



## Examples and experience: anthropological thinking and ethnographic sensibility

### Ivan Constantino

This special issue was inspired by a workshop exploring the use of ethnographic examples as a pedagogical tool in anthropology. The workshop, entitled 'Learning by Example: Building Arguments Ethnographically', was organised by the *Teaching Anthropology* in collaboration with the Royal Anthropological Institute, the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth, and Magdalen College Oxford. Bringing together sixth-form students, instructors and examiners, as well as university researchers, the day explored how different teaching professionals select and use examples and assess their students' understanding of ethnography. Students offered their understandings of how they learn to use ethnographic evidence, which in some cases they had obtained first-hand as part of guided research fieldtrips.

The idea for the workshop arose from a particular challenge faced by graduate students leading small group tutorials: knowing how and why to use ethnographic examples in anthropological teaching and learning, particularly to make arguments about 'large issues' or to engage with theory. The responses by Angela Riviere and Caroline McGranahan were challenging, inspiring and thought-provoking: their papers are developed versions of these presentations.

Riviere alerts us to the difficulty of enabling students from around the globe to think anthropologically. Drawing on her experience as an International Baccalaureate's (IB) Social Anthropology diploma curriculum, her paper highlights the importance of encouraging IB diploma students to engage *critically* with the ethnography they read, and to contextualise this reading by means of limited fieldwork experience. It is only through ethnographic exemplification (be it through reading, fieldwork, or both) that anthropological concepts, theory, and sometimes daunting jargon can come to life in the classroom for the average 16-19-year-old IB Social Anthropology student.

Riviere's aim to use ethnography in order to think anthropologically is reflected in McGranahan's paper, originally delivered as a keynote address at the workshop. She champions long-term ethnographic fieldwork, the importance of teaching an ethnographic sensibility in the classroom and the notion of experience as pedagogy. In doing so, McGranahan takes us on a guided tour of her classroom, where conceptual and bodily exercises are used to help students appreciate the power of ethnographic fieldwork. Her pedagogy demonstrates how empathy is one of the key epistemological bases for ethnographic knowledge and anthropological thinking. In the end, her students learn that is both the experience of 'being there' and an ethnographic sensibility attuned to one's informants that enable one to think anthropologically.

The papers by Susanne Kuehling and Gareth Barkin explore the role that ethnographic knowledge, either acquired directly 'in the field', or through reading and role-play, plays in anthropological pedagogies. The importance of experience and exemplification in these papers develops ideas explored in the workshop. Both authors demonstrate that students who are not fully-fledged practitioners can still engage in anthropological thinking and develop what McGranahan refers to as ethnographic sensibilities. Kuehling describes her use of role-play in the classroom, whilst Barkin makes the case for reflective and engaged short-term field trips. Whilst challenging to implement and assess, these and other pedagogies enable students at all levels to learn about anthropology's key mode of generating knowledge: ethnographic practice.