

The hidden curriculum

The hidden curriculum is a powerful, intrinsic in organizational structure and culture and sometimes contradictory message, conveyed implicitly and tacitly in the learning environment by structural and human factors. The values and lessons reinforced by the hidden curriculum are often the accepted status quo. The Hidden Curriculum is normally contrasted to the 'formal' curriculum which consists of the formal programme of specific subjects and lessons which governments, exam boards and schools designs to promote the educational achievement of students. (Thompson, 2017)

MARXISM

Marxists stress that education helps meet the needs of society by dividing it into distinct social-classes the ruling (bosses) and working class (workers). The 'hidden curriculum' is more important and influential than the formal school curriculum. (S-Cool, 2020) Through their correspondence principle, the 'hidden curriculum' is seen as preparing pupils for their future roles. The hierarchical nature of both the structure and process of schooling conveys ideas of subordination and hierarchy that are essential for future workers, managers and bureaucrats. (Agnihotri, 2017)

LOUIS ALTHUSSER (1972): *The hidden curriculum relays the importance of time, private property, loyalty, honesty, and discipline therefore social order is maintained and good obedient workers produced. Teachers are seen to be agents of capitalism who through their classroom work reproduce the exploitative relations of production.*

BOWLES AND GINTIS (1976): *Acceptance of exploitation. It teaches pupils to accept their position in society, where society is unequal and exploitative.* (Agnihotri, 2017)

FUNCTIONALIST

Functionalists look at the function or role of an institution in society in keeping the social body 'functioning' (working) properly. Functionalist argues that the survival of society is dependent upon the holding of collective values which label as consensus theory and their social transmission.

- *Emile Durkheim: For society to function, there must exist an unwritten moral code that people follow. The strict enforcement of school rules and subsequent punishment for any violation would highlight the damage that could be done to society through the lack of collective co-operation. Society functions because shared norms and morals create a sense of trust that leads to general social cohesion. Schools impart the moral codes into pupils so that they can develop into productive adults that contribute to society. Pupils also learn about how rewards are achieved.* (Robson, 2013)
- *Parsons: "Education is a functional prerequisite, where each generation of pupils acquire the 'central' norms, values and culture of their society. This connects people together by giving them shared values, what sociologists' term as a value consensus, through the hidden curriculum. Educational settings are sites of secondary socialisation. A bridge between the particularistic values of the home and universalistic values of school and values of meritocracy of contemporary industrial society.* (Agnihotri, 2017)

Characteristics of the concept of the hidden curriculum

- Nature of the hidden curriculum
- Sender of the message
- Environment
- Content of the hidden curriculum
- Method of transferring
- Learner's Role
- Effect of the hidden curriculum
- Hidden from whom
- Intentionality
- Outcome (Andarvazh et al, 2018)

Definition of The Hidden Curriculum

- Boostrom (2010, p. 440): learning that is not described by curriculum planners or teachers as an explicit aim of instruction even though it results from deliberate practices and organizational structures.
- Giroux and Penna (1979): schools mediate the social and cultural reproduction of class, racial and gender relations in dominant society.
- Kentli (2009, as cited in Drew (2021) The components of socialization within educational settings comprising norms, values and belief systems.
- Durkheim (As cited in Hall (2018): Secondary socialisation which passes on universal norms and values that are shared by broader society. Helping pupils to become fully-functional, normal members of society and this in term helps society because people know how to behave.
- Robert Dreeben (1968, as cited in Kentli, 2009): "Pupils form transient social relationships submerge much of their personal identity and accept the legitimacy of categorical treatment".

NEW CURRICULUM

- A move away from the traditional subject-based approach to a curriculum delivered through six 'areas of learning and experience'.
- The aim is to meet the needs of learners, employers and civic society. (Power et al, 2020)
- The Four Purposes is in line with The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Teachers are encouraged to explore subject knowledge 'creatively', making it more student-centred.
- Standardised assessments replaced where teachers are expected to see learning as developmental rather than in relation to stage completion.
- Increased teacher flexibility to tailor the curriculum to the particular needs of their pupils. through compulsory schooling and on to post-compulsory education and training in Wales.
- Prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of later life. (Welsh Government, 2020)

GENDER

- Some subjects seen as masculine or feminine.
- Books are gender-stereotyped in terms of the messages they convey. Males are more likely to be shown in active rather than passive roles and there are clear stereotypes about how males and females should look and behave. (Trueman, 2015)
- English language generally favours masculine forms of expression ("dustman", "postman", "spokesman") as well as using the term "man" to signify humanity as a whole ("mankind"). (Trueman, 2015)
- Teaching staff are predominantly female, as well as cooks and cleaners.
- Physical Education is split in to boys activities and girls activities.
- Uniforms conform to the traditional gender stereotypes and are a constant and highly visible marker of gender difference. (Mergler, 2018)
- School Concert characters are often assigned to pupils in line with their gender, for example, all girls are angels and all boys are shepherds.

SOCIAL CLASS

- Social standing ("status") of different types of school.
- Bourdieu argues that schools are middle class environments full of teachers with middle class values and tastes. (Thompson, 2015)
- Bernstein argues that one form of language code (elaborated) is the norm for middle class adults (such as teachers) and their children, whilst another form (restricted) is the norm for working class adults and their children. (Thompson, 2008)
- Catchment areas for different schools make some "more desirable" than others. Affluent areas get a reputation for being "good" (i.e. they achieve good examination results), whilst deprived areas get a reputation for being "bad" (i.e. they don't produce good exam results...).
- (<http://sociology.org.uk/notes/hc2.pdf> No Date)
- Educational achievement or failure depends on pupils conforming to school values, beliefs and norms.
- Banning and Streaming disadvantages the working classes and some minority groups. Working class and ethnic minority pupils were more likely to be put into lower sets. (Thompson, 2015)

ETHNICITY

- Uncritical teaching leads to the maintenance of the existing ideology. For example, multicultural education is often translated into 'tolerance of others' – supposedly a democratic value. However, acceptance of others, not mere tolerance, is what is to be truly desired.
- Failing to recognize racist history and portraying a race-less and colour-blind society condones and continues white privilege. (Ghosh, 2008)
- Focus on Christian holidays, western sports and uniforms not reflecting cultural differences.
- Exams and tests are often culturally biased and serve to confirm stereotypes held by teachers, it is difficult for someone to succeed in a test not designed for their culture.
- No ethnic group is naturally less capable than any other although we can identify patterns of achievement associated with ethnic groups. (Welsh Government, 2009)
- Minorities are expected to assimilate.
- Ethnic minorities are more likely to experience frustration with racism and poverty and consequently display behavioural problems in the classroom. This may result in teachers defining non-white children as being "a problem".
- Channelling ethnic minority pupils to participate fully only in stereotypical areas of the curriculum. For example, the idea that Afro-Caribbean boys are "naturally good at cricket or running". (<http://sociology.org.uk/notes/hc2.pdf> No Date)

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