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Abstract
This article discusses the teaching of anthropological fieldwork during a period of
comprehensive educational reforms in Danish universities. We trace widely held conceptions
of fieldwork among master's students of anthropology and the efforts they make to live up to
what they assume to be classic fieldwork. We argue that the ideals of classic fieldwork too
often fail to support the learning process when fieldwork is squeezed into the timeframe of
the curriculum and show how fieldwork as part of an educational programme can be
mentored by online feedback. Our suggestion is that cooperative reflection during fieldwork
can improve the quality of the empirical material and the analytical process significantly.

Introduction: fieldwork in a reformed university setting
This article calls for a reconsideration of ethnographic fieldwork and the way anthropologists
teach, write and talk about what is generally held to be the heart of the discipline. We argue
for the necessity of developing a format of fieldwork appropriate for master's students.
Recent (closely monitored) university reforms in Denmark have led to an increased number
of students but a lower staff–student ratio, a speeding up of student throughput, penalties if
students do not complete their programme on time, and downsizing of certain study
programmes (see Carney 2006; Wright and Ørberg 2008, 2011; Wright and Rabo 2010). The
increased formalisation of education is furthermore reflected in demands for progression

within and between bachelor's, master's and PhD programmes. Whereas fieldwork is key to PhD programmes, bachelor and master's programmes might or might not include a period of fieldwork. In bachelor programmes fieldwork is typically organised as part of a short field school or as fieldwork exercises that are undertaken in teams. Despite these differences in practice, the existing literature, with the exception of field school literature (Wallace and Iris 2009), presents fieldwork in the form of long-term, open-ended immersion, where the researcher immerses him or herself in the field, attains indelible experiences and produces ethnographic material ripe with analytic potentialities. If not explicitly stated, the implicit reference is to the canonical and by now mythical fieldwork carried out by the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski in the beginning of the twentieth century. Although we appreciate the moral strengths of the myth and the intellectual values of this ideal, we also question its qualities as a role model in the current educational context. Time-limited study programmes, reduced teacher–student ratios, new collaborative and cross-disciplinary research designs and web facilities unthinkable twenty years ago make for a new environment for the professional discipline of anthropology.

Our particular concern here is fieldwork as part of a large, two-year master's programme with an annual intake of approximately 80 (some years 100) students. In the second semester (of four in all) students follow a mandatory course dedicated to prepare and write a project proposal. The third semester is reserved for fieldwork and the fourth for thesis writing. We believe that ethnographic fieldwork is an important educational element in becoming an anthropologist. We also believe that good ethnography is created by dedicated work in all the phases of an anthropological project including careful preparation of research questions, a well-considered choice of ethnographic field site(s), attentiveness and openness to the field, meticulous collection and organisation of field material in notes, documents and audio-visual material – and the continuous development of analysis in writing and conversations with the field, peers, supervisors and the wider academic and public environment. What we question is an institutionalised belief in the intrinsic value of the field experience – with intense forms of participant observation as a peak value – that is uniquely and only realised by doing it individually, long-term and open-ended. We thus agree with Faubion when he questions the prioritising of time in 'a physical fieldsite' at the cost of other relevant ways of accessing ethnographic material and states that '[e]verything hinges on the terms and requirement of the question of research itself' (Faubion in Faubion and Marcus 2009: 5). Basing our claims on many years of teaching and supervision of master's students and more recently on a series of teaching experiments, interviews and workshops with students and experienced fieldworkers, we have found that for students of anthropology a shadow side of the ideal is too often materialised as a dark loneliness, anxieties and even trauma, impacting the quality and the effectiveness of the learning process negatively. Too often, we have seen the ideal of open-endedness and individuality transformed into a loss of sense of direction that has left the student in an unproductive void – unsure about what to do about anything. Furthermore, we have observed that individual students frame their problems during fieldwork in surprisingly similar ways; we have therefore been inclined to assume that they are in fact structural.

In this article we present our teaching experiments and the outcome of discussions with students and colleagues in our department. Initially, our interest was sparked by our

experience, as supervisors, of master's students increasingly struggling with fieldwork. Our interest was further kindled as members of the study council[1] (2007–2015), where a working group in 2012 concluded, on the basis of a survey among students, that fieldwork was the most important factor for students' delay in completing their study programmes. Since 2013 this finding has prompted a number of dialogical, cooperative experiments and interventions exploring the advantages and limits of classical and collective types of fieldwork. A first step involved a group of research interns who interviewed experienced researchers and present students of anthropology about fieldwork. This work pointed to a widely shared 'lonely hero syndrome', which might surprise some readers (just as much as us) given the seminal reworking of anthropological method by central figures, not least George Marcus (1995, 1999, 2007). The second step comprised a series of workshops on supervision with colleagues from the Department of Anthropology and staff members from the Department of Psychology, resulting in a new design for supervision for groups of fieldworkers before and after fieldwork.[2] Parallel to this, a more practice-oriented experiment set up fieldwork exercises that logically inverted the form of classical fieldwork. In this experiment we invited 100 bachelor students and researchers to do collective fieldwork in one day (instead of one person 100 days) and in the same process we investigated the explicit and taken-for-granted expectations concerning classic fieldwork.[3] This has spurred new questions and new ways of designing fieldwork, ways of working together in the field and with the field, and ways of sharing and archiving empirical material.

After a discussion of the classic fieldwork model, here we will focus on the experiment that modelled supervision *during* fieldwork. We wanted students to be part of a learning community (Lave and Wenger 1991) consisting of co-students and a PhD student who assisted the participants in organising cooperative reflection. Strengthening the teaching aspect of fieldwork we thus incorporated mentoring into the fieldwork programme ('research-tutored' activities according to Healey and Jenkins 2009). In autumn 2014, we offered all student fieldworkers the option to participate in online activities involving peer feedback and teacher guidance. In order to understand the students' perspective, this was followed up with visits and interviews in the field sites.[4] Following from these experiments, we question whether the ideals of classic fieldwork support the learning process when fieldwork is squeezed into a timeframe of, say, four months in the curriculum.

Time matters: open-ended fieldwork

Fieldwork literature distinguishes between two types of fieldwork. At one end of the continuum we find the closely monitored fieldwork school model (see Wallace and Iris 2009) and at the other the open-ended individual fieldwork. Bachelor's students typically participate in the former, where a group of students work on a common project (possibly divided into a range of sub-projects appropriate for smaller groups of students) under the guidance of an experienced anthropologist. In strong contrast to the cooperative spirit of fieldwork schools, PhD students – and in some departments also master's students – are expected to live up to the classic ideal dominating the literature on fieldwork.

Whether a master's degree in anthropology includes fieldwork or not varies across Europe. Some programmes organise something akin to fieldwork schools where students have extensive support and supervision. Others (such as Utrecht and Copenhagen) involve

independent fieldwork of three to six months' duration, the reference being the classic fieldwork ideal. With rare exceptions (Cerwonka and Malkki 2008; Marcus 2009) literature on ethnographic method does not distinguish between different formats of fieldwork. Despite critical discussions of fieldwork (see for example Gupta and Ferguson 1997a, 1997b; Marcus 1995, 1999) and the fact that many projects, as Marcus notes, are a 'pull against the convention' (2007: 353), the unspoken reference is the classic fieldwork taking place 'abroad' and lasting a minimum of one year (Malinowski 2002; see also Stocking 1983: 110).

Experienced anthropologists stress the open-ended nature of classic fieldwork. Marilyn Strathern, for example, notes that '[s]ocial anthropology has one trick up its sleeve: the deliberate attempt to generate more data than the investigator is aware of at the time of collection ... a participatory exercise which yields materials for which analytical protocols are often devised after the fact' (Strathern 2004: 5–7, in Marcus 2009: 23). In other words, anthropologists prepare themselves for unexpected connections and patterns of meaning that might appear when analysing the material. More recently, Judith Okely celebrated analytical uncertainty with reference to a series of interviews with experienced fieldworkers. Okely vehemently supports the finding that '[e]verybody changed focus to a large or lesser extent' (2012: 5). In both cases a change of focus is expected, illustrating Marcus' observation that a 'shift in plans in fieldwork … has the standing of a trope in ethnographic writing' (2009: 22). And, characteristically, this ideal is nursed with no mention of cases where major changes in fact did not occur – or where meaningful 'analytical protocols' were devised before and during the fieldwork. While we on the one hand fully agree with Strathern and Okely that open-endedness is crucial (as opposed to a social scientific research design restricted by formal hypotheses), on the other hand we support the idea that it can also be most productive to stay closer to one's research questions and carefully chosen analytical concepts.

In interviews with students – and in teaching and supervision – we have, somewhat to our surprise, observed how open-endedness and 'the trick up the sleeve' sometimes have been translated into a concrete research strategy. In those cases, students may divert from their initial ideas and plans, even to the point where they find themselves in a new field site with a topic that they have never read about in a systematic way. If those students are diligent readers they do not need to search long to find backing for this openness. In *Ethnography in Social Science Practice* Julie Scott Jones notes, for example, that 'a lot of the literature that I read before my fieldwork was irrelevant on my return, as my subject focus had changed during my fieldwork, so you should expect to be reading when you return from fieldwork' (Jones in Jones and Watt 2010: 163). What we hint at here is a tendency among anthropologists to overstate the case of openness (see Marcus 2009: 6), not least in the context of student fieldwork. In his discussion of British anthropology, Mills too suggests that the British tradition has 'invoked a vision of social anthropological fieldwork as a form of experiential and sensory knowing, a tradition that values the unintended, incidental and tangential' (2011: 12). Notably, we also observe this tendency when students relate that they get the feeling that they do not belong to the informal category of 'promising students' when they return from fieldwork having followed their original plan.

Our intention here is neither to blame the students for misunderstanding the grand tradition, nor to ridicule the teaching practice. Rather, we see signs of a more systematic problem when master's programmes try to squeeze the ideal fieldworker tradition with its

much wider time frame into the limited space of a master's programme. One result of this institutionalisation of the tradition is that some students return with ethnographic material that has no or only a slight relation to the analytical object they set out to pursue. This is not a problem if the student has developed an alternative analytical object and the material is a result of a critical conversation with existing literature. However, if a student relies too heavily on Strathern's 'trick', it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to finalise the project within the frames of the study programme. Twenty years ago, supervisors could encourage students to engage with entirely new theoretical discussions after their fieldwork and make the next appointment only months later. Today extensions have to be negotiated with reference to strict study progression in which open-endedness is not a part of the vocabulary.

Curiously, time frames for ethnographic fieldwork are rarely mentioned explicitly in textbooks and anthropological accounts of individual fieldwork. It is common knowledge that Malinowski worked for (almost) two years among the Trobriands; it is a standard that PhD fieldwork extends between nine and eighteen months in a three (some places four) year programme. In the master's programme that we teach, the students are assigned four months of fieldwork and they can chose to go anywhere in the world. '*How short can fieldwork be?'* is a question Marcus contemplates (2007), and we would like to add, *how* does time matter in fieldwork *and* in other parts of an anthropological project? Questions of time are not only important in relation to the timing of the activities in the field but also during preparation and writing up. Concerning the process after fieldwork, the classical anthropological open-endedness is reflected in Jones and Watt's suggestion that it is often necessary to 'shove' away your notes 'for several months' after returning from the field in order to 'decompress' from fieldwork (2010: 160). In the contemporary educational context, the idea of 'shoving away your notes for months' in order to recover from culture shock, get some perspective or read up a new area of research is a luxury the master's students cannot afford.

It is the responsibility of the educational departments to design teaching programmes that can realistically be completed in time. Comparing doctoral research in anthropology to that of other social sciences, Barry argues that anthropological research is 'by far the hardest to conduct' because '[t]he rigours of fieldwork are usually greater' and 'the burden of analysis is much greater with the mass of unstructured data that a long participant observation stint can produce' (2009: 1). Does it mean that ethnographic fieldwork should be abandoned in master's programmes? As we see it, the burdens may partly be a result of a re-invention of fieldwork, which emphasise the ideal of the lonely hero, hardship and endurance, and calls for a consideration of what fieldwork could also be.

Fieldwork as a rite of passage
The mythos of fieldwork means that anthropologists and students of anthropology all seem to know what it implies. The classical reference to fieldwork as a rite of passage (see Hoek 2014; Jones and Watt 2010; Okely 2012; Spencer 2010; Stocking 1983) implies that the researcher takes off, immerses him or herself in the field, and returns transformed socially, emotionally and mentally (Stocking 1992: 18). In between come hard work, adventure and fieldnotes. Thus, the indelible mark of the fieldworker is both academic and existential. This (unsettling) experience results in large amounts of ethnographic material (field notes, material objects, photographs, films and so on), but only after the fieldworker has readjusted to his or

her other own (academic) world will s/he begin to analyse this hard won material. If successful, their efforts will result in ethnographies making them real anthropologists.

Anthropologists generally perceive fieldwork as key to the training of future generations of anthropologists. The myth of fieldwork is easily and effectively reproduced, and in textbooks and monographs it is seldom considered what happens if the rite of passage goes wrong and the mythical power, unfaithfully, does not materialise. As with all myths, the whispers in the shadows, of failure and suffering, are just as persistent. Recently, Pollard has summarised the mixed blessings of ethnographic fieldwork as a time of 'intense vulnerability' and documented the difficulties that PhD students at three U.K. universities have faced, nicely ordered as emotional states in alphabetic order: 'alone, ashamed, bereaved, betrayed, depressed, desperate, disappointed, disturbed, embarrassed, fearful, frustrated, guilty, harassed, homeless, paranoid, regretful, silenced, stressed, trapped, uncomfortable, unprepared, unsupported, and unwell' (2009: 2). Among Pollard's points is her observation that the training of graduate and PhD students has done little to prepare them for the challenges. The trickery is, of course, that according to the myth and the mystical power of the rite of passage, those feelings and states of mind are inherent in fieldwork. As a rite of immersion and confrontation fieldwork *should be* ripe with anxieties and involve violent, painful and disruptive loss of self (Crapanzano 1977). Without a recasting of the self, the understanding of the field will not evolve and the incorporation into the profession is considered incomplete.

Myths are powerful. They may even convey some truth. But in order to preserve truth they also need interpretation. Today, in the anthropological environment we are familiar with, we see the students choose between what they understand as three different interpretations. The first is that you are a tough and adventurous student and that you do your best to live up to the myth by choosing a field that is unique or hazardous, often abroad. The second is to admire the myth, but consider yourself unable to live up to it and thus choose a more manageable field site close to home. As a result, you may also find yourself destined to defend this as a 'second-rate' choice in an implicit hierarchy of kinds-of-fieldwork. The third way is to secularise the myth and imagine real alternatives to classic fieldwork. Acknowledging that we are not the first to do so (see Tjørnhøj-Thomsen 2003 and Marcus 2009), this is the path we support in the last section of this article after considering how the first two options are reflected in students' choices of fieldwork.

From students' points of view

Fieldwork should at least take place abroad – and you should definitely prefer to do it alone. This is what we learn from our students about the ideal way of doing fieldwork. Not all students agree, but generally they feel that this is what they are taught. When asked to explain the reason for their choice of field site it is not uncommon for students to state that they feel that they must make the most out of the opportunity in the study programme to travel anywhere in the world. One student spoke for several when he said: 'You are a chicken if you do not make use of the opportunity to go abroad'. But it is not just the opportunity to travel abroad that influences the choices of many students. The idea of exploring something hitherto unstudied also plays a role. One former student explained how she had experienced her education: 'And then there is the issue of the unknown – it is considered an advantage if it is

unknown. Throughout my education, I have found that it was expected that one should find one's own territory, so far unknown to the world.'

Despite a strong tradition of collaborative work in anthropology (to mention a few examples: The Torres Strait expedition, Gluckman and the Manchester school, and more recently, collective work as in Pernambuco, Brazil – see Sigeau 2009), the preference for individual fieldwork is strong amongst the students. In our department, less than 10 per cent of our students chose to collaborate with other students or stakeholders. Teachers encourage work in groups, but students observe what their teachers do in practice and individual fieldwork is indeed the norm for staff members. The archetype thus lingers on in classrooms, affecting the choices students make when deciding which project to pursue and how to carry it out. It is therefore hardly surprising that master's students in Danish anthropology departments carry out fieldwork on their own in all corners of the world. In 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 students from our department carried out fieldwork in all continents apart from Antarctica. It takes an independent mind as well as courage to choose an alternative route to complete a master's degree.

Although we have sympathy with students' wish to travel the world and their aspirations towards new knowledge, we find that these ideals too often are tilted towards adventure and the unique in ways that do not necessarily support learning anthropology. The chance of contributing with something of interest within the limited time frame might increase if students chose to work as part of larger research groups. They would certainly gain a more realistic understanding of how new knowledge commonly takes shape, namely through patient and systematic work in complex networks. We do not, of course, object to anthropology students' undertaking stimulating fieldwork. But we object when these strong ideals shut out fruitful collaborations with established researchers, co-students or project holders outside the university for whom collaborative fieldwork and mixed methods are state of the art.[5]

Hazard as an alternative to length
The Danish state's educational regulations now make it increasingly difficult to stay in the field for long stretches of time. Some students seek hazard to make up for what has been lost in terms of length of stay. This is another lesson we have learned from the students. Talking about her choice of field, a student described how much energy she had had to summon up in order to ignore 'the hype' amongst students:

> I don't know how much it is a result of the students' own understanding of what it means to do fieldwork and to go native and how much it is a result of the teaching and the texts we read. But it is absolutely certain that there is a pressure, an expectation: the wilder the better. Take myself, I thought that if only I could do something related to political violence and structural violence then that would be ideal.

According to her, this tendency was also at play at the university where she completed her BA in anthropology. To illustrate this she recounted how one teacher responsible for the BA fieldwork course had fascinated everybody with stories about a demanding long-term fieldwork in a remote area. As part of the course students designed small-scale projects based

upon a couple of weeks of fieldwork abroad. One of the groups chose to study a criminal gang. Not only their choice is noteworthy but also the fact that they were allowed to carry out the project. This is by no means an outstanding case. It is notable that in Denmark, unlike in the U.S. and U.K., students are not required to have ethics approved by a committee, or a formal risk assessment. The general expectation is that since some people live with danger, anthropologists (and apparently also anthropology students) must cope with that in order to carry out their métier. As a result of this refusal to limit students' choices, some of them carry out fieldwork in zones of armed conflict where they depend upon the advice of their local interlocutors to get through their stay without serious harm. They have hitherto done this without any supervision during fieldwork, and although the department follows Foreign Ministry Guidelines, the students do not have any pre-departure course in personal health, travel safety, culture shock or any other mental health issues. Neither do they have any debriefing, a routine procedure for many other travellers to high-risk zones such as aid workers.

Some students realise too late that they have entirely misjudged themselves academically and personally and chosen topics for which they are not well suited in an attempt to live up to what they perceive to be the ideal of anthropological fieldwork – and some of them return to campus with severe psychological problems. One of our former students recounted how she disregarded the advice of her interlocutors who were trying to protect her. Working at a morgue among and with dead bodies on a daily basis, they knew that their work could be seriously anxiety provoking for an outsider. Ignoring their warning she chose to observe their work closely, feeling that she ought to do so as a student of anthropology: 'the more forbidden, the better'. For this student admittance to the otherwise enclosed world of dead bodies resulted in delusions and a long-term sick-leave. The degree of severity of this case is exceptional, and only a few students end up with trauma as a consequence of fieldwork. Nevertheless many suffer from stress and anxieties caused by fieldwork and their list of problems resemble that of Pollard (2009). One said, 'I know from everybody, that it is difficult to do fieldwork. I have spoken to others who told me that their body just gave way when they returned home from fieldwork'. During our conversations with students, they conveyed how they had come to learn that falling ill, getting divorced and struggling with new anxieties were characteristic of fieldwork, something they would just have to accept.

Second-rate fieldwork?
Although many members of the department have worked 'at home' since the 1980s, a student recounted how a teacher had sighed with relief when one of them presented a project plan involving fieldwork abroad, muttering 'at last someone who travels abroad'. Although we are confident that the intention was not to disdain fieldwork 'at home', it did not go unnoticed by the students. One student related how she had first contemplated doing an internship in an organisation in Denmark but in the end planned to do fieldwork in the United States. Her change of plans was very positively received amongst some of her fellow students, one of whom spontaneously burst out 'cool, just cool'. Feeling that their work was not acknowledged in the department, some students in Spring 2014 established a 'support group for students who carry out fieldwork in Denmark'.

Whereas a student studying armed conflict in a Brazilian favela, for example, would not be asked to explain his or her choice, students who choose a school or a kindergarten as their field site or opt for an internship in a company as a basis for fieldwork often feel they are required to explain themselves. Rather than referring to a particular interest in their chosen field, their explanations are often defensive: 'I had been an exchange student during my bachelor's followed by a stressing period when I did not have a place to live. This meant I did not feel I had the energy to undertake fieldwork abroad'. These students are familiar with the heroes of fieldwork and they might even admire them, but they do not feel they themselves would be able to live up to the ideal. Their choice is a result of a careful consideration of interest, future job wishes and, not least, awareness of their own personality and what they can cope with. In other words they have set themselves a realistic goal that they are likely to be able to fulfil. In the university setting dominated by values founded and nurtured long before the onset of the current obsession with speed and efficiency, they nevertheless feel obliged to defend their choices.

Logically, perhaps, the dominant 'fieldwork talk' also negatively affects students who happen to enjoy their fieldwork. To quote a student who had a good time during her fieldwork: 'When is it exactly that I am supposed to hit the wall? When is it exactly that I am supposed to feel alone?' Having anticipated that she would suddenly become 'madly professional', she was concerned that she did not experience any personal transformation but felt just like her old self: 'Should I have become more professional, more of an anthropologist?' The examples discussed in this section strongly indicate that the fieldwork hierarchy mentioned earlier affects students' choices and experiences in ways that are not necessarily in their – or the department's – interest.

Fieldwork as part of a taught programme: the E-tivities model
In order for students to navigate fieldwork better we have come to see the solitary hero fieldworker as an unhelpful caricature, and the idealisation of fieldwork as a rite in a reinvented classical format, as doing more harm than good for master's students and hence for the discipline. The neoliberal university reforms mentioned in the introduction have accelerated our understanding of the limitations, but so has the simultaneous public expansion of the discipline, both in terms of an increased number of students and the great variety of careers that graduated students embark upon. Becoming an anthropologist is the starting point of a research career only for a few. Fifty years ago, when the discipline was new and the number of graduating students few (in Denmark one or two in a year), students and teachers knew each other well and worked together in numerous ways. Today when eighty students embark simultaneously on fieldwork in our department, formal training in methodology, design, interviews and so on is obligatory, and feedback and supervision are in place *before* and *after* fieldwork. Training in how to organise the material and the analytical process has recently been developed. However, when it comes to fieldwork, master's students are still supposed to fly solo. We suggest that there is a need to distinguish between different formats of fieldwork when it comes to organisation, length and degree of independence. This includes a careful consideration of how students are best guided, not only when choosing their topic, fieldwork destination and methodological design but also during fieldwork. The

format we are particularly interested in for master's students hovers somewhere between the closely monitored fieldwork school model and open-ended individual fieldwork.

If a classic apprenticeship involves learning by working for and with an older, experienced expert (Bennett and Barp 2008; Hattie and Timperley 2007; Lave 1982; Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick 2006; Race and Brown 2015), a parallel in the university setting would be students' working on a research project led by a researcher. The question is whether it is possible to offer comparable guidance and feedback in departments where the teacher–student ratio is low and students are free to choose their fieldwork destination as they please. We think it is possible to conceptualise fieldwork for master's students as a mentored educational activity that offers support without losing the learning benefits of the classic independent model. This involves learning how to work with one's project design in a continuous process of readjustment (for a discussion of how fieldwork can be rethought as a design process, see Marcus 2009). Although we regret the current political preoccupation with speed and efficiency we even suggest that our students might benefit if we begin to think of the limited time period set for fieldwork as a stimulus to rethink our practice. Does fieldwork necessarily involve close interaction with interlocutors during the entire period or should time be set aside to do archival research, for example, or to work with the observations and other types of data in a (cross-disciplinary) team as suggested by Faubion and Marcus (2009)? Has the time come to start speaking of a distinct ethnographic 'mixed methods approach' in order to remind ourselves that anthropological practice from the beginning has involved much more than participant observation, and to make use of technologies now available? Could projects involve several pieces of fieldwork carried out by groups or individual fieldworkers? If so, how can collaborative projects deal with qualitatively meaningful data management? Does the sharing of notes necessarily imply co-authorship?

There is a wide gap between participating in a fieldwork school and carrying out fieldwork alone, without regular contact with a teacher or co-students. We suggest this gap can be decreased by using an Internet-based course. In the following we describe in detail the guided fieldwork model that was formally incorporated into the master's programme at the Department of Anthropology in Copenhagen in 2016. This model uses the lessons from an E-tivities project run in 2014 and 2015. The project experimented with building up an online community during fieldwork headed by a member of faculty. Out of fifty students doing fieldwork in autumn 2015, twenty-five decided to join the online activities offered during their fieldwork period.

In E-tivities, the community revolves around a number of mandatory assignments requiring students to reflect on specific aspects of their fieldwork. The main purpose of the assignments is to encourage and guide students to reflect on their project and adjust their problem formulation, the methodological design, relations with interlocutors, questions of timing, study techniques, ethics and so on. Students are divided into groups of four, they upload their assignments onto a common platform, and give each other feedback. Each group is also affiliated to a PhD student who reads and comments upon the assignments and generally offers advice if and when it is called for. Although we continue to experiment with the number, timing and content of the assignments the organisation is more or less as follows. Before fieldwork students upload their project proposal for their group members and their

affiliated PhD student to read. Two weeks into fieldwork each student is asked to describe her arrival, field, gatekeepers and interaction with interlocutors. She must consider whether her project design needs to be adjusted. Three weeks later (that is, five weeks into fieldwork) she is asked to describe who she is working with, what she is doing with her interlocutors and how this can contribute to answer her research questions. Furthermore she must reflect on whether her research questions need adjustment. Have new questions emerged? She is also asked to discuss possible ethical issues. Three weeks later (i.e. eight weeks into fieldwork) the assignment focuses on the skill of writing fieldnotes. Each student must share a fieldnote with their group and write a short note to introduce the people, the setting and the issues. She is also asked to reflect upon the analytical perspectives she is working with. Four weeks later (that is, twelve weeks into fieldwork) the student is asked to present the themes that are emerging in the ethnographic material. Within a week each student receives direct feedback from the PhD student. Using a PhD student as opposed to a teacher has the advantage of causing less anxiety about stumbling through fieldwork. What then is the role of the E-activities course teacher and the thesis supervisor? By staying in the background and only stepping in if needed, the teacher confers legitimacy to the online community of practice (see Lave and Wenger 1991: 93–4). The supervisor takes over when the student returns from the field and, to reduce misunderstanding, it has proven necessary to develop an explicit distinction between the roles of the PhD student and the supervisor.

Apart from the mandatory written assignments, each group has a closed forum in which they can discuss field-related personal issues, such as loneliness, confusion and problems with interlocutors. This type of reflection and feedback in small groups during fieldwork allows students to carry out their (independent) projects under the guidance of an experienced fieldworker and with analytical and emotional stimuli from co-students. The Internet-based course plan offers a basis for cooperative reflection without limiting the possible destinations students can choose as bases for their fieldwork. Anthropological analysis is always implicitly or explicitly comparative and we argue that the learning experience in mentored research is improved significantly through continuous collaborative analytical reflection throughout fieldwork.

Students who participated in the first online experiment responded very positively to the project and supported the idea that online reflection and feedback should become a permanent part of fieldwork for master's students. Participating students were asked to evaluate the design and suggest changes before the next batch of students embarked on the project. Several noted the importance of engagement in order for a group to function well. In the first year that we ran the project, two groups out of five were dysfunctional due to group members' neglect of their community, their reason being 'lack of time'. The following semester, the teacher in charge stressed the importance of engagement not only for the sake of group members but also for learning (see Lave and Wenger 1991: 93). In 2016, two years after the first experiment, students took it for granted that E-tivities were obligatory and productive (with few exceptions such as when a student worked in an area with limited or no Internet access). Such students can still benefit from writing assignments that encourage them to reflect continually on their project, its detours and progress. To stress the social support arising from online activities, one student explained that she had decided to participate in the online activities because they would give her social support: 'I thought that one would need

to share the fear or release with others'. During her fieldwork, however, she realised that she also benefited immensely from reading the uploads of her fellow students. It made her reflect on how they had written their fieldnotes, how they had gone about a methodological issue and other aspects of the craft of fieldwork. Other students stressed the value of being able to have discussions with fellow students 'who know what it is to be on fieldwork, unlike one's family and partner'. For the majority of students, however, the most important facet was the coordinated, regular written reflection on their work and progress. That students had benefitted from cooperative reflection was also apparent in a post-fieldwork course focused on the analysis of ethnographic material. Compared to the students who had opted not to take part in the online community, these students had come further in their analytical process. One student said:

> It is the assignments, more than my fieldnotes, which have started something … [constructive thoughts]. If nobody had asked me to do it, I would not have reached that far [during my fieldwork].

In this sense the mentored fieldwork bridges the gap between the strong identity of the profession of anthropology and the fragile professional identity of the individual ethnographer. The students are still learning by doing. They do fieldwork, and they learn how to work analytically and constructively with adjustments of the project design, how to handle and share surprising, violent or otherwise difficult situations, how to organise the field material, and how method and analysis can take on new shapes. Students learn through practice that ethnographic material does not come from merely 'being there' but is always a result of meticulous work involving a continuous calibration of the relation between the analytical object, the field and the methods used.

Conclusion
Despite the formalised progression in the organisation of educational programmes through bachelor's, master's and PhD and the well-established role of ethnographic fieldwork as key to educating new generations of anthropologists, the anthropological literature does not distinguish between different formats of fieldwork, apart from fieldwork schools (typically for bachelor's students) and the classic open-ended fieldwork. For this reason master's students preparing independent fieldwork only have the classic fieldwork as reference.

In order to develop an appropriate fieldwork format for master's students the dominant understanding of fieldwork as a rite of passage needs to be calibrated according to the present institutional and technological context. A first step in this process is to secularise the myth and carefully outline project designs with different types and scales of fieldwork including other qualitative (and quantitative) methods. In this article we have focussed on the notion of cooperative reflection and the introduction of a mentored format that can improve students' experience of fieldwork as well as the quality of the ethnographic material they produce. A model like E-tivities offers the possibility of reducing the gap between the cooperation characteristic of a fieldwork school and the lonely hero syndrome characteristic of the classic open-ended fieldwork. As part of an online community, organised in small groups, students can engage in cooperative reflection involving the writing of analytic drafts,

sharing personal matters related to fieldwork and giving mutual feedback. The experiences of students who have actively engaged in online activities clearly indicate that cooperative reflection has something to offer to educational programmes of anthropology.

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