

# Chapter 11

## Hidden Curriculum Determinants in (Pre) School Institutions: Implicit Cognition in Action

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### ABSTRACT

*The hidden curriculum is described in terms of values, attitudes, norms, rules, and rituals that are taught in school, but its main characteristic is its unplanned and officially unorganized form. It appears in every day kindergarten and school routine where children and pupils learn it as the official curriculum. From the psychological aspect, it comes close to implicit learning. In this chapter, the authors argue that the influence of the hidden curriculum and the implicit learning deserve far more attention and scientific research because of their significant contribution to the learning outcomes and for their constant presence in the education process: in a learning organization that means all the time and for all the participants.*

### INTRODUCTION

Pupils in school and children in preschool, apart from learning about formal school or kindergarten curriculum content, learn ‘something else’ in their preschool or classroom groups (Oelkers & Prior, 1982), whether their members are will-

ing to accept it or not. In an educational system, knowledge production and transfer go through phases of the *official; explicit; written curriculum* and the process curriculum, *unwritten; hidden curriculum*. Bašić (2000) and Pastuović (1999) refer to Gordon (1982) when they say that the term ‘hidden’ curriculum includes a part of an

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educational reality that is not included in the official programme, curriculum or other public documents. The hidden curriculum is important for its influence on educational outputs or its set of affective output (e.g. learned values, norms, attitudes, social skills), necessary for successful social integration.

One cannot just be a teaching expert and objectively educate without simultaneously working in the process of upbringing. Bašić (2000, p.171) analogizes in a hidden curriculum context to Watzlawick's, "one cannot not communicate". Class is a social event in general, "because every behavior – in a teacher and student case – has a communicative and a social effect" (Oelkers & Prior, 1982, p. 64). Tillmann (as cited in Bašić, 2000) sees the hidden curriculum as a regulation of educational interaction in school and appreciable instrument of school interaction. In other words, an unmentioned learning plan encompasses aimed but often unnoticed standardizing and setting norms for human relations which sets up a situation form for acquiring socially eligible interpersonal interactions and learning how to retrieve quality relationships in children age.

Public, formal and written curriculum is based on explicit content, but the grounds of the hidden curriculum are based on the contents of the official curriculum (Cindrić, Miljković & Strugar, 2010). School and kindergarten curriculum are commonly accepted as explicit, aware, intentional and formally planned with certain goals. With this didactic curriculum, which was determined in advance, children and pupils experience the hidden curriculum described as unofficial and unknowingly planned. At this point, we can use one working definition and refer to the hidden curriculum when talking about values and relations among groups and as a tool of social learning for children and pupils, but Glatthorn (as cited in Domović domus.srce.hr/...) argues that it refers to the implicit practice which is specific for a certain educational environment. Kroflič (2001)

gives more importance to the hidden curriculum when children are younger, for the influence is stronger when children age is lower.

## **BACKGROUND**

The term 'curriculum' explains the holistic process which contains educational goals, contents, teaching media, methods, situations, strategies and evaluation patterns (Bratko, Ljubin & Matijević, 2000). Simply, the term 'curriculum' can be seen as an explanation of what happens in the classroom or in the laboratory (Eliason & Jenkins, 1986), while the curricular programmes should answer the following questions: WHY? (refers to goals and objectives), WHAT? (refers to contents and activities) and HOW? (refers to various goals, objectives and planned contents realization). Several groups of people with determinate roles and assignments are included in the creation of the curriculum. Marsh (2004) describes key concepts for understanding curriculum dynamics and gives five basic curriculum categories: pupil and teacher's point of view, planning and development of curriculum, curriculum management and curriculum ideology. There are six forms of curriculum in the same book. The term of 'hidden curriculum' is associated with pupils perspective, and according to Bašić (2000), it presents the opposite or at least a difference to the public, formal curriculum. It is assumed that the content of the hidden curriculum can be established only after the content of official curriculum. In a scientific discourse, the term 'hidden curriculum' was introduced by Phillip W. Jackson in 1968 and Benson Snyder in 1971 (Pastuović, 1999, pp.134-136), but some authors (Larcher, as cited in Bregar Golobič, 2012) mention Ivan Illich and his book 'Deschooling society' from 1971 as the founder of the hidden curriculum. A reference from the international educational encyclopedia confirms Jackson as the original founder of the concept and

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