

T A N

T E A C H I N G

A N T H R O P O L O G Y

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Teaching Anthropology Newsletter

Teaching Anthropology Newsletter (TAN) promotes precollege anthropology by providing curriculum information to teachers, creating a forum for teachers to exchange ideas and establishing communication between teachers and professors of anthropology.

TAN is published free-of-charge semiannually in the Fall and Spring of each school year by the Department of Anthropology, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 3C3 (Tel. 902-420-5628, FAX 902-420-5119). Items for publication should be submitted to Monica Lewis, Circulation Manager, or Paul A. Erickson, Editor. Deadlines for submission are October 1 for the Fall issue and March 1 for the Spring issue.

TAN is mailed to 11 Canadian Provinces and Territories, 43 American States and the District of Columbia and 6 countries overseas.

Afrocentric Curricula: An Anthropologist Responds to "Melanists"

Multiculturalism has many manifestations in the classroom. One such manifestation is "Afrocentric" curricula.

Afrocentric curricula aim to redress past misrepresentations of Black African accomplishments, some of which have been pointed out in the book *Black Athena* (Bernal 1987, 1991). *Black Athena* contends that Greek Civilization, and therefore Western Civilization, derive fundamentally from Egypt and that Egyptian Civilization was fundamentally Black. It also contends that numerous other early centers of civilization, in both the Old and New Worlds, derive from Egypt.

To date, the most influential Afrocentric curriculum has been the *African-American Baseline Essay*, commemorating the contributions of Blacks to mathematics and science (Adams 1990). Afrocentric science curricula have been adopted by grade schools in Atlanta, Detroit,

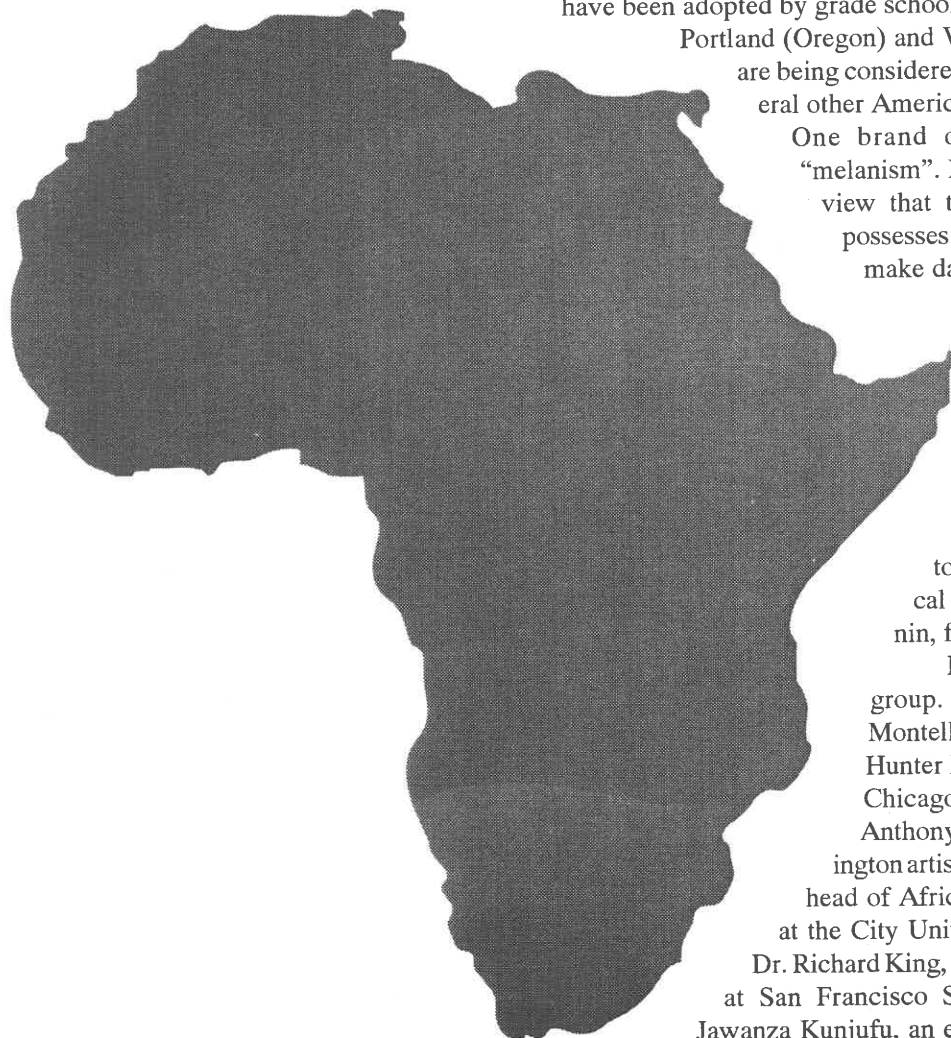
Portland (Oregon) and Washington, DC, and are being considered for adoption in several other American school districts.

One brand of Afrocentrism is "melanism". Melanists advance the view that the pigment melanin possesses special properties that make darker-skinned people,

who possess more melanin, superior to lighter-skinned people, who possess less.

Special properties are also attributed to the hormone melatonin and the biochemical substance neuromelanin, found in the brain.

Melanists are a diverse group. One list (Ortiz de Montellano 1993:35) includes Hunter Havelin Adams of the Chicago Lifeways Institute; Anthony T. Browder, a Washington artist; Dr. Leonard Jeffries, head of African-American Studies at the City University of New York; Dr. Richard King, a psychiatrist teaching at San Francisco State University; Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu, an educational consultant



in Chicago; Dr. Wade Nobles, a psychologist at San Francisco State; Neferkare Stewart, a San Francisco psychologist; and Dr. Frances Cress Welsing, a psychiatrist practicing in Washington, DC. Melanists disseminate their views in various publications, conferences and radio broadcasts (see Ortiz de Montellano 1993:55-58).

Some of the properties that melanists attribute to melanin are extraordinary:

Melanin is a neurotransmitter. People with more melanin are more sensitive to energy currents and therefore more prone to hypertension. Welsing (1987) believes that George Washington Carver was able to discover the constituents of plants because his melanin allowed him to decode plant emanations.

At least 500 years ago, because of their melanin, the Dogon people of Mali were able to detect the star Sirius B, invisible to the naked eye. The Dogon then used Sirius B as a retransmitting station for divination and precognition (Ortiz de Montellano 1993:48-49).

Melanin and related substances give Blacks more spirituality, or "soul". White people have less spirituality because their pineal glands are more calcified and produce less melanin (Ortiz de Montellano 1993:49-50).

All important stages of human evolution have taken place in Africa. White people evolved as mutants produced by the mating of Black albinos (Welsing quoted in Ortiz de Montellano 1993:53).

One inference drawn from this evidence is that because White people know that Black people are superior, White people have conspired to destroy Black people with epidemics of drugs and AIDS (Welsing 1991:4).

These and other assertions of melanists are explored in "Melanin, Afrocentricity, and Pseudoscience", an article in the *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology* for 1993. The author, Bernard R. Ortiz de Montellano, is an anthropologist at Wayne State University in Detroit. Ortiz de Montellano begins his article by tracing the origin of the Afrocentric and melanist movements. Next he explains the biochemical nature of melanin, melatonin and neuromelanin. Then he uses these explanations to respond to various melanist claims.

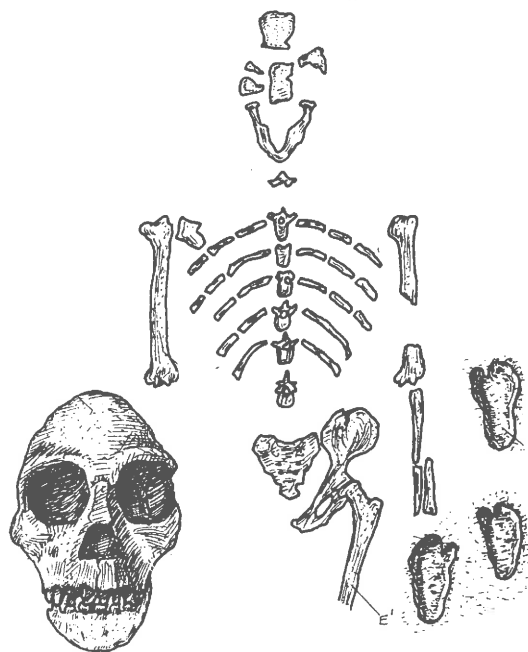
As the title of his article suggests, Ortiz de Montellano believes that almost all of the melanists' claims are false. He also believes that it is dangerous to allow such falsehoods to masquerade as science. Ortiz de Montellano has heard the broadcasts of Afrocentric melanists on radio stations in Detroit. He is worried that grade school

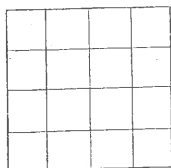
children are being taught what he calls pseudoscience, and disturbed that race relations will suffer from what he calls black racism (Ortiz de Montellano 1993:55).

"Melanin, Afrocentricity, and Pseudoscience" is eye-opening reading for anthropologists, teachers and students. It could serve as the basis for some lively classroom discussion. The *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology* is published as part of the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, which might be unavailable in some local libraries. For information on ordering copies or reprints, write to John Wiley & Sons, 605 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10158.

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- Bernal, M. 1987 *Black Athena. Volume I*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
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- Welsing, F. C. 1987 "Lecture 1st Melanin Conference, San Francisco, September 16-17, 1987." On "African-American World View." Detroit: WDTR, September 5 and 12, 1989.
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U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Cultural Resources
Departmental Consulting Archeologist

Technical Brief No. 15
October 1993
ISSN 1057-1574
Archeological Assistance

State Archeology Weeks: Interpreting Archeology for the Public

Mara Greengrass, Archeological Assistance Division, National Park Service

Archeology Weeks Gaining Popularity

Archeology Weeks are rapidly gaining popularity across North America. According to a recent U. S. National Park Service brief (No. 15, *Archeology Weeks: Interpreting Archeology for the Public*), 17 States and one Province (Saskatchewan) had staged Archeology Weeks by the end of 1993. Since data for the brief were compiled, other States have joined the list, including California, where the recent Archeology Week theme was "Celebrating Our Ethnic Diversity".

Archeology Weeks provide an opportunity to educate large numbers of the general public about archeology. In Arizona, where the first Archeology Week was staged, more than 100,000 people now attend events every year.

Archeology Week events are geared to local circumstances, interests and available funds. Some of the most popular events are lecture series, on-site tours, travelling exhibits, table-top digs, artifact identification sessions and excavations with an opportunity for volunteer participation.

So far, the involvement of precollege students and teachers in Archeology Weeks has been limited mainly to essay and poster design contests. *TAN* readers interested in launching Archeology Weeks in their own States and Provinces might consider expanding the involvement of precollege classrooms, which are both potential targets for educational efforts and potential sources of volunteer help. For guidance, write to the Archeological Assistance Division, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127.

Helpful information also appears in the following publications:

Archeology and Public Education, published biannually by the Archeological Resource Centre, c/o Danforth Technical School, 840 Greenwood Avenue, Toronto, ON M4J 4B7;

Council for British Archeology Education Bulletin, published biannually by the Council for British Archeology, 112 Kennington Road, London SE11 6RE, England;

Federal Archeology Report, published several times a year by the U.S. National Park Service, Archeological Assistance Division, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127;

Remnants, published by the English Heritage Education Service, 15/17 Great Marlborough Street, London W1V 1AF, England; and

SAA Bulletin, published five times a year by the Society for American Archeology, c/o Department of Anthropology, University of California Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA 93106-3210.

Good luck!

ALASKA ARCHAEOLOGY WEEK

A SERIES OF PUBLIC EVENTS WILL BE HELD AT THE ANCHORAGE MUSEUM OF HISTORY & ART THROUGHOUT THE STATE • FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (707) 577-2399

MARCH 28 - APRIL 3, 1993

YUPIK EXHIBITS

Yupik exhibits will be on display at the Anchorage Museum of History & Art from March 28 to April 3, 1993. The exhibits include a collection of Yupik artifacts, including a traditional Yupik sled, a Yupik harpoon, and a Yupik knife. The exhibits are part of the Anchorage Museum's ongoing effort to preserve and share the rich cultural heritage of Alaska.

SPONSORED BY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE • ALASKA STATE OFFICE OF HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY • ANCHORAGE MUSEUM OF HISTORY & ART
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Field Notes for Archaeology Educators

Archaeology and Public Education, newsletter of the Society for American Archaeology Public Education Committee, is sporting a new look. Part of its new look is "The Education Station", a four-page insert featuring practical reports on how archaeology can be integrated into the precollege classroom.

Some examples:

How elementary school students helped excavate a Native American archaeological site in Williston, Vermont;

what happened along the "timeline path" at Salmon Ruin Heritage Park in northwestern New Mexico; and

why it was necessary to establish the Educational Resource Service of the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center in La Cross, Wisconsin.

Archaeology and Public Education also promotes goings-on at archaeology museums, parks and field schools. To subscribe, contact Ed Friedman, Bureau of Reclamation, P.O. Box 25007, D-5611, Denver, CO 80225.

Archaeological Communications Offers Classroom Activities

Archaeological Communications is a private, outreach agency promoting archaeology in primary and secondary schools. Based in Indianapolis, Indiana, it organizes interactive, hands-on programs in classrooms throughout the American Midwest. Trained archaeologists help students use simulated artifacts to reconstruct past cultures. Programs are suitable for Grades 4 through 12, as well as adult education classes.

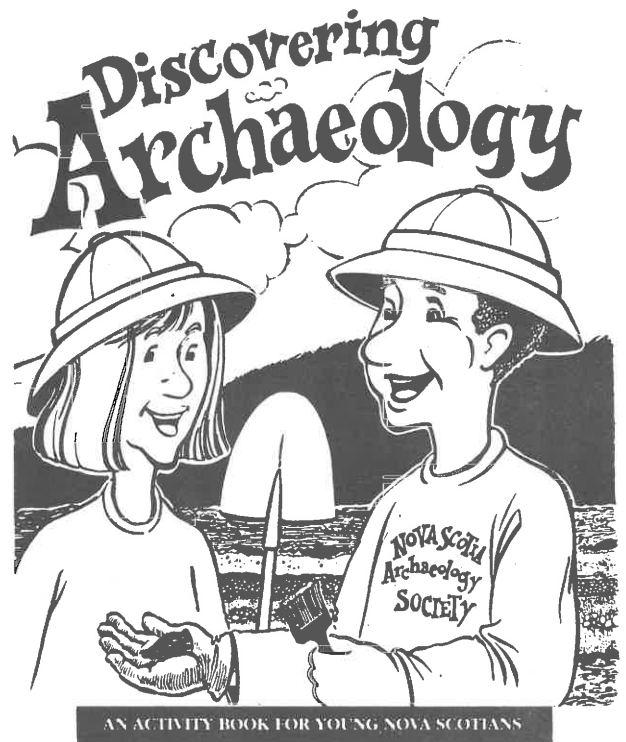
For more information, contact Cameron Quimbach, Archaeologist, Archaeological Communications, 5267 Guilford Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46220 (Tel. 317925-6986)



For Nova Scotians

Discovering Archaeology: An Activity Book for Young Nova Scotians

by Denise M. Hansen



The Nova Scotia Archaeology Society has recently published an illustrated children's activity book. *Discovering Archaeology* is suitable for Grades 2 through 5, and could be particularly useful as an optional resource in teaching a unit of the Nova Scotia Grade 4 Social Studies curriculum entitled "How Do We Learn About the Past?" Free copies of the book have been sent to every elementary school library in the Province, with the support of Provincial curriculum specialists and the co-ordinator of school libraries.

Publication of the book was made possible through a grant from the Canadian government Access to Archaeology Program. The book was written by a committee consisting of Brenda Boutilier, an archaeologist and museum educator, Paul Erickson, an anthropology professor at Saint Mary's University, David Williamson, a Halifax teacher responsible for designing and teaching a Grade 10 Archaeology course, and myself, a material culture researcher with Parks Canada Atlantic Region

Archaeology. Museum illustrator Etta Moffatt's warmly humorous drawings allow the book to both entertain and instruct.

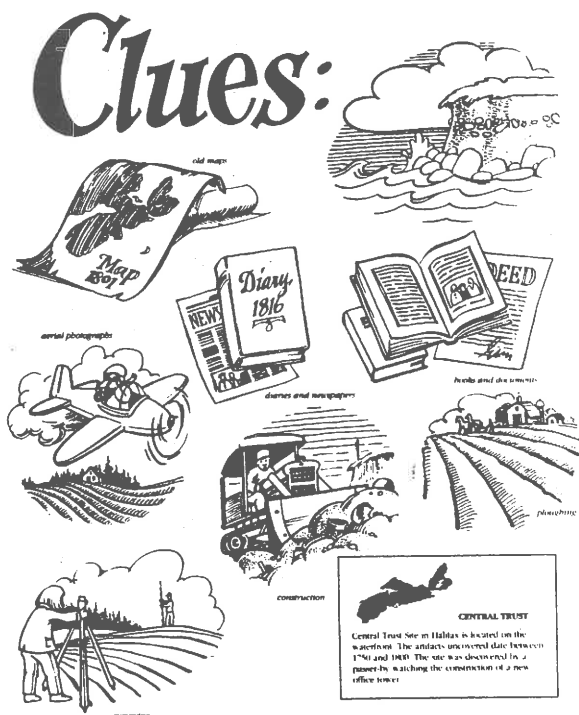
Discovering Archaeology was a labor of love for the authors, albeit a rather painful one. "Team writing" from concept to final edited product meant a series of lengthy, vocal meetings which I actually found enjoyable. Interpreting archaeology to a young audience is a challenge, particularly when one is confined to 34 heavily illustrated pages. I think that our team delivered a hands-on product that introduces key archaeological concepts in a charming, visually exciting way.

So, what did we come up with? Our book lives up to its full title by providing 18 illustrated activities, highlighting six archaeological sites on maps of Nova Scotia. Children learn about archaeology by performing simplified versions of archaeological tasks, including writing short site reports and recording artifacts as they appear layer by layer in a flip-up paper grid. The puzzles, match-ups, cross-words and — yes — "edu-colouring" (I did not invent the phrase) are an enjoyable way to teach children about sites, artifacts, stratigraphy, conservation, field work and permits. The local Nova Scotian flavor of the book does not detract from its ability to communicate general archaeological themes.

My involvement in the production and promotion of this book has been a learning experience. "Adventures in Book Land" could easily suffice as a working title for this article. I will confess to involvement becoming obsession when I found myself returning to a certain children's book store weekly just to count the number of copies sold. I recovered quickly when I realized that I was beginning to frighten small children!

Discovering Archaeology is available commercially in book stores throughout Nova Scotia, distributed by the Halifax Book Room. It is also selling well at national historic sites in the Maritime Provinces. The Nova Scotia Archaeology Society (P.O. Box 36090, Halifax, NS B3J 3S9) also sells the book for \$6.95 directly. Buy it — but don't let me intimidate you.

Ed - Denise Hansen also co-produced the "edu-kit" *Discovering Our Past Through History and Archaeology*. The kit, based on the Grassy Island National Historic Site in Nova Scotia, is intended for Grades 4, 6 and 7. For more information, contact Denise c/o the Nova Scotia Archaeology Society.



AAA Task Force on Teaching Anthropology Finds New Home

The American Anthropological Association (AAA) Task Force on Teaching Anthropology was created in 1989 with a three-year mandate. In 1992, its mandate was extended one year. In 1993, at the AAA Annual Meeting in Washington, the Task Force was dissolved. Happily, however, it was immediately reborn as the Teaching Anthropology Committee of the largest division of the AAA, the General Anthropology Division.

In its new home, the Teaching Anthropology Committee will continue to promote the teaching of anthropology from elementary schools through college. Priority will be given to completing projects begun by the Task Force. For the time being, the Committee will retain the Task Force organizational structure. Members can be contacted c/o Charles Ellenbaum, College of DuPage, 22nd Street and Lambert Road, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137.

*SACC Notes***Teaching Anthropology**

Spring-summer, 1993

Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges

Lloyd Miller, Editor



Another Teaching Anthropology Newsletter

The Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges (SACC), a long-time supporter of precollege anthropology, has decided to focus its Society newsletter on teaching. The new newsletter, *SAAC Notes: Teaching Anthropology*, will complement both *TAN* and *Anthro Notes*, the Smithsonian Institution newsletter for teachers. Although *Teaching Anthropology* will emphasize community college teaching, many of its features will be of interest to precollege educators. Such features include teaching units, book reviews, grant and travel information and essays on research and current issues.

Teaching Anthropology is free to SACC members, who must also belong to the American Anthropological Association. Others can subscribe for \$10/year by writing to SACC Secretary/Treasurer, Charles Ellenbaum, College of DuPage, 22nd Street and Lambert Road, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

Human Evolution Education Network

MISSING LINK

... joining scientists to promote the teaching of evolution.

Discover *Missing Link*

Missing Link is a new newsletter for scientists interested in promoting the teaching of evolution in schools. Published by the Human Evolution Education Network and already mailed to more than 37 American States and Canadian Provinces, it is designed to help professional scientists assist teachers from grades primary through 12.

The latest issue of *Missing Link* provides answers to questions commonly asked by skeptical students (e.g., "If people have evolved from apes, why do apes still exist?"), reports on events at museums and zoos and explains how the Wisconsin Regional Primate Center became involved with precollege education.

To subscribe, write to *Missing Link* c/o the National Center for Science Education, P.O. Box 9477, Berkeley, CA 94709.

Biological Anthropology Teaching Aids

Need biological anthropology teaching aids? If so, consult a timely review of audiovisual materials prepared by Norris M. Durham of the University of Northern Iowa and published in the *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology* for 1993 (36:59-70). The review describes films, videotapes and slide series suitable for secondary schools. Included are undergraduate-level classics like *Yanomano: Multidisciplinary Study* and *Mountain Gorilla*, as well as the *National Geographic* series and lesser-known features like *On the Track of the Bog People*. Names of producers and distributors are provided. At a time when reduced AV budgets must be spent wisely, this review should prove especially beneficial.

Consult also a new pamphlet titled *A Career in Biological Anthropology*, produced and distributed by the American Association of Physical Anthropologists (AAPA) Career Development Committee. In clear and concise language, the pamphlet explains what biological anthropology is, what biological anthropologists do and why biological anthropology is an exciting and rewarding profession. *A Career in Biological Anthropology* is designed especially for precollege students. Copies can be obtained by contacting Curtis Wienker, AAPA Career Development Committee Chair, c/o Office of Academic Affairs, College of Arts and Sciences, University of South Florida, 4202 East Fowler Avenue, SOC 107, Tampa, FL 33620-8100 (Tel. 813-974-2503, FAX 813-974-2668).



A Career in Biological Anthropology

What is Anthropology?

Anthropology is a scientific field of study with several divisions. One division, cultural anthropology, focuses on an understanding of the way that people live in different societies or cultures around the world. Cultural anthropologists often conduct studies of peoples whose customs are quite different from our own and they attempt to explain the reasons for these complex patterns of social behavior.

Another division, archaeology, is concerned with understanding societies that existed in the past. Archaeologists excavate or survey the remains of societies that existed many thousands of years ago or the remains of societies from recent times. A third division, linguistic anthropology, studies the nature of human languages.

The division of anthropology called biological anthropology is very different from the others: it deals with both the social behavior and the biology of people—it is a biosocial science. These studies can be carried out on the skeletal remains of people from the past or on the biological characteristics of living people. Biological anthropologists are interested in human evolution, from our origins and diversity in the past to our probable future as inhabitants of this planet.

What is Biological Anthropology?

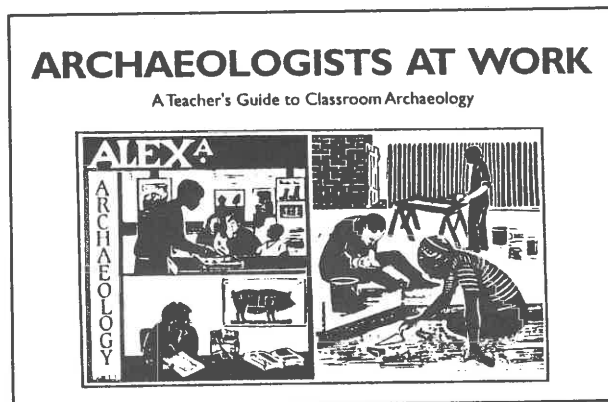
Biological anthropology (also called physical anthropology), then, is an interesting mixture of social studies and biological studies; several other ingredients make it even more fascinating. The two primary concepts that tend to hold biological anthropol

Off The Presses . . .

The growth of precollege anthropology publications attests to the growing popularity of the subject. Some noteworthy recent releases:

Archaeologists at Work: A Teacher's Guide to Classroom Archaeology 1993 Alexandria, VA: Alexandria Archaeology.

This guide is designed to help teachers integrate archaeology into a wide range of school curricula. It presents classroom activities that help show how and why archaeologists dig sites. Copies can be ordered from Alexandria Archaeology, 105 North Union Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.



Enloe, Walter and Ken Simon, eds. 1993 *Linking Through Diversity: Practical Classroom Methods for Experiencing and Understanding Our Cultures*. Tucson, AZ: Zephyr Press.

This book is a collection of contributions by teachers who have carried out classroom projects in support of multicultural and global education. According to the editors, the book “. . . builds on the present, the immediate past, the commonplace, and the local, as stepping-stones to the globe.”

Fersh, Seymour 1993 *Integrating the Trans-National/Cultural Dimension*. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

Seymour Fersh, retired Professor of Humanities at Brevard Community College in Cocoa, Florida, has promoted cultural studies for more than 35 years. He is committed to the proposition that cultural studies must be part of general education. This publication, a pamphlet, can be obtained from the Phi Delta Kappa International Headquarters, Eighth and Union, P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402-0789.

Rice, Marion J. 1993 “Precollege Anthropology/Archaeology.” Pp. 201-226 in Virginia S. Wilson, James A. Little and Gerald Lee Wilson, eds., *Teaching Social Studies: Handbook of Trends, Issues, and Implications for the Future*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Marion Rice, Professor Emeritus of Social Science Education at the University of Georgia, is an authority on precollege anthropology. This chapter appears in an up-to-date book about a wide range of related subjects of instruction.

Note on Contributor

Denise Hansen is a Material Culture Researcher with the Canadian Parks Service, Atlantic Region. She is an author of *Discovering Archaeology: An Activity Book for Young Nova Scotians* and *Discovering Our Past Through History and Archaeology*.