



## DOCTORAL THESIS

### Conceptualising a visual culture curriculum for Greek art education

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## VITA

I was born in Gastouni, Ileia, Peloponese on 13 September 1967. I received elementary education in the 1<sup>st</sup> primary school of Gastouni and graduated from Gastouni High School (Gymnasium and Lyceum) in 1985. I received training as a generalist primary school teacher in Pedagogical Academy of Tripoli and was awarded with the Diploma (Degree) in Education, in June 1987. I continued my studies at the Pedagogic Department of Primary Education, Maraslio School, in National Capodestrian University of Athens and was awarded with the Diploma of two-year General Post-Education in the Sciences of Education, in June 2001. I received the Masters of Art degree in Art, Craft and Design Education, at University of Surrey, Roehampton, in September 2004. My dissertation was called ‘An Investigation into Greek Primary School Teachers’ Attitudes and Practices in Teaching Culture and Heritage in and through Art Education’. I have also studied icon-painting alongside artists like Niki Giannakopoulou and Dora Xintari.

My education was supplemented by teaching illiterate persons and Gypsies in the People’s Further Education & Training Centre, Prefecture of Ileia from 1988 till 1993. I have worked as a generalist primary school teacher in N. Ileia district and Athens from 1993 till 1999. I have also worked as a Greek language teacher in the Greek and Greek-Cypriot Diaspora in London for five years (2001- 2006). Since 2006 I have been on educational leave to complete PhD studies. I am also a practicing icon-painter.

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## ABSTRACT

This research contributes to the current debate about the need to redefine the goals and content of art education. The aim was to establish whether or not visual culture should be introduced into the school curriculum at primary level in Greece and if so how. It began with a review of international literature conducted to determine the current state of knowledge about visual culture education and an analysis of recent reforms to the Greek art curriculum. This led to the development of a theoretical framework for the empirical research in Greece and a working definition of visual culture education.

The research had two parts. In the first part, the researcher conducted group interviews with Greek children, aged between 6 and 12, for the purposes of establishing their preferences for visual culture genres and their understanding of everyday images as a learning resource. The findings were that these children were aware that they lived in and interacted with visual images in the real world; they preferred looking at television imagery, but did not fully comprehend how they influenced their identity construction. In the second part, the researcher introduced visual culture education content and methods into art lessons in Greece. She conducted an educational intervention in two primary school classrooms over a period of five weeks using an experimental curriculum entitled ‘Deconstructing Television Imagery’. The evaluation found that the curriculum focus on telenovelas and *Barbie* animated films motivated learners to participate in art lessons and extended their understanding of these visual culture genres and how they impact on viewers’ lives.

A conclusion reached at the end of the research was that the primary school curriculum in Greece should include visual culture. Visual culture education should take into account the particularities of Greek students’ visual experiences and of Greek art education and culture. Consequently it should include fine arts, mass media and material culture, performing arts and the arts of spectacle. It would benefit from being interdisciplinary and embracing principles of critical pedagogy.

## ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Αυτή η έρευνα συμβάλλει στον τρέχοντα διάλογο για την ανάγκη επαναπροσδιορισμού των στόχων και του περιεχομένου της αισθητικής αγωγής. Ο σκοπός της έρευνας ήταν να καθοριστεί εάν ο οπτικός πολιτισμός πρέπει να εισαχθεί στο σχολικό πρόγραμμα σπουδών στην πρωτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση στην Ελλάδα και ο τρόπος με τον οποίο μπορεί να γίνει αυτό. Η έρευνα άρχισε με μια επισκόπηση της διεθνούς βιβλιογραφίας που διεξήχθη για να καθορίσει τις τρέχοντες θεωρίες για την αγωγή του οπτικού πολιτισμού και με την ανάλυση των πρόσφατων μεταρρυθμίσεων στο ελληνικό πρόγραμμα σπουδών του μαθήματος της τέχνης. Αυτό οδήγησε στην ανάπτυξη ενός θεωρητικού πλαισίου για την εμπειρική έρευνα στην Ελλάδα και στον καθορισμό ενός ορισμού της αγωγής του οπτικού πολιτισμού.

Η έρευνα είχε δύο μέρη. Στο πρώτο μέρος η ερευνήτρια πραγματοποίησε ομαδικές συνεντεύξεις στην Ελλάδα με τα παιδιά, ηλικίας μεταξύ 6 και 12 ετών, για να προσδιορίσει τις προτιμήσεις τους για τα είδη του οπτικού πολιτισμού και κατά πόσο κατανοούν ότι οι οπτικές εικόνες που βλέπουν στην καθημερινότητά τους αποτελούν πηγή μάθησης. Τα συμπεράσματα ήταν ότι αυτά τα παιδιά είχαν επίγνωση ότι ζουν και αλληλεπιδρούν με ένα πλήθος οπτικών εικόνων στον καθημερινή ζωή, προτιμούσαν να κοιτάζουν τηλεοπτικές εικόνες, αλλά δεν κατανοούσαν πλήρως πώς αυτές επηρεάζουν την δόμηση της ταυτότητάς τους. Στο δεύτερο μέρος η ερευνήτρια εισήγαγε το περιεχόμενο και τις μεθόδους της αγωγής του οπτικού πολιτισμού στα μαθήματα τέχνης στην Ελλάδα. Διεξήγαγε μια εκπαιδευτική παρέμβαση σε δύο τάξεις σχολείων πρωτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης για μία περίοδο πέντε εβδομάδων χρησιμοποιώντας ένα πειραματικό πρόγραμμα σπουδών με τον τίτλο 'Αναλύοντας Τηλεοπτικές Εικόνες». Από την αξιολόγηση του προγράμματος διαπιστώθηκε ότι η εστίαση των μαθημάτων στις τηλενουβέλες και τις ταινίες κινουμένων σχεδίων με τη Barbie αύξησε τη συμμετοχή των μαθητών στα μαθήματα της τέχνης και διέυρνε την κατανόησή τους σε σχέση με αυτά τα είδη του οπτικού πολιτισμού και με τον τρόπο που επηρεάζουν τις ζωές των θεατών.

Ένα συμπέρασμα που συνήχθη στο τέλος της έρευνας ήταν ότι το πρόγραμμα σπουδών της τέχνης στην πρωτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση στην Ελλάδα πρέπει να συμπεριλάβει τον οπτικό πολιτισμό. Η αγωγή του οπτικού πολιτισμού πρέπει να λάβει υπόψη τόσο τις ιδιαιτερότητες των οπτικών εμπειριών των παιδιών στη Ελλάδα όσο και αυτές της ελληνικής αγωγής της τέχνης και του πολιτισμού. Συνεπώς, πρέπει να συμπεριλάβει τις καλές τέχνες, τα μέσα μαζικής επικοινωνίας και τον υλικό πολιτισμό, τις παραστατικές τέχνες και τις τέχνες του θεάματος. Θα ωφελούταν από το να είναι διεπιστημονική και διαθεματική και από το συμπεριλάβει τις αρχές της κριτικής παιδαγωγικής.

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