

The hidden curriculum

[Education](#)



American Marxist economists and sociologists Bowles and Gintis (1976) believed that through education there is a “ Hidden Curriculum” which helped to achieve the objectives of the capitalists. (To provide capitalists with a hardworking, subservient, docile and obedient work force.) The hidden curriculum consists of those things that pupils learn through the experience of attending school, not educational objectives. Bowles and Gintis state that the hidden curriculum shapes the future workforce by:

1) Creating obeying, passive and docile workers. In a study by Bowles and Gintis based on 237 members of an American high school, they found that grades were more related to personality than academic abilities. Low grades were related to: Creativity, aggressiveness and independence. High grades were related to: perseverance, consistency, and punctuality. Therefore, instead of creating imaginative pupils, the American education system was creating an unimaginative, unquestioning workforce. This would mean the hidden curriculum leads to making employees easily manipulated by employers for their needs.

2) Bowles and Gintis claim that the hidden curriculum prepares school children for working life, by teaching them to behave like a mindless workforce. They are taught to accept the hierarchy, where teachers give orders and pupils obey and just how students have little control over what they study or how they study. In doing this, they prepare them for a workplace where workers have to obey their supervisors and managers.

3) At school pupils learn to be motivated by external rewards because they get little satisfaction from studying. They are encouraged to learn by taking satisfaction from the external reward of receiving a qualification at the end

of their studies. This prepares them from the working world as work in a capitalist society is intrinsically unsatisfying, therefore at school they adapt to this motivation of external rewards (Qualifications) and in the working world they continue to maintain this this motivation for external rewards (Wages).

4) Bowles and Gintis claim that another important aspect of hidden curriculum is fragmentation of the workforce. In other words it's the splitting of the workforce. Schools do this by offering subjects with little connection to each other, for example from Math to History to French to English. This is similar in the workforce. Bowles and Gintis believe most jobs in factories and offices have been broken down into specific tasks carried out by individuals. This means they have little knowledge of the overall productive process and it also means they can be easily controlled and maintained as it becomes difficult for the workforce to unite in opposition to those in authority over them.