

THE AAA TASK FORCE ON TEACHING ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropology has long lagged behind the other social sciences in the level of professional attention and support its national organization provides to precollege education. Partly in recognition of this past history, the American Anthropological Association's new Programs Department helped form an official AAA Task Force on the Teaching of Anthropology in the Schools that will exist for four years: November 1988 to November 1992. The co-chairs of the task force are Jane White (Education Dept., Univ. of Maryland, Catonsville, MD 21228; 301/455-2378) and Patricia J. Higgins (Dept of Anthropology, SUNY-Plattsburgh, Plattsburgh, NY 12901; 518/564-4003).

This task force culminates several years of collaborative effort by anthropologists in the United States and Canada who organized symposia and workshops, obtained grants for developing curriculum materials and teacher training programs, worked with other organizations such as the National Council for the Social Studies, and helped stimulate interest in and legitimacy for precollege anthropology within the discipline. Since 1979 Anthro. Notes has been in the forefront of this effort. (Anyone seeking a review of this work should consult Practicing Anthropology 8:3-4, a special issue devoted to precollege education, available free-of-charge from Ruth O. Selig, SI-120, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.)

The overall mission and mandate of the official AAA task force is to encourage the

effective teaching of anthropology in North American schools--at various grade levels and through a diversity of specific subjects. Three major task force goals have been outlined:

1. To explore the conditions that contribute to or impede the teaching of anthropology in North American schools.
2. To make recommendations on the curricular role of anthropology and how all those concerned--teachers, students, parents, school administrators, teacher educators, college and university professors, publishers, community educators and boards of education--might strengthen teaching and learning through the use of the anthropological perspective.
3. To help the staff of the American Anthropological Association, specifically the Director of Programs, promote the teaching of anthropology in schools.

The task force is divided into four working committees, each with a focused set of objectives. These committees and their chairs are:

Committee One:
Research on Anthropology in Schools (Paul Erickson)

Committee Two:
Development of Guidelines for the Teaching of Anthropology (Jane J. White and Charles Ellenbaum)

Committee Three: Review and Development of Curriculum Materials (Ruth Selig and Ann Kaupp)

Committee Four: Outreach (Patricia Higgins)



Some of the specific projects the task force hopes to complete through its committees are:

-- surveying requirements for teacher certification to teach anthropology and/or social studies in precollege classrooms and proposing ways to increase anthropology's participation in this process;

-- evaluating materials currently available for teaching anthropology as well as encouraging the development of new materials;

-- developing and distributing resource lists, curriculum guidelines, bibliographies, and packets of materials useful for teachers;

-- facilitating the publication of booklets and bulletins helpful to those teaching anthropology;

-- developing and maintaining a mailing list of teachers interested in integrating anthropology into their curricula;

-- organizing workshops, as well as in-service and pre-service anthropology courses for teachers;

-- working with social science and science organizations and with teacher organizations.

Anyone interested in joining one of the committees of the Task Force on the Teaching of Anthropology in Schools should write or call one of the Task Force Co-chairs, or contact the editors of AnthroNotes. The task force needs help from both teachers and anthropologists, and anyone with interest, ideas, and energy is encouraged to join.

Ruth O. Selig, Co-Chair
Task Force Committee 3

DO YOU KNOW?

● that a new series titled "Indians of North America," Frank Porter III, General Editor, appropriate for junior and senior high school students is now available. Some of the books published thus far cover the Cherokee, Seminole, Crow, and Cheyenne. Write: Chelsea House Publishers, Dept. WP3, P.O. Box 914, 1974 Sproul Rd., Suite 400, Broomall, PA 19008-0914.

● that a new series--"Raintree American Indian Stories" and "Raintree Hispanic Stories"--for upper elementary students is also available. Write: Raintree Publishers, 310 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53203.

● that the Harris Educational Loan Center, Field Museum of Natural History, lends free natural history materials in the form of small exhibit cases, experience boxes, and audiovisual and printed materials to educational organizations. For example, social studies experience boxes cover such topics as American Indian Games, Eskimo Spiritual World, Ancient Egypt: Planning for the Afterlife, African Musical Instruments. For more information, write: Field Museum of Natural History, Harris Educational Loan Center, Department of Education, Roosevelt Rd. at Lake Shore Dr., Chicago, IL 60605-2497.

● that you can obtain an educational resource publication on "The Native Peoples of the Northeast Woodlands" free from the Education Office, Museum of the American Indian, Broadway at 155th St., New York, NY 10032.

● that a new video, first of a series, "The Navajo: Legend of the Glittering World," is available for \$29.95 from The American Indian Cultural Foundation, P.O. Box 3776, Page, AZ 86040.