Reporting on experiments with research integration in teaching

Name

Helle Bundgaard et al. IA, KU.

Course Name

Ethnography revitalized: the craft of writing

Study Board

Studyboard for Anthropology, KU

Level and class size

The experiment was open to BA and MA students who wish to engage creatively with qualitative data material based on ethnographic fieldwork (carried out in the field, in an archive, or online).

Description of the experiment

On the basis of specified readings we discuss central issues related to the writing of ethnographic text. We shifted between online plenum discussions and online group tasks. Groups discussed their results in plenum. In June it was possible to meet at campus. We had invited a literary expert who discussed our (teachers' and students' drafts).

Outcome for the students

As Marie Larsen Ryberg (postdoc at Institut for Naturfagenes Didaktik) can confirm the course was extremely well received. Students wanted something similar to be permanently integrated as part of our teaching programmes.

Outcome for the research

The outcome has among other things lead to the (ongoing) writing of a book called Ethnographic writing intended to inspire students to write vivid ethnography.

Interaction between teaching, research and exams

During classes we used exercises to train distinct modes of writing. We have shared our own writing with students and have received their feedback. This autumn the portofolios are meant to support students ability to write an anthropologically informed story, i.e. creative non fiction.

Adapting of the experiment

The experiment consisted of a number of workshops. This semester the workshops have been developed into a full semester elective course. I am currently discussing with my Head of Studies Ayo Wahlberg how elements from this course can be integrated as part of our mandatory courses.

Strengths and weaknesses

Despite corona the course achieved what we had hoped for and was as mentioned very well received. The main weakness was that everything apart from the last workshop had to be online.

Experienced challenges

Corona

The most important experience

What made all the difference was the change to teach something we feel strongly about. Students can feel this deep engagement and respond positively to it.

Will the experiment be conducted again?

As mentioned I have developed the course Etnografisk tekst and I am responsible for developing mandatory elements in ethnographic writing in our programmes. I hope to be able to continue experiments within the field of ethnographic writing.