

IN A Chicago high school a student slips an 8mm film cartridge into a projector, sits back to take notes on primate behavior. In Suffern, New York, a seventh grade class listens intently to a tape of the Iroquois creation myth, told by a leading scholar. In a Philadelphia suburb a teacher hands out reprints of matrimonial advertisements from the *Bombay Times*; class begins on a note of ribald hilarity but ends with a serious discussion of caste as it affects biological diversity.

A small group of Minneapolis students ponder a facsimile of an ancient statuette on the table before them, speculating as to the kind of society that might have produced it. In Concord, California, high school juniors read a scholarly article comparing the European conception of authority—as outside the individual and “above”—with the very different conceptions that underlay the fierce individualism of certain American Indian groups. In Massachusetts, fifth grade pupils work through sets of picture cards, sorting scenes of urban and rural life, the beginning steps of a substantial inquiry into the origins and nature of cities.

These separate classroom events have a connection—all occur in the context of experimental units designed to test the contribution of anthropology to the social studies. Such experimentation breaks new ground, for anthropology has been the social science most underrepresented in the traditional social studies program.

Evidence from several quarters suggests that the period of neglect is nearly over. The mere existence of national curriculum projects concerned with anthropology has uncovered a surprising degree of interest among teachers and curriculum workers. Also the experimental materials produced by the projects are be-

Anthropology in the Schools

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ginning to reach a larger audience of educators, to communicate concretely the relevance of the several fields of anthropology to social studies programs.

Physical anthropology, with its focus on the problems of human origins and human diversity; *archeology*, study of early cultures; *ethnology*, systematic study and comparison of cultures; *linguistics*, study of language, the sine qua non of culture; *social anthropology*, with its attention to the structure and dynamics of societies—all clearly have something to say. Experimental units on bio-cultural evolution, the emergence of civilization, how to study society, origins of urban life, language and cultures, area studies of Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, films on Eskimo and Bushmen, on archeological digs and domestication of corn, give practical voice to these fields.

The new materials are being produced by several groups.¹ Educational Services Incorporated in Cambridge, active across much of the curriculum spectrum, has specialists at work on units for the elementary school. Also directing its efforts to elementary school applications is the recently activated Anthropology Curriculum Project at the University of Georgia. In Chicago, the Anthropology Curriculum Study Project, sponsored by the American Anthropological Association, is developing and testing high school materials.

Certain other curriculum groups, whose focus is not primarily anthropological, are producing units in anthropology. The School Science Curriculum

Project at the University of Illinois, for example, is preparing materials on race, social organization, and archeological method. Some state departments of education—notably Pennsylvania, New York, and Wisconsin—are actively involved in the creation of programs and materials that provide for anthropological contributions, as are curriculum leaders in Minnesota and Indiana.

Experiments in Schools

Neither national projects nor state departments hold any title to experimental work with anthropology in the social studies. Individual teachers and schools have anticipated the current flush of enthusiasm by many years. Programs at the Edsel Ford High School in Dearborn, Michigan, the Francis Parker School in Chicago, the Verde Valley School in Arizona are of long standing.

The number of such schools is small, of course, as is the number of schools engaged in testing the new units. Many of the units planned by the projects are still in production and most of those now in use are in first-draft form and will need revision and larger scale testing. It will be several years at least before the response of the schools to anthropology can be properly measured.

While it is clear that teachers and curriculum people will judge the contribution of anthropology on the basis of the experimental units, specific reactions to these may be less important ultimately than general developments in the social studies and in the society as a whole. Those who study educational change are well aware that there is an ecology of education. They know that the brightest plans pursued with the most capable energies tend often to be submerged,

¹ Project addresses: (a) Educational Services Incorporated, 12 Garden Street, Cambridge 38, Massachusetts; (b) Anthropology Curriculum Project, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia; (c) Anthropology Curriculum Study Project, 5632 S. Kimbark Avenue, Chicago 37, Illinois.

transmuted or accelerated by circumstances, by quiet trends and movements.

So whether anthropology finds a welcome in the elementary and secondary schools will depend only partly on the specific results of classroom experimentation; it will also depend on whether the social sciences in general find a place.

There is some reason to believe that a "readiness" for the social sciences exists in American schools. Certainly, many of those who concern themselves professionally with social education express the belief that there is little continued reason to keep these disciplines in the peripheral position to which they have long been relegated.

A New Warmth

If a new warmth toward the social sciences is evident, it should by no means be taken to represent a simple flirtation with pedagogical novelty. As much as anything it relates to a growing intellectual sophistication among American educators. This is a sophistication that is as impatient with folk ideas about social phenomena as it would be with folk ideas about physiology or the solar system. Teaching a supracultural natural science while promulgating folk explanations of human history and behavior seems less and less tenable. Realization is growing that the social sciences have developed useful ways of studying society, a reservoir of information, and empirical generalizations worth knowing. More important, educators are beginning to recognize that limiting access to such knowledge to a college-educated elite represents a serious inconsistency in a democratic society.

If high school education marks, for the moment, the minimal education we

expect of all citizens, then it must be said that the capacity to think systematically about man's nature, his many societies, the whole career of his species—has not been included in our definition of the educated citizen. Knowledge of man produced by the disciplined researches of social scientists has not been generally available to public school students. The high school graduate who has been taught to expect regularities in the affairs of the physical universe will never have heard of the search for regularities in the affairs of men. But the schools seem to be on the threshold of offering access to such understandings, ready in effect to democratize a social scientific comprehension of man. It will be in the context of such a development that anthropology may find a role in the schools.

Yet other matters will play a part, too. Our increasing sophistication as a national society makes it tolerable to look at other societies non-invidiously. Non-invidious comparison of societies and their cultures is fundamental to anthropology as a science. But it has not, historically, been a comfortable exercise for the lay citizen and would probably be impossible were we not outgrowing the national narcissism of earlier years.

Trends *within* the social studies may also be preparing the ground for the social sciences. Interest in an inductive pedagogy has generated instructional materials long on data. There will be, inevitably, a corollary demand for frameworks that give such data meaning above and beyond common-sense inference. The social science disciplines offer tool kits of concept, method and theory that enable such frameworks to be built. Many of the units planned by the projects marry data with models of analysis so that students experience, in micro-

cosm, the modes of inquiry of the working scientist.

Certain developments in the social studies promise an increasing need for the special competencies of anthropologists. Among these is the interest in area studies, in "non-Western" cultures. These studies frequently depend on survey materials, aggregates of information. Anthropologists, whose methods call for intensive work in the field and whose training develops a special regard for the *wholeness* of cultures, will be able to offer a complementary approach. This will be characterized by case materials that make depth study possible—and by an emphasis on the interrelatedness of economy, belief systems, social organization, etc.

In Large Perspective

In such contexts, it may be that the *reasons* for the anthropologists' research into other cultures will be found worthy of emulation. The researcher's motives go beyond "knowing about" the particular group studied. He works always toward *general* understandings, toward the discovery of laws that apply to the functioning of all human groups, that make some sense of the minutiae of history.

He studies the economy of a modern African group because, compared with earlier researches, the analysis may throw light on the dynamics of social change. Or he charts an intricate kinship system because beneath its uniqueness lie some truths about human social organization. Or he traces over time and space the movements of a particular tool or technology because he is interested in the general problem of culture diffusion.

This search for an understanding of fundamental social processes and struc-

tures marks the work of the anthropologist—and it is not impossible that this will come to be seen as a legitimate goal of the social studies.

One need not discard the conventional content to implement such a goal. The particulars of our own history, for example, grow in meaning when viewed against the backdrop of other human experience. The Westward Movement can be compared to and illuminated by other human migrations. The story of the American immigrant takes on new significance when viewed in the light of systematic studies of acculturation. The Bill of Rights is seen afresh when compared to other societies' institutional devices for safeguarding the autonomy of the individual.

In each instance, *comparison* yields insights into the particulars of our own tradition and produces generalizations about the history of the species and the functioning of its diverse groups.

Those who wish anthropology to play a part in the social studies do not imagine that the discipline can play *more* than a part. (It is noteworthy that the national projects in anthropology are preparing units rather than courses.) Yet the role of anthropology can be an important one, adding significantly to the impact of the social studies.

The explicit curriculum of the schools probably has less influence than any teacher would wish to know. Nevertheless, the influence of those programs we categorize as the social studies can be increased—if such programs demonstrably provide students with the opportunity to see human affairs in large perspective, with the skills of disciplined observation and with new power to explain social phenomena. Anthropology will have a measurable contribution to make to a social studies so conceived.

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