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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Legacies of the OSEA ethnography and Maya language field school (1997–2023)

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Abstract

This article discusses the legacies of the Open School of Ethnography and Anthropology (OSEA) field school programs and projects. OSEA was founded in 2003 in Pisté, Yucatán, Mexico, and continues to offer an array of programs to undergraduates, graduate students, non-students, and scholars. OSEA emerges out of a prior field school program (1997–1999). The article considers the difficulties of how to assess the intangible, immeasurable legacies of field schools, provides a history of OSEA and its precursor, and concludes with a view toward future development.

KEYWORDS

Chichén Itzá, experimental ethnography, field methods, heritage politics, Maya art, Maya language pedagogy, transcultural exchange

INTRODUCTION

One model of ethnography field schools is based on an applied anthropology agenda: In these, the mission is to synergize research and pedagogy such that the field school, as a whole and as carried out in individual student projects, target a specific social issue or problem as a field of intervention. These have built-in methods of evaluation, measurable goals, tangible outcomes, and explicit, deliverables. These metrics, such as designated by a university, granting agency, or legislative mandate, are certainly valid and useful; however, they are less apt for assessing and understanding legacies in terms of intangible effects and invisible consequences. It is noteworthy that the contemporary definition of legacy, like the word "heritage," privileges material goods and property as things that are passed on to an heir; etymologically, it references an "ambassador," "envoy," or "deputy" appointed or commissioned to collect, gather, or speak as a representative of an authority.[1] The significance of our discipline's field school

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engagement and exchange with communities as a part of and contribution to the life, society, or "cultural well-being" of collaborators, partners, and participants in anthropology is a more elusive type of legacy. This article discusses the field schools I have directed in Yucatán, México, with the aim of identifying these less tangible contributions.

The Open School of Ethnography and Anthropology (OSEA) follows in general the "applied anthropology" model just noted. However, in the course of nearly 30 years it has changed in form, content, and strategies. For example, the historical precursor to OSEA ("Field School of Experimental Ethnography" 1997–1999) had three target areas of engagement, while OSEA "proper" (2003-present) has been organized as a program without predefined, specific, structured domains of research in which students define their projects. In this article, I explain, first, how creating and directing an anthropology school has been an integral part of my self-conception as an anthropologist, vision of anthropology, and career trajectory. Second, I outline the vision and concept of a field school that I first developed in the 1990s in the Maya community of Pisté, Yucatán, México. In particular, I profile three field school projects and their contributions to collective "well-being." Third, I sketch the current OSEA manifestation of ethnography field school in terms of legacies and contributions. Fourth, in closing, I chart current projects involving new collaborations in the field of Maya language revitalization and capacity building of language infrastructure.

BIOGRAPHY OF A FIELD SCHOOL, FIELD SCHOOL AS BIOGRAPHY

To ask about the legacy of a field school, the first questions should be about the motivations, agendas, and contexts that led to its existence and that defined its activities. Is not the field school in itself a legacy of the teachers, their teachings, and the director's biographic contexts that lead to and coalesced into the creation of on-site anthropology training program?

As a first-generation Guatemalan American, my intellectual agenda as an anthropologist has been shaped by questions that are precisely at the heart of this special issue: What are the long term effects, consequences, implications, contributions of anthropology to the communities we study, in general, and specifically in relation to Maya peoples and communities in Guatemala and México? While histories of the lives, ideas, and institutions of anthropologists are important, my primary concern is not "Great Man" histories of anthropology.[2] Rather, my focus is the sociopolitical and cultural processes of how anthropologies (discourses, practices, ideas) are integrated into and embedded in real life experience of the peoples with whom we study. These interests led me to write my dissertation (1991) and my first book (1996) on the multi-disciplinary, 18-year Carnegie research project based in Chichén Itzá, its relationship to the nearby Maya community, and how anthropology as discourse and practice collides with, feeds, and articulates not only tourism development, governmental policies and projects, local politics, but also cultural invention.

While I attended graduate school in the 1980s, a now common-place idea was just then emerging in anthropology: we should "give back" to communities, rather than just extract (self-serving) value out of persons and communities who were at that time still labeled "informants." Initially the discussion was a bit naïve, if good hearted, as some debate revolved around "giving copies of our books" as a way to return knowledge. This of course is a great idea but in and by itself, it is not a solution. At the time, two of my mentors, Robert M. Carmack and Gary Gossen, were directing a field school in Chiapas for graduate students. Although I did not participate in their program, I certainly learned from them that teaching and leading field schools was an important and essential *ethical* part of one's career trajectory that furthered one's investigative objectives. "My" solution to "giving back" was therefore not really mine, but an idea—*a legacy*—

I was *learned from my teachers* and took to it as a calling or vocation:[3] to develop a combined research–field school–community center that could articulate long-term investigation, pedagogy, and exchange with the aim of bringing knowledge anthropology creates into Maya communities.

As a Mesoamericanist, I was aware of and inspired by an array of models for thinking about how to bring community exchange into synergy with collaborative research and training. These include: the Harvard Chiapas Project; the Trudy Blom House that then functioned as a center for scholars in San Cristobal and which is now the Casa Na Balam Museum of Lacandon Culture; CIRMA—Centro Investigaciones Regionales Mesoamerica based in Antigua, Guatemala; and (even!) the Carnegie Institution of Washington (CIW) multidisciplinary research project based in Chichén Itzá (1923–1941). I imagined a multifaceted field school that prioritized putting anthropology at the service of and for the benefit of the community, through a field school in a facility that was, at once, both a center for researchers and a site of community engagement and exchange.

At first opportunity after completing my first book (1996), I directed ethnography field schools between 1997 and 1999 in the form of summer courses for the University of Houston. Following a year as a Fulbright Scholar at the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (Mérida, México), I collaborated with Juan Castillo Cocom, OSEA co-founder, to develop a new, more ambitious project in 2003. OSEA has offered summer ethnography and intensive Maya language learning courses every year tThrough to the present along with an array of educational programs primarily serving undergraduates, [4] but also persons outside of academia and who have completed advanced degrees. These have included: 4-week winter courses; advanced writing workshops for graduate students and recent PhDs; 8-week/quarter field schools interdisciplinary multi-media courses created for students in Design; short intensive beginning level Spanish courses; and undergrad level educational tour packages.[5] Academic activities has also included hosting conferences and publishing books. For example, OSEA partnered with Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Unidad 31-A in publishing: *Estrategias identitarias: Educación y la antropología histórica en Yucatán* (Castillo Cocom and Castañeda, 2005). Most recently OSEA partnered with the Universidad Intercultural Maya de Quintana Roo to publish *T'áalk'u' Iknalítico: Omniausencias, Omnipresencias y Ubicuidades Mayas* (Castillo Cocom, 2024a, discussed below).[6] Throughout the last 20 years, OSEA has provided public lectures and workshops to different sectors of the Pisté community (e.g., for tour guides, high school students, artists, federal heritage site workers). As the director involved in designing, developing, and carrying through these various activities, my own academic activities and career are intimately intertwined with OSEA as extensions, reflections, and legacies of each other.

FIELD SCHOOL OF EXPERIMENTAL ETHNOGRAPHY, 1997–1999

The field school was designed as a research project to develop experimental methods of ethnography, primarily multi-media documentation and ethnographic installation.[7] The programs received major funding for 2 years from COMEXUS (1998–1999).[8] Student researchers worked in teams in one of three project areas: Teaching English, Maya art, and Pisté history.

The first project was developed in direct response to community members—especially tourism and heritage workers at nearby Chichén Itzá—asking me to teach English.[9] I enlisted Joy Logan (Spanish Professor, Department of Languages and Literatures of Europe and the Americas, University of Hawaii) as the first director. Her areas of expertise made her the ideal collaborator to establish the foundations of this that sought to integrate pedagogy of

the oppressed with language revitalization and ethnography. The goals were (a) to develop a methodology for teaching English that used and positively valorized Maya; and (b) to convert the classroom space into a site of fieldwork to study transcultural exchange and dynamics with the development of multimedia documentation strategies (Logan 2005).[10] In 1998 José Saúl Martínez was appointed as the second director. He used this as the field project for which he wrote hisMaster's in the Anthropology of Education (Martínez 1998, 2000). In 3 years, we provided two dozen US students classroom experience in teaching English, several of whom used this to initiate or expand their careers in second language teaching and related educational fields. More significantly, we taught English to an approximate total of 40 adults and 180 children aged 8 to 18 in 3 years. The majority of the adults were handicraft producers or venders working in the Chichen tourism industry. This program was suspended between 1999 and 2006, but reinitiated within the new format of OSEA. It continued to be offered until 2015. Yearly enrollments from the community ranged from 30 to 80 per year. It should be noted, as a frame to gauge the significance of this program, that the 1990s was a time of exponential, rapid change, and growth of tourism at Chichén and in the peninsula, more generally. Unfortunately, despite the significance of and interest in this program, it became impossible to sustain due to the drop of both US undergraduate enrollment to serve as teachers in the program and locals. An insurmountable time conflict emerged between the dates of the OSEA summer program, the Mexican school year, and the high season of regional tourism. The English language courses were offered at a time when there far fewer opportunities to learn English both in-person and via the internet. Thus, the field school classes provided immediate benefit for the adults and generated long term significance for the children.

The second project in which students participated was a study of the social history of Pisté.[11] Based on prior archival research I had amassed a collection of documents and photos created between the 1890s and 1930s by various researchers, such as Edward Thompson and the CIW.[12] In the field school, we studied and sorted these materials for display in a 3-day ethnographic installation in the center of town for residents to view, read, question, discuss, share stories, and re-imagine their individual and collective histories. In the words of one resident, by displaying photos of uncles, aunts, cousins, and grandparents doing the archaeological re-building of Chichén, our exhibit gave people the opportunity to view images that "were censored by the government." While this is literally incorrect, the sentiment has many meanings to unpack: We, as teachers and students in the field school, cared more about the actual living persons of Pisté than the fetishized objects and imaginary of archaeological, tourism, and governmental discourses, which disempower community identification with Maya archaeological heritage. At a time when the community was embroiled in intense politics over Chichén—receiving extreme negative press and governmental sanctions (see Castañeda 1996, 2009b; Himpele and Castañeda 1997)—this positive promotion of Pisté history and heritage had an immeasurable significance for collective and individual self-worth and identity. In the 1998 and 1999 field seasons this project was co-directed by Lisa Breglia, whose dissertation project developed in part out of this work.[13]

The third field school project was a study of Pisté Maya art and artists, primarily wood sculptors, stone carvers, *batik* makers.[14] This project led directly to several publications, including a master's thesis Fernando Armstrong-Fumero, who first participated in 1997 as an undergraduate student and was then assisstant director for the project in 1998 and 1999 (Armstrong-Fumero, 2000). The primary objective was to intervene in the field of Pisté Maya art worldof handicraft production and marketing at Chichen through the development of new ethnographic methods, art installations, and engagement with local understandings. We sought to open up new possibilities for marketing handicrafts as well as transform community perceptions of handicraft makers' self-identity and self-worth from "*chac moolero*" to *artist* and producer's self-conception of their activities and products from "cheap, fake souvenirs" to

envision and positively valorize their aesthetic production as *contemporary modern art*. Conceptually, the project was based on the idea that this artwork, invented in Pisté, is a form of indigenous kitsch that both derived from and commented on the anthropological and touristic imagining of Maya culture. The success of this project is based on three local art exhibitions in the summers of 1997–1999 that culminated in an international exhibit on the campus of Lake Forest College (Castañeda, 2004a, 2005b, 2005c, 2009a, 2009c; Castañeda et al., 1999).[15] This included the participation of five Pisté artists over a 10-day period in which they led workshops with students. We also networked contacts and connections to develop new market venues in the Chicago gallery, museum, and restaurant scene. One artist connected with a wholesaler, who in turn pioneered exporting of local art as a common practice among Pisté artists. This later inspired Mathew Breines, a 2009 OSEA alumnus whose ethnography project was with Pisté artists and venders, to initiate an export business in collabaoration with several local artists and partners.

This project was in some manner an inspiration and precedent for Mary Katherine Scott, who as a graduate student under Jeff Kowalski at Northern Illinois University developed her own pioneering research with contemporary Maya artists and art, specifically wood carvers from the Puuc region of Yucatán. As well, given that the Puuc and the Pisté art traditions are historically entangled, Scott brought me and the Pisté artists into her museum exhibition projects that developed out of her thesis and led to her dissertation (Scott, 2008, 2009, 2012a, 2012b). Between 2008 and 2010, she curated art exhibitions in Northern Illinois University, Trinity University, and the Museum of the Teatro Peón Contreras of Mérida, Yucatán (see Castañeda, 2009a; Kowalski, 2009; Kowalski & Castañeda, 2009; Scott & Kowalski, 2009). These exibitions focused on the art and artists of the Puuc region, but included several works of Pisté Maya art.[16]

OSEA, 2003–PRESENT

Following a 4-year hiatus in directing an ethnography field school, I founded OSEA in 2003. The new program built on personal and institutional relationships developed during my time as a Fulbright Scholar in the Facultad de Ciencias Antropológicas at the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán. Motivated by Juan Castillo Cocom, who became a founding co-director, I reorganized the field school with a new vision. We inaugurated the first season in the winter of 2004. Our mission is: "To provide training to individuals and communities in ethnography; to produce and share knowledge that prioritizes and serves the needs of communities; and to promote the innovative development and application of ethnography as a means for the improvement of individual and collective life-worlds."[17] The central academic pillars have been—and continue to be—undergraduate training in ethnography and teaching Maya language. The total enrollment to-date in OSEA is approximately 200 US participants, most of whom were undergraduates but also including nearly 30 graduate students, five professors, several newly "minted" Ph.Ds., nearly a dozen non-students, and one high school student. OSEA legacies can be assessed in terms of three areas: homestay experience, graduate student participation and mentoring, and the Maya language program.

The OSEA prioritizes transcultural exchange and dynamics not only through explicit outreach activities (e.g., workshops and lectures for tour guides, community schools, and heritage workers), but homestay experience between family and participants. OSEA prioritizes student commitment to being in the field with the people with whom one does ethnography. We teach how to be in the field and do fieldwork, based on an ethics of care and listening that has philosophical underpinnings in the work of Emmanuel Levinas: This means engaging with others as humans first, and secondarily as culturally different persons. Given that the philosophical

and ethical framework is laid out in part in two publications (Castañeda, 2006a, 2006b), we only note here that this ethical framework underlies the transformative experiences for the majority of field school participants and homestay families. While a portion of students do not develop deep connections with their families, the community, fieldwork, or anthropology, there are more than two dozen students who maintain extensive communication and engagement with their host families and who return periodically to visit

The connection with the student is deeply meaningful for the families for a variety of reasons. There are direct and indirect economic benefits for the family. As well families often prioritize the intangible benefits that can be gained. With regard to the intangible and indirect economic benefits, homestay parents with children are often motivated to host OSEA participants by the idea that they or their children will be able to learn or imporove their English. There many other reasons as well.

The direct economic payments made to families are controlled by the host moms. For the most part, the host fathers explicitly recognize that the woman is the one who does the "heavy" work for the homestay participant in terms of daily interactions, caretaking, buying and making food, and so on. Although this might seem to be legacy of a traditional gender divide between home/public spheres, I rather interpret that this is a recognition which emerges in the context of the tourism economy that "domestic work" is work that warrants income just as the same kind of work in hotels and restaurants is paid. The women who receive these payments do often use it for special family focused expenses, both routine and extraordinary (e.g., school, medical expenses, remodeling the home, financing life transition rituals). However, it is also a source of financial independence for some of the women who have been hosts. Some families, however, sought to be homestay families less for the additional income, but for other types of gain.

Immaterial benefits of being a host family include sentimental values of pride and prestige, but also the experience of cultural and ducational exchange are significantly valued. Being able to collaborate with OSEA often generates a sense of augmented self-worth, pride, and appreciation of being recognized as trusted, valuable, and sincere friends. Indeed, the families that partner with us have been selected through my own network of friends and collaborators developed since I began to work in Pisté in 1985. Families talk among themselves about "their" past OSEA students, boasting about how often they communicate, send gifts, and visit; some familieseven brag about the career successes of their OSEA student. A current OSEA participant will hear all variety of stories about prior participants—their integration into the family, personalities, adventures, research projects, activities, and affairs that were kept "secret" from me, as well as how the family helped and supported past participants. These are fables with a moral not only about how past students became role models for the children within the family, but also for the current participant to adopt, adapt, work hard, and succeed. There are a few past participants that are so clearly connected with their families and the community that I have asked them to return as teaching staff. This experience of lived connection—and the personal value attributed to it by students and locals alike—is without doubt a significant and enduring legacy for any field school. It is a mutual connection—at OSEA we call it "transcultural exchange" for the theory books!—that is generated, I suspect, out of and as an extension of *compadrazgo* (god-parenthood) dynamics of reciprocity, exchange, and prestige. It is common-place with ethnography and archaeology fieldschools, as well as with long-term and team-based research, for community members seek us out as particularly celebrated foreigners with their own strategies of attaining and generating local prestige and empowering their sense of self through association with us. Further one can suspect that at least some of those who are ill-disposed to us as individuals and as a field school project may be negative due to being left out of the field school's community network.

An intangible legacy of OSEA is the number of participants who have "fallen in love" with Pisté based on their successful immersion—that is, adaptation to and adoption by the community. Among those who have been successful in both doing fieldwork and being in the field are six persons who returned in staff roles such as Spanish instructors, community liaisons, and fieldwork assistants. One of these alumni not only initiated a career teaching English as a second language, but formed a business with locals exporting Maya art. According to another alumna who returned in a staff role to teach Spanish, she was accepted into a top tier medical school, due to her OSEA experience and research because it distinguished her from other top candidates. Among the recent graduate student participants in the Maya program, three returned as staff and sought me out as an advisor for their dissertations. All three have focused on current revitalization of Maya language in relation to new cultural production in literature, theatre, and music.[18]

OSEA was founded with a partnership with the Facultad de Ciencias Antropológicas of the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (UAdY).[19] In 2016, we began a new partnership with the Intercultural Maya University of Quintana Roo (UIMQRoo).[20] This partnership built on my long term collaborations with Castillo Cocom.[21] OSEA sponsors the participation of UIMQRoo students in the summer programs, specifically to receive training either in ethnography methods as fieldwork assistants or in Maya pedagogy and grammar as language instructors for non-heritage learners of Maya. To date, we have provided training for six Maya students, three of whom have continued their education in pursuit of graduate degrees in anthropology, linguistics, and related fields.

Within the last 5 years, OSEA has focused energies on Maya pedagogy and building language infrastructure in terms of training UIMQRoo students and development of pedagogical materials. This is motivated, on the one hand, from dropping ethnography enrollments due to well-known recent sociopolitical contexts (the Mexican government's war with cartels, Trump's negative politics against Mexico, and the COVID pandemic), and, on the other hand, the increased importance of language training in the context of Maya revitalization. Over the course of the last 14 years, OSEA has relied on 10 graduate students and three post-student staff in paid and partially-funded internship positions. In particular, the pillars of the ethnography program were two anthropology doctoral students from the University of Albany, Sarah Taylor (2009-2010) and Christine Preble (2014).[22] In 2012, Edber Dzidz Yam joined the team as a UIMQRoo undergraduate to be trained in the Maya pedagogy I had been developing to assist in this capacity. He used this experience to learn English, to be trained in new anthropological approaches, and to explore his intellectual passions as he completed his *licienciatura* (BA equivalent) followed by a Masters in linguistics (CIESAS-México, 2017–2020) (Dzidz Yam, 2013, 2020). His role in OSEA has transformed from assistant instructor to assistant director and co-author on the Maya textbook that we have been refining since 2018 (expected completion spring 2025). Currently as a PhD student in anthropological linguistics (University New México, UNM, since 2022), Edber and I have initiated new projects both within and outside the OSEA context as equal partners, who share a vision of Maya culture, anthropology. Along with long time colleague such as Juan Castillo Cocom, we are developing new collaborative initiatives that build on training junior scholars coming out of the UIMQRoo. This opportunity and good fortune to contribute not only to Edber Dzidz Yam's training but to be able to continue collaborating with him on new projects of enormous promise (Armstrong et al., 2024; Dzidz Yam, 2024; Dzidz Yam & Pfeiler, 2024; Knowlton & Dzidz Yam, 2019; Rhodes & Dzidz Yam, n.d.) is among the most significant of OSEA's legacies. Currently, as a PhD student in anthropological linguistics (University of New México since 2022), Edber and I have initiated new projects both within and outside the OSEA context as equal partners. Along with long time colleague Juan Castillo Cocom, we are developing new collaborative initiatives that build on training junior scholars

emerging from the UIMQRoo. In this manner OSEA is a significant institutional framework and network that enables us to contribute to the fields of language and cultural revitalization as well as to the emergence of Maya-driven forms of ethnography.

OPENING NEW ROADS

To conclude, I point to the future of OSEA by briefly describing a few of these current collaborative projects that are in the different stages of design and funding. First, in relation to the sociopolitical and economic transformations initiated by the Tren Maya Project, OSEA is creating new opportunities to study tourism, heritage, and archaeological ethnography at Chichén Itzá.[23] Specifically, OSEA is developing a partnership with the administration of the federal National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) overseeing Chichén Itzá that will generate internships and hands-on learning programs in the museum and archaeological zone.

Second, the ongoing collaboration with Castillo Cocom (2024a) has led to the publication of a landmark text in the inter-disciplinary cultural anthropology of the peninsula that includes poetry, ethnography, geography, sociology, literary analyses, linguistics, and cultural studies. The book, published by the UIMQRoo with support of OSEA, includes 28 authors from México, the US, and Europe, including junior and established scholars, many of whom are associates or collaborators with OSEA (Brandner, 2024; Brito May et al., 2024; Campbell, 2024; Canul Góngora & Cahum Chan, 2024; Castañeda, 2024a, 2024b; Castillo Cocom, 2024a; Castillo Cocom & Castañeda, 2024; Cetina Catzin, 2024; Dzib Suaste, 2024; Dzidz Yam, 2024; Taylor, 2024; Tun Canul, 2024; Ucan Dzul & Ballote Blanco, 2024; Villegas, 2024; Worley, 2024). More importantly, this work includes 15 Maya authors whose contributions are based in language based analyses that explain and interpret the meanings and everyday experiences of Maya people. While this type of interpretive language and meaning approach is common for other parts of the Maya world, e.g., the work of Gary Gossen in Chiapas (1986, 2013), it is relatively rare in the ethnography of Peninsular Maya; exceptions include the work of Ronald Loewe (2010) and Paul Sullivan's dissertation (1984). These studies makes this a book that transcends the still common anthropological paradigms of studying peninsular Maya culture established by Redfield and Villa Rojas (1934; cf. Redfield, 1950; Castillo Cocom & Castañeda, 2024) that has been promulgated throughout the 20th century. We look forward to future publication projects and collaborations with the UIMQRoo, its students, and its faculty.

Third, with support from OSEA and The Language Conservancy (TLC), Edber Dzidz led a team consisting of Adrian Cetina Catzin (PhD cultural geography, University Florida), Jaime Chi Canul (PhD linguistics CIESAS-México), and I, that created a Mexican non-profit, U Beelbesa'al Maaya T'aan (UBMT) to engage the worsening state of Maya language loss. Catherine Rhodes, a linguistic anthropologist at UNM, (University of New México) was integrated into the collaboration for the purpose of creating a free-access digital trilingual Maya dictionary (Maya-Spanish-English) that includes Maya to Maya entries and investigates language ideologies through combined ethnographic and linguistic fieldwork (Rhodes & Bloechl, 2019; Rhodes & Dzidz Yam, n.d.). We believe this will become a pioneering study and documentation of Maya language variation that promises to have an enduring legacy: First, the resulting dictionary is designed to be the first of its type with many innovations including phonetic description, sample sentences, dialectical information, open access app, and Maya-to-Maya entries (Rhodes et al., 2018). Second, the project builds language infrastructure by training community-based collaborators in the linguistics fieldwork and ongoing updating of the dictionary database. The goal is to promote vernacular Maya in ways that help generate new Maya speakers and to counteract the astonishing language loss that has occurred

over the last 10 years. Through its participation in this project, OSEA continues to work to contribute to the cultural wellbeing of the Maya communities in which it is embedded.

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NOTES

[1] Accessed, October 15, 2023. https://www.etymonline.com/word/legacy

[2] Accessed, October 15, 2023. https://www.historytoday.com/archive/head-head/there-still-value-%E2%80%98great-man%E2%80%99-history

[3] It is a noteworthy legacy of these professors and of the Mesoamerican anthropology faculty, such as Gary H. Gossen, but especially Robert M. Carmack, at the University of Albany (SUNYA) that at least a half dozen of their doctoral students (at least) from across different generations have directed their own long-term ethnography field schools among the Maya and their neighbors. I dedicate this article to Dr. Carmack (1934–2023), who passed on October 20 (see Little forthcoming on Carmack's legacy).

[4] OSEA has run summer programs continually since 2003, with two exceptions. The first hiatus, summer of 2008, was motivated by my visit to Tim Wallace's Field School in Guatemala to learn about his program and process. His teachings have been a guide and inspiration in leading field schools. The second was during covid when we suspended on-site programs but taught Maya language remotely at beginning and intermediate levels.

[5] Accessed October 15, 2023. http://www.osea-cite.org/program/MIRA_2013_overview.php. See Rogal (2012).

[6] These include two OSEA organized conferences, "Emerging Scholars Research" (2011), "Maya Philosophy, Language, Pedagogy" (2023), and a Wenner-Gren Workshop on archaeological ethnographies (2005); see Castañeda and Mathews (2008).

[7] See https://www.osea-cite.org/history/ for more robust descriptions of project design, theory, history, and outcomes. See reference list below and online, for a more complete list of publications resulting, directly or indirectly, from OSEA: https://www.osea-cite.org/history/publications.php

[8] COMEXUS (US-Mexico Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange) is a binational agency providing funding for students, teachers, researchers, and artists. In addition, COMEXUS administers Fulbright Scholar awards in México and US through Fulbright-Garcia Robles grants.

[9] https://www.osea-cite.org/history/selt.php

[10] https://www.osea-cite.org/history/SELT_1997_Joy-Logan.php

[11] Accessed Ocotber 15, 2023. http://www.osea-cite.org/history/chilam.php

[12] In 1985–1988, I conducted archival research for my dissertation research in the Carnegie Institution of Washington (CIW) collections at the CIW (now called Carnegie Science) in Washington, Peabody Museum, the Hartford Seminar Foundation, and Cold Spring Harbor. With assistance of Lisa Breglia and Fernando Armstrong-Fumero, I did follow up research in these CIW collections in between 1997 and 2002 to produce materials for the Piste Social History project (see Castañeda, 2003a, 2003b, 2005b, 2009a, 2009c).

[13] See Castañeda (2006a, 2006b, 2009a, 2009c) and Castañeda and Breglia (1998, 1999). It is also the basis of other publications and served as a springboard for co-director Breglia (2003, 2006).

[14] Accessed October 15, 2023. http://www.osea-cite.org/history/ahdzib.php

[15] See: Castañeda (2004a, 2005b, 2005c, 2009a, 2009c); Armstrong-Fumero's (2000, 2007); Castaneda et al. (1999).

[16] The catalog exhibition held in the Jack Olson Gallery at Northern Illinois University (NIU), Dekalb, Illinois was built on the Masters research conducted by Mary Katherine Scott (2008) under the direction of Kowalski, who edited the exhibition catalog Kowalski (2009). Scott initiated the project and was the primary project curator who oversaw the exhibition when it traveled first to Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas (October 2010) with the support of Jennifer Mathews and then to the museum of the Teatro Peón Contreras of Mérida, Yucatán, México (March 2011) with the support of Alfredo Barrera Rubio.

[17] To learn about osea mission, goals, and values go to https://www.osea-cite.org/about/mission.php and https://www.osea-cite.org/about/values.php

[18] See: Brandner (2022); Buckenmeyer-Salinas (2018); Campbell (2018, 2022, 2024).

[19] A deep debt and appreciation is owed Francisco Fernández Repetto for his initiating this partnership and to both Steffan Igor Ayora-Diaz and Gabriela Vargas Cetina for their institutional support of OSEA. I thank Patricia Fortuny Loret de Mola for her ongoing participation in OSEA as guest lecturer, advisor, and commentator for student projects.

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[21] I served as Reader in the UIMQRoo Language and Culture Program on the Licenciatura Thesis Committees of Jaime Chi Pech (2011), Edy Dzidz Yam (2013), and Rosa Carolina Dzib Suaste (2016).

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[23] Tren Maya, or the Maya Train, a.k.a. *Tsíimin K'áak*, is a rail network connecting cities and tourism destinations, such as Cancun, Mérida, Tulum, Chichén, Campeche, and Chetumal in the Yucatán Peninsula with Palenque in Chiapas and points west. The project was proposed in 2018 by Mexican president-elect Andrés Manuel López Obrador and, after a public referendum in 2019, construction was initiated. Although the train system did not fully meet the initial completion deadlines in 2023, much of it became operational in 2024 (see Can Tec, n.d.; Capetillo Ponce, 2024).

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