Third Edition

Education and Cultural Process

Anthropological Approaches

George D. Spindler

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edited by

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This book is dedicated to Louise Schaubel Spindler.

Your radiant smile, your loving personality, your care and concern for others, and your keen intellect—always curious about the next bend in the river, the next page of a book, or the next interview or observation—will be sorely missed by all who knew you.

Deceased March 24, 1997

Preface

This book is intended as a text in the anthropology of education, for courses and seminars that utilize anthropological materials and perspectives in the analysis of educative processes. These courses and seminars are offered to both the upper-level undergraduate and the first- or second-year graduate student. Some are given in schools of education, others in departments of anthropology. Many are listed in both. This book may also be used as a text or collateral reading in the cultural foundations of education, the sociology of education, in teacher training and curricular courses, and in other foundation areas such as philosophy, history, and psychology, as well as in applied anthropology and cultural dynamics courses that are in part concerned with education. It must therefore serve a wide range of interest and expertise. It is designed with this diverse audience in mind.

This volume first appeared in 1955 as *Education and Anthropology* (Stanford University Press). That book was an edited version of a four-day conference seminar in Carmel Valley, California, supported by the Carnegie Foundation and organized by George and Louise Spindler. Although there were important antecedents to this conference (as a reading of Part I of this book will demonstrate), it is often touted as the origin of the field of educational anthropology. Twelve prominent anthropologists and as many prominent educators exchanged papers and views on topics that still concern us today. One chapter from that volume, C.W.M. Hart's classic paper on prepubertal and postpubertal education, survives in the present volume forty-three years later. *Education and Culture: Anthropological Approaches* was published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston in 1963 under George Spindler's editorship. The first edition of *Education and Cultural Process* was published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston in 1974. The second edition of that book was published in 1987 by Waveland Press, as is the present volume—the 1997 third edition—which contains twelve new chapters representing significant recent developments and issues in the field.

Each of the parts of this volume are arranged around certain themes. Part I represents the history of the field from two different

points of view, one of them anthropological and the other one educationist. They overlap considerably, but still the emphasis is different.

Part II is concerned with approaches to the study of schools. Chapters 3 and 4 are explicitly about ethnographic approaches. Chapter 5 concerns a condition many teachers encounter in the course of their professional activity that affects both their ability to teach and their ability to do ethnography of their own classrooms.

Part III addresses education and cultural process in the United States. Its topics range widely, including chapters on minority groups and their circumstances in American society and American schools; characteristic features of American schools, such as emphasis on competition; education in communitarian societies, such as the old-order Amish; and the incorporation of Mien culture (a Southeast Asian culture) with a science curriculum in the elementary schools.

Part IV addresses cultural process in education viewed transculturally. The focus is on nonliterate, non-Western cultures such as the Hopi, the Tiwi, the Mistassini Cree, and a formerly nonliterate culture on the Pacific Island of Kosrae.

Part V concerns transcultural comparisons, including a chapter comparing Japanese and American day-care centers and another chapter making a cross-cultural comparison of schooling in Germany and in Wisconsin. Another chapter contrasts the formalistic teaching methods characteristic of schools in developing countries and the progressive, mainstream Western concepts of a proper education.

Part VI, Teaching Culture, includes a report of an experiment in teaching anthropology in a Zuni Native American high school, a chapter on teaching cultures using case studies, and a class discussion comparing Hutterite education with an inner-city school education. The reader will find the approach in this book anthropological but eclectic. The wide range of problems should stir the imagination of everyone who considers what the authors have to say.

Those familiar with the previous edition of this volume will notice the absence of a section of readings devoted to nonhuman primate learning. Due to space limitations I have foregone the inclusion of contributions on this important area. As a replacement we recommend William McGrew's *Gombe: Wild Chimpanzees in Western Tanzania* (Harcourt Brace, 1998). This study of chimpanzee culture describes all phases of chimpanzee learning, including social learning.

Fundamental to the anthropological approach is the transcultural perspective—a special feature of anthropology and of this book. Although there is only one section explicitly devoted to cultural process in education viewed transculturally, every section displays the influence of this perspective. From the anthropological point of view, "transcul-

tural" is easily converted to "multicultural." The world is diverse, and so must be our approaches to understanding it.

Our colleagues Ray McDermott and Fred Erickson recently conducted interview sessions with Louise and myself dealing with our practice of ethnography since 1948. The uncut, unedited video, *A Life with Ethnography*, offers frank and revealing discussions, with special attention given to our work in schools and with the problems we see in education. It is our hope that instructors will find this to be a useful companion to this latest edition of *Education and Cultural Process*, as well as an important tool for stimulating classroom discussions. For more information, write to me c/o Ethnographics, Box 38, Calistoga, CA 94515.

In the editorial previews I often refer to "we." By this I mean George and Louise Spindler. Since most of our chapters and the thinking behind the previews are joint products, this seems appropriate.

G.D.S.
Calistoga, CA 1997

Acknowledgments

Thanks are due all of the authors, without whom, obviously, there would be no book. Special thanks are due Gayle Zawilla of Waveland Press, who worked through the myriad details involved in a volume of this kind, and who kept the project on track. Thanks also to Ona Ondre of Stanford University, who saw to it that my dictations were transcribed quickly and accurately, and to Tom Curtin, who saw the virtue in a revision and encouraged me to do it. I appreciate everyone's goodwill and good help during a time of bereavement for me after the sudden death of my partner and sweetheart.

George Spindler, Editor

Contents

Part I

HISTORY

Preview

The two chapters of Part I include an overview of the history of the field—one chapter from an anthropological perspective and another from an educationist point of view, providing useful background for the rest of the book. The anthropologist, Elizabeth Eddy, obtained her Ph.D. in cultural anthropology but has worked in and around education for many years. The educationist, Rosalie Ford, obtained her Ph.D. in the social foundations of education and also studied anthropology during this time. She obtained a master's degree in anthropology but worked in education and within public schools for many years. She currently works for the City of Springfield, Massachusetts, School Department, with at-risk children. Early in her career she taught Hispanic children in a rural area in New Mexico and African-American youngsters in Kansas City, Missouri. It is interesting to see not only how these two chapters overlap but also the ways in which their emphases diverge. Some of the contributions cited by one author are not cited by the other. One acquires a feeling for the contributions of the educationist to the development of an educational anthropology that is usually lacking in anthropologically oriented overviews.

It is important for us to know that educational anthropology is not an upstart field of recent interest without roots in the mainstream of anthropological and educationist inquiry and thought. Although there may be some tendency in contemporary work to detach educational anthropology from the rest of the discipline, the history of our subdiscipline is embedded in the history of anthropology—and, if we have a future, will continue to be so but at the same time will relate effectively to the concerns of educators and the processes of education.

There is a tendency for fellow anthropologists to think of educational anthropology as applied anthropology. It is true that there is a strong ameliorationist orientation in our field, but educational anthropology is—and must be—more than applied anthropology. I do not mean to suggest that an applied label is demeaning. Far from it. However, applying anthropological concepts, perspectives, methods of research, guiding models and paradigms, and interpretive principles to processes of education, both in our own society and abroad, requires that theory and practice be joined. We cannot be guided solely by the demands of our society for the solution of immediate educational problems. We must maintain a disciplinary posture and approach the study of problems in a disciplinary manner with appropriate tools. This is easier said than done in the present context in which we work. Anthropology is changing. Some would say it is fractionating, falling apart, but this is not our point of view. This volume will show us how anthropology produces a fairly coherent interpretive framework for the analysis of

educational process. In any event, the conceptual structuring of the field is a primary concern.

The Editor

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Theory, Research, and Application in Educational Anthropology

Elizabeth M. Eddy
University of Florida

Educational anthropology, usually referred to as anthropology and education, has developed within the context of the rise of anthropology as a profession. The transition of anthropology from an avocation pursued by the independently wealthy or those who made their living in other fields into a profession that provides a livelihood for its practitioners did not occur until the early years of the twentieth century. The process of professionalization required the establishment of the discipline within reputable universities, the anthropological training of students who subsequently would support themselves by work in this field, and the increased production of scientific research and publications that were sufficiently technical to be comprehensible primarily to fellow practitioners.[1]

Substantial growth in the number of professional anthropologists is a post-World War II phenomenon. In the United States, the postwar years were accompanied by unprecedented changes in the funding of anthropologists and their careers, intense expansion of specialization within the discipline, and a proliferation of professional associations and journals organized by and for specialized interest groups.

Educational anthropologists represent one of many interest groups but, unlike some specialists, their historical roots date from the late nineteenth century when anthropology emerges as a science. An important reason for the long history of anthropological interest in education is that the process of professionalization was intertwined inevitably with the promotion of the discipline as a legitimate and needed new area of scientific teaching within institutions of higher education. Yet as early as the late 1800s, a few anthropologists were concerned with the practice of education outside the academy. It was then that the

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potential contributions of anthropology to pedagogy, the school curriculum, and an understanding of the culture of childhood were first recognized (Barnes and Barnes 1896; Chamberlain 1896; Fletcher 1888; Stevenson 1887; Vandewalker 1898). Prior to World War I the fullest and most widely known statement along these lines was that of Maria Montessori, whose *Pedagogical Anthropology* was published in the United States in 1913.

The early beginnings of educational anthropology are important, but contemporary educational anthropology is primarily the outgrowth of social and cultural anthropology as it developed during the 1920s. For this reason, the focus here is on significant relationships between the growth of professionalism in anthropology and the development of educational anthropology as an area of specialization within the discipline during the past 70 years. The historical trends in educational anthropology throughout this period will be divided into two time periods: the formative years, 1925–1954; the institutionalization and specialization years, 1955 to the present.

I argue later in the chapter that the Conference on Anthropology and Education convened at Stanford in 1954 and the formal organization of the Council on Anthropology and Education in 1970 marked major turning points in the history of educational anthropology. Each event culminated previous developments and inaugurated new ones in the field. But these events also mirrored important shifts in professional anthropology as a whole. The changes represented more than the replacement of older theories and research methodologies with newer ones. In addition, they reflected important changes in the sources of economic support for anthropological work, modifications in the relationship of anthropology to applied problems, and more elaborated definitions of the meaning of professionalism.

The factual material and analysis presented here are preliminary at best. A history of educational anthropology has yet to be written, and the history of anthropology itself is only beginning to be documented adequately.[2] Thus the pages to follow provide but a sketch of a much longer story that requires extensive scholarly endeavor and documentation before it can be told fully.

The Formative Years: 1925–1954

An examination of the Roberts and Akinsanya chronological bibliographies on anthropological studies of childhood and anthropology and education reveals a remarkable array of anthropologists who engaged in research related to formalized systems of education and the enculturation of the child during the years between 1925 and 1954 (1976:375–412; see also Roberts, n.d.). The roster reads like a *Who's*

Who of American and British founders of modern anthropology. Luminaries include Gregory Bateson, Ruth Benedict, Franz Boas, John Dollard, John Embree, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Raymond Firth, Meyer Fortes, John Gillin, Alexander Goldenweiser, Felix Keesing, Melville Herskovits, H. Ian Hogbin, Ralph Linton, Bronislaw Malinowski, Margaret Mead, Siegfried Nadel, Morris Opler, Hortense Powdermaker, Paul Radin, Robert Redfield, Audrey Richards, Edward Sapir, Laura Thompson, W. Lloyd Warner, Mark Hanna Watkins, Camilla Wedgewood, John Whiting, Monica Wilson, and others.

With the exception of Boas and Malinowski, these notables began their careers after anthropology had broken with nineteenth-century unilinear evolution and the extreme diffusionist theories of Grafton Elliot Smith, W. J. Perry, and Fritz Graebner. In England, the publication in 1922 of Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* and Radcliffe-Brown's *The Andaman Islanders* ushered in "practical" or "applied" anthropology, the terms subsequently used by Malinowski (1929) and Radcliffe-Brown (1930), respectively, to denote the emergence of social anthropology as a new branch of the discipline. For both Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, there was a close relationship between theoretical and practical applied anthropology. Oriented toward the study of human behavior and institutions in the contemporary world, they argued that the scientific knowledge produced by this type of study would be capable of application by those concerned with the practical problems of planning administrative and educational policies for native populations in the British colonies.

In the United States, Franz Boas' choice of the study of adolescence among a primitive people for Margaret Mead's fieldwork in 1925 marked a similar transition of the discipline into the study of a new set of problems related to the modern world. In *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), Mead argued the value of comparing American civilization with "simpler" societies in order to illuminate our own methods of education. By the mid-1930s the study of culture and personality was well established in American anthropology. Mead and other leaders in this field gave considerable attention to the practical relevance of their work to educational problems.

On both sides of the Atlantic, the internal intellectual developments that foreshadowed the florescence of modern social and cultural anthropology were influenced significantly by a transformation in the institutional framework within which the discipline developed after 1920. The major changes were modification in the economic base for funding anthropological research, the growth of an interdisciplinary movement in the social sciences, and the academic expansion of anthropology within universities (Stocking 1976:9–13). These changes were interrelated and greatly facilitated by the liberal funding provided