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ON THE COVER: Manuel Segovia Jiménez is one of the last remaining speakers of an indigenous Mexican language called Ayapaneco. He is pictured here preparing a vocabulary lesson for a group of students who will come to his house later that evening. The state of Tabasco has declared don Manuel to be a “guardian of Tabascan tradition,” and it pays him a small monthly stipend to participate in cultural festivals and teach his language to members of his community. Don Manuel’s story is explored in Daniel Suslak’s article, “Ayapan Echoes: Linguistic Persistence and Loss in Tabasco, Mexico” (this issue). (Photograph taken by Daniel Suslak on August 21, 2008.)
Archaeology – the study of human cultures through the analysis and interpretation of artifacts and material remains – continues to captivate and engage people on a local and global level. The significance of such international heritage sites such as the pyramids both Egyptian and Mayan, the Lascaux caves, Stonehenge, and Petra all provide insights into our ancestors and their actions and motivations. When archaeologists are asked to elaborate about their job, they will touch on archaeological theory, chemistry, geology, history, classical studies, museum studies, ethical practice, and survey methods, along with the analysis and interpretation of their sites. Archaeology is a much broader subject than its public image and branches out to many other fields in the social and hard sciences.