Anthropology in K-12 Education

Edward Liebow, PhD
Executive Director, American Anthropological Association

National Academies Seminar
Teaching the Social and Behavioral Sciences in K-12 Education: Past, Present, Future

17 November 2016
The American Anthropological Association

- DC-based
- 10,000 members
  - 20% are outside the US
  - 25% employed outside academy in private, govt, and non-profit sectors
- 22 journals in our publishing portfolio
- Research conferences
- Professional development support
- Education Initiative
Why teach anthropology in K-12?

- Good for students
- Good for anthropology
- Good for the social and behavioral sciences in general
Current public awareness?

• In our field, the public imagination is shaped by stereotypes in popular culture
  • the swashbuckler (Indiana Jones)
  • the crime solver (CSI / Bones)
  • the fascination with the exotic (Euphoria)

• Level of awareness is generally quite low

• “What is Anthropology?” Video
What does the teaching of Anthropology in K-12 look like?

• IB comes the closest, but it is not for every institution or for every student

• Our focus has been in the “informal learning” environments, especially museums, which serve as a supplemental classroom resource
Practical teaching issues

• Alignment with curriculum objectives
  • biology
  • social studies
  • world history
  • literature
• Qualified teachers
• Grade-appropriate learning materials
Potential for integrating into science education

C3 core concepts

• What It Means to be Human: Unity and Diversity
• Methods and Ethics of Inquiry
• Becoming a Person: Processes, Practices, and Consequences
• Global and Local: Societies, Environments, and Globalization
Potential for integrating into science education

- Our Public Education Initiative, which began with the Race Project, is now expanding to include the “World on the Move: 100,000 years of human mobility.”
- Anthropology Day activities
- Compile best practices in International Baccalaureate and high school programs
- Expand our Anthropology Guide to include anthropologists in other institutions
- Planning an award to recognize excellence in teaching anthropology in secondary schools
Thank You!

Comments?
Questions?
Ideas?
Concerns?