Educational anthropology as a major approach for educational research: The beginnings and the evolution of educational anthropology, with an overview of its introduction in the Greek educational context

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ABSTRACT

This article is presenting and investigating the input of social and cultural anthropology in educational research. Moreover, the cultural focus is on Greece and Greek educational institutions. Socio-cultural anthropology offers a multiplicity of alternative pathways to the investigation of 'who we are' and why we behave the way we do through the study of cultures and institutions different from ours. The anthropology of education investigates a number of problems such as the socialization function of schooling, the transmission of culture from older to younger generation within the educational process, the role of ethnocentrism in the reproduction of inequalities and the possibilities of cultural relativism in schools. At the end of this presentation we review the emerging field of educational anthropology in Greece.

Keywords: Anthropology, cultural transmission, education, ethnography, Greece

1. Introduction

In this article we present and investigate the input of social and cultural anthropology in educational research, while the cultural focus is on Greece and Greek educational institutions. While remaining within this perspective, it is useful to introduce as briefly as possible the fundamentals of the anthropological approach. Socio-cultural anthropology offers a multiplicity of alternative pathways to the investigation of 'who we are' and why we behave the way we do through the study of cultures and institutions different from ours. Comparative anthropological analysis of various cultures, many of them being 'indigenous' or pre-modern, of cross-cultural interactions, and of minorities living within one's own society, represents a legitimate method of work permitting a better understanding of the 'boundaries' between human groups, as well as of their common characteristics. The anthropological view tends to legitimate difference and neither variation of cultural norms, thus forcing us to contemplate the possibility that our own behavioural code is neither the only nor the best of the ways to do things. Moreover, the anthropological experience forces us to reconsider the rationale, the cultural underpinnings, and the entirety of the process of cultural transmission. This last point is of crucial importance to teachers and educators for education aren't a 'pure' and separated from society *knowledge transmission*; it is equally, and unavoidably, a *cultural transmission*.

The sub-discipline of Anthropology of education engages all the above mentioned angles and frames of reference through the study of the educational process in our own society and culture, as well as from the point of view of minority groups in our culture; an equal attention is paid to a transcultural perspective. The anthropology of education investigates a number of problems such as the socialization function of schooling, the transmission of culture from older to younger generation within the educational process, the role of ethnocentrism in the reproduction of inequalities and the possibilities of cultural relativism in schools. As it is argued by the American Anthropology Education Commission (AEC, 2011, p. 1), 'anthropology can provide powerful tools for students and educators to understand themselves and others in today's rapidly changing world. For example, contemporary anthropological perspectives on the concepts of race, ethnicity, culture, and nationality are especially germane for today's students as they develop their sense of identity as a member of different groups.' We could also add that the above mentioned concepts constitute useful references for educators seeking to address matters of racial, religious and ethic segregation, all issues of importance for Greek schools. The anthropological approach can help both students and educators to develop positive and even productive intergroup relations. Teachers and educators can benefit from their understanding of the anthropological approach in many ways. The mastering of the methodological tools of Anthropology, such as the practice of gathering multiple perspectives from different stakeholders in the school and its environment, can be useful to

them in order to develop and achieve a more inclusive decision-making. An anthropological approach to the study of the parallel processes of teaching and learning focuses on how people learn during their childhood (and beyond) and on what they take for granted as cultural knowledge, or 'truth'. An anthropology of teaching and learning helps clarify issues such as how do educational systems and institutions relate to religious and national identities, and how education seems inevitably culture-bound. Such an approach seems particularly promising in today's social and cultural context of Greece.

It is crucial to clarify that the educational function doesn't consist exclusively in the transmission of a precise curriculum of knowledge. Without any doubt, as attested by a great number of studies (King and Lindsay, 2004, Mahoney, 2000), knowledge and education extend beyond the classroom. This is a universal characteristic of human societies and we already possess a number of studies on informal teaching and learning in a Greek cultural context (Henze, 1992). As Herve Varenne has said (2008, p. 1), '*the anthropology of education must focus on what people do to educate themselves outside the constraints constituting the problematics of schooling'.* Important research has been done by anthropologists in three areas: a) school ethnographies, b) school-community contacts with ethnic (or other) minorities, and c) cognitive and linguistic development (Modiano, 1970).

2. The beginnings and the evolution of educational anthropology

When discussing educational anthropology, or the knowledge-generating interplay between anthropology *and* education, it seems appropriate to start by setting out a general outline of the complex web of relations linking disciplines and practices like anthropology, ethnography, and education with concepts like' knowledge transmission' and 'cultural transmission'. This needs to be placed in its historical, geographical, and socio-cultural setting.

2. 1 The beginnings of educational anthropology
 It is generally recognized that the formal beginning of educational anthropology took place in the U.S.A. during the 1950s (McCarty, 2005, p. 299). Nevertheless, we shouldn't identify the 'formal beginning' of educational anthropology with its 'formative years', or, better, with the formative years of educational ethnography, which preceded the emergence of a distinct branch of anthropology concerned with matters of education; according to Eddy (1985), the formative years of educational ethnography, characterized by the work of anthropologists engaging formalized systems of education as well as issues of enculturation, corresponds to the time period 1925-1954. However, from the very beginning, the relationship between ethnographic practice in educational settings and anthropological theorisation about matters of knowledge or cultural transmission appeared as a source of controversy. Harrington (1982), in a chapter called *A Selective History of Anthropology and Education*, argues against '*atheoretical*' and exclusively descriptive accounts in educational anthropology; this is a fundamental shortcoming, in a way inherited from the Boasian tradition (Harrington, 1982, p. 325-26), which is a '*fault*' characterising a substantial number of educational researchers 'who have mastered the methods of anthropology but not its theory' (Harrington, 1982, p. 326). Harrington insists in the importance of making explicit the link between theory building (which informs ethnology and anthropology) and ethnography (which is 'at heart idiographic'). Further, Harrington reminds us that the sub-discipline of the 'anthropology and education' has been 'from the beginning ethnological'. In order to justify this statement he cites the works of Whiting (1941), Pettit (1946), Whiting and Child (1953), and finally Spindler (1967). Harrington underlines Spindler's concern for "*education as cultural transmission*", a type of approach that can be seen as an examination of cultural systems through their teaching and learning techniques. However, George Spindler's contribution to educational anthropology is too rich and important to be reviewed concisely. In a rather acerbic tone, Harrington criticizes the fact that, at the time his writing (1982), 'large numbers of ethnographic studies (mainly in educational anthropology) have been done with little attention to theoretical or comparative issues', something that has led some researchers to think of anthropology as synonymous with ethnography (Harrington, 1982, p. 327). That view seems to be adopted by educational anthropologists like Daniel A. Yon, who, in an article entitled *Highlights and Overview of the History of Educational Ethnography* (Yon 2003), seems to use the two terms interchangeably, at least within his particular field of concern, while in one occasion he calls 'educational ethnography (…) a subdiscipline in anthropology' (Yon, 2003, p. 412).

Harrington's remarks, taken together with different points of view such as Yon's, shed some light in the triangulated relation connecting education to ethnography, ethnography to anthropology, and finally anthropology –a theory-grounded discipline informing research on distinctive cases or aspects of culture- back to education. If, for a majority of educators, education is a process of knowledge transmission, then, in a logic shared by Harrington and others, for the anthropologically trained educational researcher, education should be seen as 'cultural transmission'. However, the investigation of the process of 'cultural transmission', even in well defined institutional settings such as a school, demands larger theoretical frames that will inform, guide and sustain the development and implementation of all the technical aspects of any ethnographic research. In this understanding of the matter, Harrington is perhaps (or implicitly) joined by Hymes (1980), for whom it is not in ethnography that the promise of 'anthropology and education' lies, but in ethnology; or by Ogbu (1981, 1983a, 1983b), who makes a distinction between microethnography and macroethnography, while arguing for the application of traditional anthropological (macro-) ethnography in the study of formal education.

Yon (2003), commenting on the institutional and disciplinary development of educational ethnography (which he implicitly identifies with that of educational anthropology), speaks of the 'seminal role played by the Spindlers' (Yon, 2003, p. 413), and by George Spindler in particular. George Spindler has been one among the most influential figures in the history of educational anthropology, whose name is often associated with that of his wife and research partner Louise Spindler. The Spindlers' name is linked with the formal beginning of the anthropology of education (McCarty, 2005, p. 299), since they figured among a number of rather illustrious participants at the 1954 Carmel Valley Conference which represents the starting point of a systematic project that brought anthropology and education closer to each other.

George Spindler's edited *Education and Anthropology*, published in 1955, is a collection of case studies of teachers, children, and administrators in educational settings; it was a work which, according to G. Spindler himself (Spindler and Spindler, 1992, p. 54), brought him, an anthropologist, 'into a life-long relationship with education'. For Spindler, it was the publication of that volume which 'credited the anthropology of education as a legitimate subdiscipline' (Spindler and Spindler, 1992, p. 55). Nevertheless, the tradition of inquiry that most interests the author of this article, ethnography, was virtually absent from its index, except for Spindler's own overview of 'the use of cross-cultural materials furnished by (general) ethnography' (Spindler and Spindler, 1992, p. 55). We should also mention that in this presentation we follow John W. Creswell's line of thought, for whom there would be only five focus-related qualitative inquiry research traditions, that is biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, case studies, and ethnography (Creswell, 1998, p. 5).

However, it is important to note that, from its formal beginning, the approach of the emergent 'anthropology of education' was to examine culturally specific practices of knowledge transmission as they took place in educational settings. On this level, knowledge transmission and cultural transmission seem inseparable, at least from an anthropological point of view. Thus, in its initial focus, 'educational anthropology' exhibits a sensitivity that makes apparent one of its sources of inspiration, the 'culture and personality' school in anthropology which asserted that each (type of) culture produced a specific personality type (Benedict, 1935; Mead, 1928, 1930). In this respect, Mead's input to the first formative steps toward an anthropology of education is generally recognized, as Yon (2003, p. 413) reports in an article where he reminds us of Margaret Mead's role as a convenor of a 1949 conference organized for 'the purpose of exploring the educational problems of special cultural groups', or her engaging insight into a U.S. Department of the Interior and Commissioner of Indian Affairs research program –from 1941 to 1947- on Native American personality, education, and administration (Mead, 1951).

The same absence of the term 'ethnography' characterizes the second major work edited by Spindler, *Education and Culture: Anthropological Approaches* (Spindler, 1963). However, in George and Louise Spindler words, a significant feature of that volume is that 'ethnography (…) serves as the implicit data base for studies carried out and written about' by its contributors (Spindler & Spindler, 1992, p. 56). From Jules Henry who writes on 'attitude organization in elementary school classrooms', to Melford Spiro who 'describes education in a communal village in Israel', there is a 'constant attention' to the richness of situations and behaviours that the participant-observer anthropologist encounters on his/her field of study. In this emerging ethnographic/anthropological approach to educational issues there is an element that prefigures our approach in educational research and which is best described by George and Louise Spindler (in the introductory chapter of *Education and Culture*), when they state that 'probably the most substantial contribution that anthropology could make to education would be the

building of a body of case materials based on direct observation in a variety of educational situations…' (Spindler & Spindler, 1992, p. 57).

2.2 Ethnography is acknowledged as a major tool for educational research

The next of Spindler's edited works, *Education and Cultural Process: Toward an Anthropology of Education* (Spindler, 1974) is much more clearly ethnographic than its antecedents. Moreover, in this volume there is a chapter by John Singleton on the *implications of education as a cultural transmission*, where he distinguishes participant observation from other observational procedures while making explicit mention of '*educational ethnography*' (Singleton, 1974, pp. 26-38). George and Louise Spindler acknowledge the above mentioned volume as substantially ethnographic –if we consider that of the twenty-seven contributions, twelve were explicit ethnographic case studies- while being 'clearly cross-cultural in character' (Spindler & Spindler, 1992, pp. 58). There are two *foci* in this volume that are sources of inspiration for many researchers: the first is the explicit ethnographic character of the accounts of 'cultural transmission'. This endeavour entails a number of presuppositions: first, that there is such a 'thing' as a culture, a 'pattern of meanings embodied in symbols'; second, that this *pattern* is transmissible; third, that the transmission of the *pattern* relies heavily on education, formal or otherwise.

The second *focus* of the volume is the underlining of the special role of participant observation in a naturalistic research setting. Putting the two together, it seems that being a participant observer who could make use of specific ethnographic tools in order to grasp the practicalities and peculiarities of a cultural transmission process that takes place in Greek educational settings is a workable idea.

Spindler's next edited volume, *Doing the Ethnography of Schooling; Educational Anthropology in Action* (Spindler, 1982) announces itself as 'explicitly ethnographic throughout' (Spindler & Spindler, 1992, p. 58). In George and Louise Spindlers' words 'one of the major purposes of the volume was to show that anthropological educational ethnography did have clear problems and that it had both methodology and theory' (Spindler & Spindler, 1992, p. 59).

The *Doing the Ethnography of Schooling* collection represents a decisive step towards the making of a new sub-discipline, that of an educational anthropology nourished by the prolific products of educational ethnography. Viewed from another point of view, this approach sets the standards for the accomplishment of many research works in education. Perhaps the usefulness of the approach deployed in *Doing the Ethnography of Schooling* can best be described by Spindler himself when, in a later text jointly written with Louise Spindler (Spindler & Spindler, p. 59), remarks that 'one of the significant themes that emerges in the papers in this volume (Spindler, 1982, our citation*)* is the attention to the 'hidden' curriculum, to the covert, tacit, or implicit cultural patterns that affect behavior and communication, particularly in face-to-face social interaction, and that are largely outside the consciousness of the actor'. Only slightly departing from Spindler's view, I would say that it is precisely that *attention* to the *implicit* meaning, to the *elusive* pattern, to the *partly conscious* action, that informs our own practical engagement with the research field.

Spindler's ethnographic and interpretive agenda in investigating issues in education –shared by a growing number of anthropologists, other social scientists, and educators- becomes even clearer with the appearance of the next collection of texts edited with his wife, *Interpretive Ethnography of Education at Home and Abroad* (Spindler & Spindler, 1987). Moreover, in this volume, the editors explicitly perceive education as cultural transmission, with all that this entails as prerequisites for a researcher's positioning and dialectics with his/her subject matter. A passage from their first chapter is quite revealing: 'We see education as cultural transmission, and of course cultural transmission requires cultural learning (…) Further, we see that aspect of cultural transmission (…) – education in the broad sense, schooling in the narrower sense (including initiations, rites of passage, apprenticeships, as well as schools) as a calculated intervention in the learning process. (…) We are interested in the learning that takes place (…) as a result of calculated intervention.' (Spindler & Spindler, 1987, p. 3).

Many of the elements of any researcher's involvement with their object of study are present in the above passage. Most of us, researchers in educational settings, are interested in a form of learning that is mostly – although not entirely- the result of a calculated intervention, the final outcome or product of a number of years of schooling. This is called official education, in other terms the tangible product of an educational institution.

The corpus of transmitted skills, with all the individual variations in thoroughness of knowledge and practical mastery of related tasks, is embodied in the physical person of the graduates and exteriorized in the form of craftsmanship, discipline, and emotional relation with the constituents of their workplace, while the 'holistic' expression of its synthesis can be evaluated in terms of 'professional performance'.

However, if we put the accent on skills that present themselves as more elusive and unquantifiable, like the highly personalized details of the emotional relation to one's workplace (and that latter's human landscape), the importance of some of the suggestions in the Spindlers' chapter becomes apparent. The Spindlers argue for a particular focus on cultural transmission, a process that encompasses initiations, rites of passage, and apprenticeships, without of course forgetting these latter procedures' relation with the formal curricula and institutionalized practices of schools. At this point we can't but agree with the Spindlers' perspective, for initiations, rites of passage, and apprenticeships represent important steps in the making of a 'good teacher', or educator.

Other notable contributions in the *Interpretive Ethnography of Education* that constitute fruitful lines of thought for research in educational settings are David Fetterman's focus on ethnographically constructed educational evaluation (1987, pp. 81-106), Katherine Anderson-Levitt's work –synthesising approaches borrowed from cognitive anthropology and ethnoscience- on frameworks of cultural knowledge (1987, pp. 171-194), and Reba Page's work on hidden school curriculum and participation structures (1987, pp. 447-474). However, from our point of view this volume's most interesting feature is its explicit underlining of the interpretative character of educational ethnography –and, implicitly, of educational anthropology.

That final point, the relation between anthropology of education and educational ethnography, is, to an extent, the concern of the last published volume of the Spindler's saga, the second edition of *Education and Cultural Process* (subtitle *: Anthropological Approaches*) (Spindler, 1987). In the Spindlers' own terms 'the difference between Education and cultural process in both its editions (making allusion to *Education and cultural process: Toward an anthropology of education*, published in 1974, our comment) and the other collections is consistent in that both editions are about the relationships of anthropology to education and do not focus primarily on ethnography as a research tool' (Spindler & Spindler, 1992, p. 62). In commenting on this volume, George and Louise Spindler make mention of a 'tension' between Harry Wolcott's focus on the concept of the *anthropology of learning* (Wolcott, 1982) and their own focus on the theoretical framework of *cultural transmission*. This alleged 'tension' isn't without consequences for a researcher's choices, given the existence of types of knowledge, or learning, that are 'resistant' or alternative to the means used by an officially recognized educational institution in its attempt to provide a purposeful organization of educational resources. These alternative types of learning, 'concepts' in the Spindlers' words, are 'concomitant learning, incidental learning, unintended learning, and latent learning' (Spindler & Spindler, 1992, p. 62). Spindler recognizes that these latter kinds of learning 'are "subversive" in their relationship to explicit, mandated learning' (Spindler & Spindler, 1992, p. 63), meaning by the latter a type of learning anticipated as the result of a *calculated intervention,* presumably by a public authority invested with an institutionally legitimated power to do so. In a masterly and polished manner, the Spindlers conclude by expressing their belief that the animated dialectics of the two increasingly divergent approaches will 'constitute (…) an important arena for significant theoretical debate in our subdiscipline' (Spindler & Spindler, 1992, p. 63).

The Spindlers' conclusion brings up the connection between the processes of (cultural) knowledge transmission, as seen primarily from the point of view of teaching, and (cultural) knowledge acquisition, as seen from the point of view of learning (by the recipient of the act of teaching), and requires further examination.

2.3 Knowledge transmission and knowledge acquisition
Margaret Mead once made a distinction between what she had termed *learning cultures* and *teaching cultures* (Mead, 1942, as reported by Gearing, 1973), the first representing small rather undifferentiated human groups in which cultural transmission doesn't require a highly specialized effort, while the second referred to more complex societies that tend to develop specific frames –like educational institutions- in order to culturally inform their younger members. Mead's overall conclusion was that 'learning, which is based on human dependency, is relatively simple' (Mead, 1970, p. 72). Wolcott (1982) obviously doesn't share Margaret Mead's dismissal of learning as 'simple' (1982, p. 85), and enlarges on the question, raising the problem of the relation between 'learning in school' and 'learning that is not school related' (Wolcott, 1982, p. 86). Moreover, Wolcott reminds us of another great figure in the history of anthropology who 'frequently turned his attention to raising problems

about the nature of the learning process' (Wolcott, 1982, p. 85), Gregory Bateson. There is a passage in which Bateson's skepticism about anthropology's aptitude for dealing with issues of learning becomes manifest; he asserts that 'as is usual in anthropology, the data are not sufficiently precise to give us any clue as to the nature of the learning processes involved. Anthropology, at best, is only able to *raise* (italics in the original) problems of this order. The next step must be left for laboratory experimentation' (Bateson, 1972, p. 115).

In his *anthropology of learning* article (Wolcott, 1982) –which is almost a 'statement of faith'-, Harry Wolcott sounds much more optimistic about the future of such a specialized, or applied, anthropology. He underlines the paramount role of ethnography in the production of anthropological knowledge through the demonstration, in his terms, of the fact that 'anthropology has more to offer to the field of education than simply a *fieldwork* (italics in the original) approach to research' (Wolcott, 1982, p. 86). In the same article, Wolcott insists on reminding (non-anthropologically trained) educational researchers that anthropology isn't a 'method' to be used for conducting research, or, better, that anthropology's task is much wider, its focus being in the endeavour of making 'sense of the lived-in world'; in other words, to make our lived-in world more sensible.

2.4 The work of Clifford Geertz as inspiration
Wolcott's querying of meaning finds a powerful ally in Clifford Geertz, arguably the leading figure in 20th century's interpretative anthropology. Speaking of the sense-making task of anthropology, Geertz asserts that 'like all scientific propositions, anthropological interpretations must be tested against the material they are designed to interpret; it is not their origins that recommend them' (Geertz, 1968, p. vii). Further elaborating this issue, he states that 'the validity of both my empirical conclusions and my theoretical premises rests, in the end, on how effective they are in so making sense of data from which they were neither derived nor for which they were originally designed' (Geertz, 1968, p. viii).

2.5 An 'anthropology of knowledge transmission'
On another level, studies in the 'anthropology of learning' may contribute to what Judith Friedman Hansen calls 'a "new" anthropology of knowledge transmission' (1982, pp. 189-202). For Friedman Hansen the study of knowledge is framed by a number of assumptions: a) 'all knowledge is culturally infused', b) 'cultural knowledge is distributed differentially among members of all societies (…) and (…) individuals (…) hold variants of the common stock', c) 'knowledge is polymodal, that is, verbal and nonverbal, cognitive and affective', and d) 'knowledge is always contextualized by its bearer…' (Friedman Hansen, 1982, p. 190). Viewed from this perspective, any contribution to the debate on learning as a socio-cultural process, and on the learning of cultural meanings in particular, might prove fruitful for the development of new educational practices and pedagogies (Lancy, Bock, & Gaskins, 2009).

The above outline of a debate within the ranks of educational anthropology has a special importance. What the Spindlers see as 'subversive' learning (Spindler & Spindler, 1992, p. 63) (i.e. concomitant learning) can very well be one of the 'hidden' dimensions, the implicit meanings, the elusive patterns, and the partly conscious actions of actors that complement and integrate with the *calculated intervention* of an official (as invested with, and representing, the power of the –conventionally accepted as-ultimate legitimacy, the State) educational institution, thus indirectly contributing to a surprisingly harmonious final outcome of the entire process. In simpler terms, the conceptual –and, as we suspect, ontological- 'tension', can permit us to present a translation of the 'hidden' connection between an educational institution and its final product.

On another level, in an important chapter, the Spindlers' contribution to *The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education* (LeCompte, Margaret D., Wendy L. Millroy & Judith Preissle, 1992) that summarizes much of the Spindlers' insight on matters of anthropology, ethnography, and education, *Cultural Process and Ethnography: An Anthropological Perspective* (Spindler & Spindler, 1992), a number of guidelines are given to prospective researchers on how to do 'a good ethnography of schooling'. These guidelines refer to issues or procedures like direct observation, sufficient time on the site, the volume of recorded data, the evolving character of ethnographic study, instrumentation, quantification, the object of study, selective holism and contextualization, and the possible answers to the question 'whose ethnography is it anyway?' In the same chapter, these guidelines are followed by eleven 'criteria for a good ethnography' (Spindler & Spindler, 1992, pp. 63-74). All these guidelines and criteria are highly useful for the organization and realization of a research in educational settings.

3. Educational anthropology in Greece

One of the most referenced studies in Greek educational anthropology is Leonidas Sotiropoulos' *Anthropology in Education* (Anthropologia stin Ekpaideusi, 2002). Sotiropoulos' work covers the relation between cultural (or social) anthropology with education while paying particular attention to the possible input that the first can offer to the latter. As he himself argues, the aims of his endeavour are multiple: firstly, he tries to make clear that the educational function is not reducible to a mere transmission of a particular and compartmentalized knowledge; secondly, he insists on the fact that learning and education stretch beyond the classroom; thirdly, he underlines the importance of the subjective dimension of the learning experience and of the way in which the anthropological research method can help to understand that fact; finally, Sotiropoulos undertakes the important task of clarifying in which ways the anthropological research methods can be used by the educator in order to study an educational practice.

Georgios Tzartzas has made an important contribution to introduction of educational anthropology in Greece. His article *New Perspectives in Educational Anthropology* (: Nees Prooptikes stin Pedagogiki Anthropologia, 2010) offers a double benefit to the reader; firstly, it introduces the Greek scholarly public into the work of prominent German theoreticians, namely Helmuth Plessner, Herman Nohl , and Max Scheler, whose contribution to the field is generally ignored by the English-speaking or French-speaking academia in Greece; secondly, Tzartzas' work puts the accent on the new perspectives that pedagogy, as a recipient of the Anthropology of Education input, faces within late modernity. As Tzartzas asserts, 'Educational Anthropology aims not on a universal approach of humanity but moreover to investigate individuals in their particular historic, social and cultural context. Anthropological knowledge is produced in various discourses, which contribute to the shaping of pedagogical perceptions, situations, structures and ideas by showing the hierarchical structures of society, science and education (2010, p. 1).' For Tzartzas, Anthropology of Education uses a particular methodological approach that informs its research as oriented towards three major topics, namely: '1) the capability of transformation of humanity and the importance of imagination and language for the planning and forming of education, 2) the importance of mimetic and ritual procedures, and 3) the role of violence, the "Other" and the globalisation of education (2010, p. 1).'

Other notable contributors to the field of educational anthropology in Greece are Efi Plexousaki, whose work at the Aegean University treats of the social and cultural parameters that, from an anthropological point of view, determine the 'classroom reality'; Iphigeneia Vamvakidou, at the University of Western Macedonia, who teaches on 'universality and cross-cultural instruction of history'; and Eleni Sideri, at the University of Thessaly, whose work concentrates on the study of the ways anthropology can contribute to the methodological and theoretical investigation of educational mechanisms. Finally, we might mention Ioannis Sideris' work (2009) on the interplay between rites of passage within a vocational educational institution, communities of practice and social networks, viewed from the point of view of educational anthropology.

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