

What is 'hidden curriculum'? essay sample

[Education](#), [School](#)



' Every school has two curricula. One is the open curriculum, which we are already familiar with. The other curriculum, the hidden one, often has the greatest impact on an adolescent boy or girl. It is the hidden curriculum that molds self-esteem, aids or hinders confident social development, that helps make high school a time of pleasant memories, or turns the high school experience into an ordeal.' (Ruby Ausbrooks, Ed. D.)

<http://www.parentingteens.com/curriculum.shtml>

The phrase ' hidden curriculum' was coined by Brian Jackson in 1968 to draw attention to the idea that schools do more than simply aid the transmission of knowledge between one generation and the next. The concept of the ' hidden' curriculum is very ambiguous. The hidden curriculum may be viewed as covert, unintended, implicit, or simply unacknowledged. Most sociologists use the term to refer to the various characteristics of schooling that are unquestioned or ' taken for granted'.

Brian Jackson argues that we need to understand " education" as a socialization process. That is, a process that involves the transmission of norms and values as well as a body of socially approved knowledge.

Therefore, the basic idea behind the concept of the hidden curriculum, pupils learn things that are not actually taught in the formal curriculum. If students want to succeed within the education system, have to " learn how to learn".

That is, they have to learn to conform not just to the formal rules of the school but also to the informal rules, beliefs and attitudes perpetuated through the socialization process. If we wish to provide pupils with an enriching, positive experience of education, we must be alert to the power of

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the “ hidden curriculum”. The hidden curriculum refers to those practices and outcomes of schooling, which, while not explicit in curriculum guides or school policy, nevertheless seem to be a regular and effective part of the school experience.

Formal curriculum planning procedures, and the hidden curriculum, which is not ordinarily addressed through regular curriculum planning but which nevertheless influences what and how students learn. It concerned with the socialization of the young. It communicates to learners a set of social values. What is learned from the subtle or hidden curriculum is frequently more powerful and lasting than that which is learned from the more obvious, planned curriculum. If open curriculum is said to be Custodial, and hidden curriculum is said to be a humanistic climate. Students feel more self-actualized in the humanistic climate. Another aspect of the hidden curriculum is the way in which the school portrays itself to the general society as to maintain its acceptance. The planned curriculum itself may have unintended meanings that are a part of the hidden curriculum. The hidden curriculum is just as much a part of the school program as a course or subject offered. It is a powerful and pervasive source of learning. As an aspect of schooling, the hidden curriculum can include any or all of the various qualities of schooling not overtly governed by the formal curriculum.

The “ Hidden Curriculum” includes:

- Teachers’ expectations of pupils
- Teachers’ interaction with pupils, including discipline

- Allocation of tasks, equipment and resources to girls and boys in the classroom, school and playground
- Content and illustrations of textbooks and other teaching materials
- Organization of the timetable, and the choices within
- Extra-curricular provision for girls and boys
- Relationships of the staff to each other
- The extent to which women are part of the decision-making structures of the school

<http://www.derby.ac.uk/telmie/private/dublin/gender/hiddencurriculum.html>

The interaction between Open curriculum and Hidden curriculum:

Open curriculum and hidden curriculum is two different things. Outcomes typically considered being products of a hidden curriculum include political socialization, obedience, docility, the learning of values and cultural mores, the development of attitudes toward authority, and the reinforcement of class distinctions. The hidden curriculum fosters intellectual curiosity and emotional growth. It provides opportunities for discovering new interests and developing new abilities. While open curriculum mainly provide knowledge, which are facts, theoretical ideas and formulaic matters. Though sometimes, there will be conflicts aroused between them, they are closely related and affecting each other. Due to the change in the society, in student's needs

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and in educational system, part of the open curriculum are disappearing and turn into hidden curriculum; while some part of the hidden curriculum which is more important, and which has been used adequately and was focus on, will then transform into open curriculum.

According to L. F. Hopkins, he divided open curriculum into six categories: Subject curriculum, correlated curriculum, fused curriculum, broad field curriculum, core curriculum and the activity curriculum. The activity curriculum and the subject curriculum are at the two poles, and the activity curriculum and hidden curriculum has the most reciprocal influence. As what Bearne (1986) said: " What students learned in hidden curriculum has a farther effect and more profound meaning compared to what they learned from the open curriculum". But hidden curriculum can be both positive and negative. It can hinder the open curriculum and it can also promote it. As the two examples from my own experience will show:

In my secondary school, there is a teacher who has a very great enthusiasm in her job. She is very responsible and like teaching so much. However, she has a very high expectation from the students and this creates stresses in her students, so some of them didn't like her. In my last year in that school, she got a heart attack and has passed away. Our principal told us that on the day before this tragedy, she is still working on our English Graded test. One of the reasons why she got a heart problem is that she got a lot of pressure from her work, but still, she likes her job. The incident affect quite a lot of people in our school, students were guilty of thinking bad about her before. They felt so sorry for they haven't cherish every lesson she gave before, they

are sorry for cursing her in the back, they are sorry for not listening to that teachers advice of studying harder for the exams and tests. Her death reminds and teaches all of us something, and that is very positive. However, it does also affect some of the teachers too. Besides from feeling sorry about their colleague's death, I heard from some teachers that they would put less effort on their work, for they were afraid of getting the same illness too. They also claimed that if we don't want to study for our tests, they will not border about that, for they don't want to add up pressure on themselves and said that ' it is your own business if you don't want to revise'.

Another example is about the religion class in my secondary school. In secondary, my teacher will teach us many Bible stories. We will discuss the stories about Jesus Christ, about what would he do for us. Besides from teaching these stories, our teacher will make use of some leisure time to play some games with us. We were very impressed with the games that she has designed, for every time she finished the game, we would found that there is a lesson to teach, maybe about love, sharing, hope or forgiveness. In our exams, we are usually tested only about the Bible stories. From this example, my teacher has used a hidden curriculum, that is, to make use of games to teach us moral. Open curriculum is also important here because if my teacher didn't teach us some Bible stories, we won't learn about the importance of sharing and giving love. It gives me the fundamental idea about those moral. With the hidden curriculum, my teacher helps me to understand more and even to experience the feeling of giving love and experiencing love from my classmates. In this example, the open and hidden curriculum works very well together to help to build students with knowledge

that a school curriculum requires students to learn and also teaches them norms and values of a good citizen, a good friend, a good child and a good student.

What educators are hoping for is to promote a positive relationship between the two kinds of curriculum, which could help to create the best way and environment for students to learn and explore other knowledge around them. As the following quote stated:

“ What is important about what pupils learn in school is not primarily the ‘ overt’ curriculum of subjects like French and Biology, but values and beliefs such as conformity, knowing one’s place, waiting one’s turn, competitiveness, individual worth and deference to authority. The hidden curriculum teaches pupils ‘ the way life is’ and that education is something that is done to them rather than something, which they do. The prevailing values of society are ‘ picked-up’ by pupils.” (Whitty & Young 1976)

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