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# Introduction to the Special Issue: Teaching in the Field

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Education, as both process and place, is a locus for many of the most deeply-held cultural beliefs and practices within a society. Teaching involves cultural particularities, ranging from modes of knowledge transfer to expectations of student-teacher power dynamics to age and gender norms. Anthropologists and other social scientists frequently engage in teaching practices during field research. Teaching can be harnessed as a research method, creating entry to a field site and opening new possibilities for learning for the researcher. In this vein, anthropologists have affiliated themselves with and taught at local schools, colleges or universities. Through these undertakings, the anthropologist is exposed not only to a wider cross-section of people than might otherwise be accessible, but they can also experience first-hand what it means to teach and learn in the local context. Teaching can also be utilized as a form of local development as anthropologists create courses, teaching programs, or research departments, often forming long-term educational partnerships. Such projects simultaneously change the anthropologist and anthropology as well as field site communities, while creating new knowledge locally and transnationally.

What are the ethical implications of becoming involved in education in field research settings? What is the role of education as an ethnographic research tool, and how does it enhance or challenge the relationship between the anthropologist, students, and communities in the field? A one-day workshop, sponsored by the University of Oxford Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology and Department of Education, was held in November 2011, to discuss these questions and to create a dialogue on how to ethically navigate educational endeavours in field research settings. I co-organised this conference with Ann Lewis Wand (DPhil student, ISCA, University of Oxford) in collaboration with this journal - *Teaching Anthropology*. Nine papers were presented, and the twenty attendees were encouraged in discussion by a keynote address by Professor David Parkin (University of Oxford) and concluding remarks by Dr Peggy Froerer (Brunel University). The presentations during the workshop and the resulting papers that appear in this issue center around two interrelated themes: 1) investigating education and educating as investigators; 2) building capacity and supporting social change through teaching.

My own interest in the subject of teaching in the field is rooted in my experiences teaching anthropology and public health in Guatemala. Working with students from North America and elsewhere in the developed world to explore foundational principles of ethnography and health research in the context where I conduct my own long-term research has been the most rewarding teaching opportunity I have had. In the university setting, students are taught research methods in the classroom, perhaps with constructed local field projects, but they must largely imagine the challenges posed by genuine fieldwork. Conversely, by teaching in the field setting, students must grapple with cultural differences and the issues that arise in implementation of a research project. It is intensely satisfying to be able to couple classroom instruction on theoretical ideas, such as social inequalities in health services, and then visit health facilities alongside students and see those realities truly strike a chord in them above a chorus of readings and second-hand information. The real reward for me as an instructor comes in seeing the students then become deeply invested in applying their fieldwork to addressing the health and social disparities that they have witnessed and in building relationships with local partners to do so. As Professor David Parkin noted in his keynote address during our 2011 workshop, "Doing something other than just research is more ethical in the eyes of local people. It's increasingly not accepted to just do research."

As the articles in this issue illustrate, there are a number of ways in which educational endeavours have allowed anthropologists to engage meaningfully with their field research communities. The first two articles address formal cooperative institution-building through education and the cultural encounters that transpire in doing so. Jane Derges et al. describe the challenges and successes of establishing a partnership between a UK university and an Indian NGO to build research capacity in addressing cultural barriers to provision of effective mental health care. Also focused on advocacy through institution and capacity-building, Heidi Hoefinger presents the Global Girls Project that she initiated with female entertainment industry workers in Cambodia. Through the project, women were encouraged to record self-reflexive narratives about their lives and aspirations and were assisted in learning computer skills, which the women identified as an essential stepping-stone to self-improvement. The third article, by myself and Gelya Frank, discusses the fertile ground laid for development projects through a transdisciplinary field school in Guatemala through which foreign social science and clinical students engage with hands-on projects identified by and run collaboratively with local partners. The fourth and fifth articles in the issue focus on intensive teaching roles undertaken as ethnographers in the field. Iris Marchand outlines her experiences in contributing to the establishment of an adult education program in Western Suriname, and she builds a strong case for the superior ethics of engagement and intervention through education over the traditional ethnographic principle of non-interference. Camilla Morelli describes her work in the classroom of an indigenous school in the Peruvian Amazon and queries the oft-touted notion that pedagogical principles and necessarily culturally bound. She focuses on the integration of sensory and emotional experiences of both students and teachers as a way to improve classroom learning. Finally, the issue concludes with two brief commentary pieces focusing on teaching while conducting ethnographic research: Samantha Hurn discusses the blurred boundaries of research and life when she finds herself teaching in a university near her field site following field work, and Ole Kaland shares the tensions and successes of his experiences working as an English teacher and mentor to high school students in Shanghai in order to gain access to a research population of rural-urban migrants.

Throughout the issue, the themes of advocacy, capacity-building, and the ethics of ethnography emerge in new and interesting ways. I hope this special issue opens further dialogue within anthropology on the potential of teaching in the field both as a research method and as a vehicle for local development.