In the second half of October, 2005, I was fortunate to travel to Sweden because of a Fulbright Senior Specialists award. I spent one week at Umeå University and a second at the University at Göteborg.

**Umeå University**

My first week was spent at the Department of Informatics at Umeå University. I visited with Ulf Hedestig, who works in computer support for collaborative learning, Olle Persson, head of Library & Information Science, and Victor Kaptelinin, who works in human computer interaction and activity theory. Victor is from Russia and had worked with A. N. Leont'ev at Vygotsky's institute in Moscow, but he also has strong interests in John Dewey's work. I presented a major talk on learning there, as well as led a discussion on the Schools of Information movement in the US.

**Akademi Norr and Lycksele learning center**

On October 21, I spent a day in Lycksele. There, I learned about an innovative organization called Akademi Norr from Regis Cabral, their EU coordinator. The organization emerged as the result of cooperation among 13 municipalities in four counties in northern Sweden. It initiates, coordinates, and implements higher education programs and courses for people in the north, in order to meet needs for both education and development.

Each of the 13 municipalities has its own learning center, typically housed with the community library. Akademi Norr works with the center, a local industry, community members, and a university to devise a specialized higher education program. The center offers meeting spaces, Information and Communication (ICTs), local tutoring, and other services. Their program shares many similarities with my own school's Chicago program in LIS education.

For example, I visited one of these learning centers, Lycksele lärcentrum. Most of their website is in Swedish, but you can see a little bit more in English on education in Lycksele. They've set up several programs. One
currently underway leads to a BS in Engineering, with a focus on GIS; another is for a BS in Nursing, with an emphasis on ICTs.

Students who have completed these programs have easily found jobs in their region, because the program is designed from the start to make that possible. This is especially important in a region with strong ties to the land and community. The program is also designed to meet the needs of local industries, which might otherwise have difficulty finding qualified workers in such a sparsely-populated area (3.8 people/sq-mi in Lapland versus 223.4 people/sq-mi in Illinois).

The staff in the Lycksele lärcentrum as well as at Akademi Norr are very open to having people visit or study what they are doing. There are possibilities for funding through organizations such as the American-Scandinavian Foundation. We could learn a great deal about community work, meaningful learning, ICTs in education, and more, through a better understanding of the learning centers programs.

**IT-University at Göteborg**

During the second week, I went to the IT-University at Göteborg, where they have been using my situated evaluation approach. I met with Berner Lindstrom and Marisa Ponti, who work in the area of ICT and Learning, as well as others.

We held a half-day seminar on Monday, "Supporting Distributed Collaboration in Science: Reflections from Experiences", in which I presented along with Diane Sonnenwald, from the University College of Borås. Later that week, I taught a two-day short course on Pragmatic Design of Information and Communication Technologies, and then on Friday gave a lecture on inquiry-based learning.

My Swedish consists of a few apologies for not speaking or understanding the language, softened with a few polite expressions. But I did learn one important word that some longer-term visitors to Sweden may not know. It's *fika*. You can begin to understand it when you reverse it to *kafi*, the Swedish word for coffee. Fika is an important ritual, often supplemented with *mandelkrans* (almond cake). Fika time was a good break in a busy schedule, but also a time when people connected in a more personal way. Sometimes the discussions there extended what we'd talked about in other venues, but linked them more deeply to people's lives. The students made a *fika inquiry unit* to provide a space for further investigations.

**University College of Borås**

On Tuesday of that week, I traveled to the Swedish School of Library & Information Science at the University College of Borås (Högskolan i Borås) to give talks on our distributed knowledge project and again on the information school movement. In addition to Diane Sonnenwald, I met with there with Louise Limberg, who works in information literacy. She and I are both involved with an information literacy project directed by Eero Sormunen in the Department of Information Studies at the University of Tampere, Finland.
Connecting Sweden and the US

Hoping to share my experiences in Sweden with my students, as well as to let the Swedish students encounter those in America, I used Flashmeeting, a web-based, video conferencing system developed by colleagues at the Knowledge Media Institute, Open University, UK. I was able to connect with my class in Champaign and students from the Swedish university were able to join in. This had the added benefit of allowing us to explore a technology for communication, which was one of the themes of the grant.

See also the Daily Illini article: "Bruce visits Sweden as Fulbright Senior Specialist," by Elizabeth Kim.