

Strategies IN Teaching Anthropology

Edited by

Patricia C. Rice ■ David W. McCurdy

Strategies in Teaching Anthropology

edited by
Patricia C. Rice
West Virginia University
and
David W. McCurdy
Macalester College

Foreword by Conrad P. Kottak

Introduction by Yolanda T. Moses

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CONTRIBUTORS

S. Elizabeth Bird (University of South Florida)
John L. Caughey (University of Maryland)
Vicki Bentley-Condit (Grenell College)
Douglas Caulkins (Grenell College)
John M. Coggeshall (Clemson University)
David Howard Day (Monroe Community College)
Marilynne Diggs-Thompson (Hunter College – CUNY)
Elizabeth Dunn (Encyclopedia Britannica)
Charles O. Ellenbaum (College of DuPage)
Ann Christine Frankowski (University of Maryland, Baltimore County)
Daniel M. Goldstein (Miami University)
Beverly Goodman (Pennsylvania State University)
Robert Graber (Truman State University)
Renee M. Gralewicz (University of Wisconsin – Barron County)
Robert C. Harman (California State University, Long Beach)
Matthew Kennedy (City College of San Francisco)
Grace Keyes (Our Lady of the Lake University)
Ruth M. Krulfeld (The George Washington University)
Suzanne LaFont (Kingsborough Community College – CUNY)
David F. Lancy (Utah State University)
Joyce Lucke (IUPU – Columbus)
David McCurdy (Macalester College)
Maureen Siewert Meyers (Louis Berger and Associates)
Serena Nanda (John Jay College – CUNY)
Sam Pack (Temple University)
Janet Pollak (William Paterson University)
Patricia C. Rice (West Virginia University)
Matthew J. Richard (Valdosta State University)
Julia L.J. Sanchez (UCLA Institute of Archaeology)
Ernest L. Schusky (Southern Illinois University)
Cathy A. Small (Northern Arizona University)
Eric C. Thompson (University of Washington)
Charles F. Urbanowicz (California State University, Chico)
Dirk Van Tuerenhout (Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University)
Dickie Wallace (University of Massachusetts)

ANNOTATED INDEX BY TOPIC, LEARNING OUTCOMES, AND STUDENT ACTIVITY

Growing Up Pink or Blue: Using Childrens' Television Commercials to Analyze Gender Enculturation (Bird)

- ... gender as a cultural construct;
- ... students learn how TV commercials enculturate children into culturally proper gender roles;
- ... students watch a prepared video tape of ads aimed at children and then discuss the depicted gender coding. (Additional related exercises are suggested.)

How to Teach Self Ethnography (Caughey)

- ... ethnography of self;
- ... students learn how to do field work as well as discovering “hidden truths” about their own culture;
- ... students choose an informant whose cultural background is significantly different from their own and through “field work” interviewing, compare the resultant life history with their own.

Participation and Page References: Sharpening the Focus of Class Discussions (Caulkins and Bentley-Condit)

- ... class participation using “page referencing;”
- ... students learn to read for comprehension, solve problems, and use team discussion of “narrative” readings (rather than informational readings);
- ... students are prepared to answer open-ended questions (prepared and distributed by the instructor before reading), note the page where the answer occurs, and respond in class in the order of the pages, resulting in contributions from the entire class.

Nacirema Writing (Coggeshall)

- ... writing about the relationship between assigned readings and a related subject;
- ... students learn writing skills and how to apply the specifics in a reading assignment to a general theme;
- ... 12 times a term, students write a 10-minute in-class essay on an assigned reading as a prelude to class discussion launched by that reading.

“And a Hush Fell Over the Courtroom:” Use of a Mock Trial in Cultural Anthropology (Day)

- ... a classroom mock trial concerning Native American medical practices;
- ... students learn about Native American medical practices as an alternative to American medicine and the legal problems this entails;

... the mock trial allows students to play trial roles: the Native American accused of illegal acts, lawyers, judge, witnesses, jury members, and court stenographer.

Building Student Interest, Input, and Engagement: Organizing Small Group Projects in Large Lecture Classes (Diggs-Thompson)

... term team projects;
 ... students learn that anthropology is the study of modern, technologically complex people, not just ancient, extinct, “primitive” cultures;
 ... in teams of 9-10, students make in-class presentations based on one of 60 randomly chosen topics gleaned from articles from *The New York Times*; the presentations can be reports or debates and can include data, slides, or charts.

Teaching the Political Economy of Socialism (Dunn)

... the economics of political socialism;
 ... students gain an understanding of the principles and implications of state socialist economies;
 ... following a model and instructions, students attempt to build “houses” from gummi bears and toothpicks, though there are shortages of both; they may resort to stealing, biting bears in half, or trying to work in teams to fulfill their “plan.”

Discussion Preparation Guides (Ellenbaum)

... discussion of articles or films;
 ... students learn how to share information and views on articles or films;
 ... students sit in groups of 5, use their filled-in Preparation Guides (provided) and discuss the main points of a reading or film.

“Sensory Anthropology:” A Sensi-ble Approach to Teaching Anthropology (Frankowski)

... “sensory anthropology:” sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste;
 ... students learn how human senses are culturally constructed and how anthropologists use their senses while doing field work;
 ... through various exercises, students taste, observe, hear, touch, and smell features of cultures other than their own.

Potlatching Classroom Participation: Using “Prestige” and “Shame” to Encourage Student Involvement (Goldstein)

... classroom participation;
 ... students learn the principles of potlatching, reciprocal gift giving, and their associated shame and prestige;

- ... students must attempt to answer questions pertaining to recently presented class material on Durkheimian social theory in order to discharge their obligation for a gift given to each.

Cultural Anthropology 101: Teaching Cultural Anthropology Scientifically (Goodman)

- ... science-based cultural anthropology research project;
- ... students learn how to develop a science-based research project in cultural anthropology from hypothesis generation to field notes and final report;
- ... students engage in designing survey questions, getting permission from survey candidates, conducting field interviews, and writing up field notes.

The Trouble With the “Race” Concept: It’s All in the Cards (Graber)

- ... the concept of “race;”
- ... students learn that the traits used to construct “races” are not concordant and therefore do not produce biological races;
- ... using two decks of manufactured cards, students sort one deck into two “races,” but no matter how hard they try, cannot sort the second deck because more than one trait is used.

Quizzing the Kula Way – With Persuasion (Gralewicz)

- ... term quizzes using kula concepts;
- ... students learn the economic and social principles of Kula Ring transactions, i.e., persuasion;
- ... half of the students “travel” to other groups and half “stay behind” to receive travellers, each group attempting to persuade the other group to give up its “gifts.”

Value Orientations in the Classroom (Harman)

- ... research on “national culture” value orientations;
- ... students learn the value of anthropology’s attempt to understand other cultures, in this case “national cultures;”
- ... students pick the country (or culture) they wish to investigate for a term-long research project and research the value dimensions and value orientations of their chosen national culture, reporting their results orally and in written form.

Exploring the Meaning of Family (Kennedy)

- ... personal kin diagram;
- ... students learn how anthropologists trace descent in “other” cultures by doing their own kin diagram;
- ... students interview family members to construct a diagram that is at least three generations long and includes at least 10 people in either their mother’s or father’s line.

Doing Ethnographic Research in the Classroom: A Simple Exercise for Engaging Introductory Students (Keyes)

- ... in-class ethnographic research;
- ... students learn how to interview, collect, and interpret data;
- ... students take turns interviewing each other, first asking two “get acquainted” questions and then a “serious” question about American eating behaviors; implications and meanings are then discussed by the class.

Field Trips and Student Involvement: Hands-On Learning Components (Krulfeld)

- ... field trips as data bases;
- ... students have direct experience with a culture different from their own by participating in cultural events;
- ... students observe, interview, participate in events, and write-up the experience under the guidance of the professional anthropologist-teacher.

Cultural Rights (LaFont)

- ... cultural rights;
- ... students learn about the complexity of cultural rights issues;
- ... after a small amount of preparation, in a one-class session, students discuss a particular cultural rights issue in small groups, with responses noted; the issues are discussed in the full class the next session. (Suggestions are given for cultural rights issues.)

Short Writing Assignments in Large Classes (Lancy)

- ... research papers in large classes;
- ... students learn the research process by doing a standardized assignment;
- ... students use a “critical source library” to research a topic, ending with a 2½ page research paper (that does not take much time to grade).

A Feline Paternity Suit: An Exercise in Anthropological Genetics (Lucke)

- ... principles of Mendelian genetics;
- ... students learn basic genetic terms and principles by studying the genetics responsible for cat coats;
- ... students use the knowledge of cat coat genetics to describe the phenotype and genotype of a “mother cat” and her kittens and then predict the phenotype and genotype of the unknown Tom cat. (More advanced exercises are suggested.)

Interviewing Tricks for Student Ethnographers (McCurdy)

- ... eliciting cultural knowledge from informants;
- ... students learn about cultural knowledge and how to elicit knowledge from informants;
- ... students interview an informant (of choice) for a term; the article gives 7 “tips” for interviewing to elicit the most relevant information.

An Exercise in Real World Archaeology (Meyers)

- ... an exercise in archaeological sampling and research design;
- ... students learn how to create and carry out a research design and how to apply different sampling strategies to different situations;
- ... in teams of 5 - 7, students receive a research scenario and spend 15 minutes designing a research strategy, presenting the strategy to the class as a whole for critique. (A total of five different “scenarios” are included.)

Museum Visits in Cultural Anthropology Courses (Nanda)

- ... effective museum visits;
- ... students learn to apply in-class abstractions to concrete examples in museums as well as to appreciate diverse cultural heritages;
- ... students visit special or permanent museum exhibits, focusing on a particular topic or problem, observe and then describe what they see in short, focused, papers.

Familiarizing the Exotic in Ethnographic Film (Pack)

- ... viewing ethnographic film;
- ... students learn how to critically examine the ethnographic films they see;
- ... with only their brains and eyes being active, students see films of “the primitive” from a non-ethnocentric perspective.

“First Steps” in Hominid Evolution: A Lesson on Walking (Pollak)

- ... critical thinking about bipedalism;
- ... students learn how to dissect a seemingly easy behavior -- walking -- and thus learn how anatomically and physiologically complex the behavior is;
- ... students write a paragraph for “an owner’s manual” for standing/walking by either observing others or “practicing” the behavior; after reading a sample of the first-drafts to the class, the instructor returns the papers for rewrites.

A “Class inside The Class” (Rice)

- ... in-class discussion;
- ... stress-free discussion of written materials;
- ... 3 - 4 students have a “conversation” with the instructor on a small-group basis with the rest of the class as the “audience.”

Dr. Seuss Meets Up With Anthony Giddens (Richard)

- ... use of Dr. Seuss’ “Sneetches” as the “other” to understand cultural relativity;
- ... students learn about cultural relativism, ethnocentrism, and socially constructed world views;
- ... no student activity. (The instructor reads portions of the children’s book in class, pointing out the parallels to perceptions of “others.”)

“Excavating” in the Classroom (Sanchez)

- ... archaeological survey, “excavation,” and interpretation;
- ... students learn to use a budget, do a survey, “excavate,” and interpret a simulated project;
- ... students do a survey based on map grids of a chosen site, receive a set of survey results (features and artifacts), and decide where to “excavate;” the result is a site report/interpretation.

Moiety Exogamy, Sibling Exchange, and Cross-Cousin Marriage (Schusky)

- ... three “exotic” rules of behavior: moieties, sibling exchange, and cross-cousin marriage;
- ... students learn the nature of these sets of rules and under what circumstances the behaviors will occur together;
- ... students move to one of two “villages,” choose “siblings” in that village, choose spouses from the other “village,” and then find spouses for their children.

The Penny Game: An Exercise in Non-Industrial Economics (Small)

- ... the principles of reciprocity;
- ... students learn that generalized and balanced reciprocity is not a matter of “naive” non-Westerners giving their wealth away but a matter of marketing “savvy” and often necessary to survival;
- ... each student starts with 12 pennies and following the rules, meets and “exchanges” (or not) with others; after counting pennies at the end of the exchange period, strategies are discussed; a “surprise” at the end alters the fortunes of many.

Web-Based Research Projects in Anthropology: Notes From the Virtual Field (Thompson)

- ... Web-based research projects;
- ... students learn to separate fact from opinion and assess the quality of website materials;
- ... students do two Web-based research projects, chosen to coincide with the themes and intent of the course.

Mnemonics, Quotations, Cartoons, and a Notebook: “Tricks” for Appreciating Cultural Diversity (Urbanowicz)

- ... a series of ideas to use in teaching cultural anthropology;
- ... students are aided in their understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity;
- ... no student activity. (Instructors are shown how to use a number of ideas to teach diversity.)

New Technology, Library Budget Cuts, and How to Deal With Them All (Van Tuerenhout)

- ... a comparison of “text” from a textbook and a “text” from a website on the same subject;
- ... students learn how to evaluate what they read, in this case both website materials and textbook materials;
- ... students investigate a particular topic (the nature of Maya writing) through reading a chapter in a textbook and a specific Web-based article.

Pre-Class Fieldwork: Ethnographic Introductions (Wallace)

- ... an ethnography of the first day of class;
- ... students learn about field methods and the ethics of doing field work;
- ... no student activity. (The instructor sits in the back of the room dressed as a student, takes notes and observes behavioral patterns of students as they come into the classroom the first day of class. This is the basis for an immediate discussion of field work and ethics.)

FOREWORD

Conrad P. Kottak

We all have our teaching tricks and we sometimes share them anecdotally with colleagues. We may do this in meetings, conferences, or over lunch with a fellow faculty member. Usually, however, our focus at national meetings and professional conferences is the more exalted domain of research. As anthropologists, we don't talk about **how to teach** as much as we should. This volume provides a welcome forum for a group of seasoned teaching anthropologists to share their pedagogical techniques, knowledge, and observations with their fellows. And in a sense, it is a sequel to the 1997 *The Teaching of Anthropology: Problems, Issues, and Decisions* that I co-edited with Jane White, Richard Furlow, and Patricia Rice. This new volume is the applied "how to do it" side of the pedagogical nature of teaching our discipline.

Anthropology's breadth supports an array of teaching strategies, and it is useful to have a number of these strategies assembled here in a single volume. A range of articles representing anthropology's sub-fields exposes numerous teaching "tricks." As teachers, we have discovered that some things work while others do not. Some of the strategies we use with undergraduates may not work with graduate students. One strategy that can work at both levels, when used properly, is the team project. In a large class, such projects can also reduce our workload, permitting us, say, to read fifteen papers instead of thirty. Teamwork, a tradition in archaeology and biological anthropology, is featured in several of the strategies discussed in this volume. Such joint work does pose a challenge to the lone ethnographer model that has long, and probably unfortunately, dominated cultural anthropology. But I have found that joint writing projects, especially involving teams of two students who are allowed to choose their own partner, enhances the quality of presentation. Students have to get their points across to each other before trying to explain them to me. Better, clearer writing, and higher grades result, along with a sense that even cultural anthropologists can learn to work in teams.

Often we develop special strategies for parts of the introductory course that our students find particularly challenging, such as genetics and kinship. The papers in this volume offer tricks for making comprehensible several of anthropology's "esoteric" topics. These range from the kula, the potlatch, and economic exchange theory, to cross-cousin marriage and moiety organization. Other contributors describe strategies they use to demonstrate anthropological perspectives that contradict everyday experience and establish social categories, as in teaching about the social construction of race.

The book offers teaching tricks ranging from specific to very general applicability. Strategies involving interviewing, hypothesis testing, field trips, museum visits, ethnographic film viewing, and Internet use can be applied in a variety of courses. Others have more particular goals, such as using cat's coats to teach about genetics or a mock trial to teach about culture clashes. Almost everyone who teaches introductory anthropology has learned the

usefulness of using the familiar to illustrate the novel. Students appreciate American culture examples, whether we are teaching about kinship, genetics, race, gender, rituals, or values.

This volume enhances anthropological pedagogy by assembling tricks of the trade from anthropologists working in a variety of teaching settings. For those of us who value teaching, which after all most of us do for a living, this book, once read, should be placed on an easily reachable shelf.

INTRODUCTION

Yolanda T. Moses

Anthropology has often been called the science of the 21st century. It is a wonderful discipline with at least four sub-fields: Cultural-Social, Biological, Archaeology, and Linguistics; and with two dimensions: research and applied studies. One major problem with anthropology in the United States is that it is not usually taught in high schools, so the first time most students are exposed to the subject is at the college or university level. Consequently, the first exposure to anthropology and how it is taught is critical.

Anthropology professors, like most classically trained academicians, do not learn how to teach as a part of their training. We learn our subject matter, often in great detail. In fact, we are often the only experts in our particular subject area in the entire world. There is, therefore, a huge gap between the student who is taking an anthropology class for the first time and faculty members who know their own “dense” subject matter, but do not know how to pitch it to their audience, to “engage” them in anthropological subject matter and its processes. I have found in my many years of teaching students (mostly non-anthropology majors), that they learn anthropology best by “doing it.”

This book is the first of its kind as far as I know to focus on the “how” of teaching anthropology across all of its sub-fields, with a wide array of learning outcomes and student activities. For example, in Part I, the general section, the authors recommend tried and true strategies to engage students in all sub-disciplines in learning about anthropology. These strategies are particularly appropriate for students’ first exposure to anthropology and college classrooms in general. For example, “Discussion Preparation Guides” by Ellenbaum and “A Class Inside the Class” by Rice give tips on how to create student successes every time.

In Part II, Biological Anthropology and Archaeology, “‘First Steps’ in Hominid Evolution: A Lesson on Walking” by Pollak provides the opportunity for students to develop critical thinking skills around the deceptively simple art of walking, which actually turns out to be an extremely complex phenomenon. Students then write about standing or walking by observing others or “practicing” themselves. Graber’s article “The Trouble with the ‘Race’ Concept: It’s All in the Cards” shows students that the traits used to construct “races” are not concordant and therefore do not actually produce biological “races.” By using two decks of cards, the students easily sort one deck into two “races,” but no matter how hard they try, they cannot sort the second deck into “races” because more than one trait is used. Both of these examples have the ability to engage students in understanding the complex issues of hominid evolution and “race” through activities and props very familiar to them.

Part III, Cultural Anthropology, has the largest number of examples, ranging from “Value Orientations in the Classroom” by Harman to “Cultural Rights” issues by LaFont, to “Exploring

the Meaning of Family” by Kennedy. These authors engage students in a series of activities that challenge the familiar and reveal that which is masked or often covert. Gender differences are explored in a very visual way in Bird’s “Growing Up Pink or Blue: Using Childrens’ Television Commercials to Analyze Gender Enculturation.” Field trips are emphasized in Nanda’s “Museum Visits in Cultural Anthropology Courses.” She points out that the tried and true visit to the museum can be very effective as students learn to apply in-class abstractions to concrete examples in museums and to appreciate diverse cultural heritages. And, in “Field Trips and Student Involvement: Hands-On Learning Components,” Krulfeld treats field trips as data bases with students participating in cultural events of a group different from their own and then writing about the experience.

The hallmark of cultural-social anthropology is ethnography. I am pleased to see that this book contains four articles that directly teach ethnography: Caughey’s “How to Teach Self Ethnography,” “Pre-Class Fieldwork: Ethnographic Introductions” by Wallace, “Doing Ethnographic Research in the Classroom: A Simple Exercise for Engaging Introductory Students” by Keyes, and “Interviewing Tricks for Student Ethnographers” by McCurdy. Finally, the volume uses technology in several articles to engage students. It is a medium that many of them are already comfortable using. For example, in “New Technology, Library Cuts, and How to Deal with them All” by Van Tuerenhout, students learn to evaluate what they read through both text and related website materials.

My thanks to the editors, Patricia Rice and David McCurdy, for bringing these talented colleagues together to share their best practices with other teachers, anthropologists, and non-anthropologists so that we can finally provide our undergraduate students the best experiences possible in their discovery of the wonder of anthropology.

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