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## THE IMPLICATIONS OF HIDDEN CURRICULUM FOR MEANINGFUL LEARNING IN INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

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**Abstract:** The concept of curriculum currently has many meanings, which have been transformed over the years and thanks to educational research the term is reconfigured according to different circumstances, models, theories and educational purposes. During the training process of future primary school teachers, a series of knowledge, procedures and skills are acquired, necessary to conduct and mediate the construction of learning with primary school students. The present investigation allows us to analyze and determine how in the hidden curriculum various spaces are generated for the development of significant learning that is part of its training process.

**Keywords:** Hidden curriculum, learning, meaningful, training, teacher.

## INTRODUCTION

The `` Benemérita Escuela Nacional de Maestros `` has been responsible for the initial training of primary school teachers in Mexico City for more than one hundred and thirty years, a breeding ground for multiple generations who, with dedication and commitment, have dedicated their professional studies to the consolidation of teaching, at primary level.

Currently, the Bachelor's Degree in Primary Education is offered with the 2012 study plans and programs, where through four years of academic training the necessary skills are developed to consolidate the profile as a primary level teacher.

During the training process of primary teachers, they acquire a series of knowledge, procedures and skills, necessary to conduct and mediate the construction of learning with primary students.

The curriculum is revealed in the development of the study plan, during class sessions, the activities requested to be carried out at home and in teaching practice.

However, complementary activities, advice from teachers, a constant exchange of ideas and opinions of students in spaces outside of classes and reflective processes are carried out repeatedly in the subsequent development of teaching practice in primary schools.

This set of activities and others, which we will seek to identify, are part of what we will call hidden curriculum, since they are associated with teaching skills and propose a series of significant learning that favors and complements the initial training of primary school teachers.

Therefore, the general objective of this research is to analyze and determine how in the hidden curriculum of the Bachelor's Degree in Primary Education 2012, a series of learnings are developed that gain important relevance and meaning in training as future teachers.

Through educational research, determine which actions are part of the hidden curriculum, where a series of processes are manifested that have important meaning and great relevance in the initial training of the teacher.

It is important to mention that in our bibliographical collection and in the reports corresponding to the research area where the records of the research carried out at `` Benemérita Escuela Nacional de Maestros `` are kept, there is no academic document that addresses this topic.

This way, it is proposed that the findings obtained serve as a proposal or reference for change and improvement in teaching practice, study programs, educational quality and reflection in our institutional actions. Likewise, this study can be consulted by future generations and is available to the academic community for critical analysis linked to other research on the matter.

## METHODOLOGY

The research that was carried out is of a mixed type and according to its temporality, it considers a prospective study, taking into account an ethnographic approach to know and interpret the curricular dimension and the hidden curriculum, based on documentary theoretical inquiry, it is complemented the study with the analysis and interpretation of various applied interviews, gathering the different opinions of the participants.

In the quantitative part, the data obtained will be interpreted through simple descriptive statistics, expressing the results in graphs, based on a questionnaire applied to a random sample based on the selected universe.

The size of the universe corresponds to a population of 72 students divided into three groups, group "A" (1°7) with 24 students, group "B" (2°15) with 25 students and group "C" (3°10) with 23 students, all of them belonging to the Bachelor's Degree in Primary Education.

## THE CURRICULUM

The concept of curriculum currently has many meanings, which have been reconfigured over the years and thanks to educational research the term is reconfigured according to different circumstances, models, theories and educational purposes.

The curriculum is linked to all the actions of educational work, it is a topic of debate of international stature, highly studied by different specialists who have dedicated a large part of their lives to studying it in depth, there are postgraduate courses and courses to be able to understand its complexity and participate in its design. There are even conferences, colloquiums and seminars where specialists debate or discuss the research carried out on this topic.

The first studies regarding the curriculum take us back to 1663, at the University of

Glasgow, incorporating it in a new way as part of the learning and teaching process, providing two important elements, that of discipline and study scheme. However, Franklin Bobbitt can be identified as the researcher who coined the term curriculum based on his studies carried out at the beginning of the 20th century.

The curricular field emerged with two trends that at the end of the 20th century showed surprising developments. One linked to educational processes, school experiences and the development of each student and another with a vision closer to the institutions, that is, to the need to clearly establish a sequence of content that bases the choice of teaching topics. (Díaz, 2003, p.5).

According to Sacristán (1996), the word curriculum comes from the Latin phrase *currere*, which is similar to a race, a journey that must be completed, this journey is conceived as the journey of the students and their progress through schooling., with an interpretative and flexible but decisive proposal in the educational process.

For his part, Bolívar (1999, p.27) determines that the curriculum is "an evaluatively biased concept, which means that there is no social consensus in this regard, since there are different options of what it must be."

Caswell and Campell (in Guerra, 2008, p.7), interested in the concern of instruction based on textbooks, "incorporate the concept of curriculum as all the experiences of the student under the guidance of the teacher, in this sense, everything What happens in the life of a child, in the life of his country and his teachers, everything that surrounds the student, in all the hours of the day that constitutes him.

The curriculum cannot be reduced to the pedagogical practice of teaching, where actions of a political, financial, administrative, supervision, media production, intellectual creation, and evaluation come together; all

of them are autonomous and interdependent subsystems around the pedagogy (Guerra, 2008, p.8).

On the other hand, Díaz Barriga (2003, p.7) mentions that the curricular definition can be seen as a part of educational theory that responds to the needs generated by globalization, as a category that guides educational purposes, taking into account the institutional needs of the educational system, in the selection of content and the formation of skills as a problem for society as a whole, not as an aspect that corresponds to a particular school and even less to a specific teacher.

Coll (in Guerra, 2008, p.14) tells us that, "We understand curriculum to be the project that presides over school educational activities, specifies its intentions and provides appropriate and useful action guides. For his part, Zabalza (in Guerra, 2008, p.14) mentions that the curriculum, "It is the set of starting assumptions, the goals that you want to achieve and the steps that are taken to achieve them: The set of knowledge, skills, attitudes that are considered important to work on at school."

Casanova (2012, p. 9) advocates for a curriculum that includes what is important to have comprehensive basic training, that favors the transfer of learning to the context of real life, that allows the student to emerge as a specialist in being a person (as life demands it) and a specialist in being professional (as society demands).

In this framework of complexity, the curriculum was reconstructed as multidisciplinary knowledge with aspects of sociology, history, administration and economics to base the study plans, as well as psychology and didactics for the program proposals that were finally implemented. They combined with contributions from anthropology and philosophy (Díaz, 2003, p. 8).

## HIDDEN CURRICULUM

The hidden curriculum is represented considering the learning that students acquire without it being shown explicitly in the planned curriculum, in an evident or manifest way. It is a way in which students socialize and internalize values, social practices, roles and notions in a more lasting and profound way.

In the research model developed by Philip Jackson (in Díaz, 2003, p.7), the hidden curriculum is determined "from the perspective of experience, articulating a series of non-explicit learning in a study plan, which is not intentional, but they appear highly effective. These learnings are the result of school and classroom interaction; In this sense, they are results of experience."

Ángel Centeno and María Grebe (2021, p.2) tell us that "the hidden curriculum consists of a whole set of learning, which occurs outside of what is declared and planned. Since these learnings occur without an apparent relationship with what is expected, they can be seen as not very significant. However, they are always valuable and evidence shows that they play a role in meeting educational goals and that this learning needs to be included."

Under the different conceptions, we can link the hidden curriculum as a cultural and contextual phenomenon as part of the educational process, explained as follows:

In this approach, the hidden curriculum is widely understood as a lens to look in depth or read the effect of culture and context(s) on training. Organizational culture understood as the way of being of each institution and that includes explicit aspects such as rules of coexistence, rites, symbols, customs and other implicit ones that are more difficult to access, such as assumptions, beliefs, values and messages that are transmitted within it. The context includes the physical environment (infrastructure and facilities) and the climate or affective environment prevailing during the instruction. A wide range of pedagogical spaces and potential

learning scenarios are then generated that must be discovered and found (Centeno, and Grebe, 2021, p. 3).

In this sense, the hidden curriculum is interpreted as the means through which a series of attributes and traits that the profession requires are developed, including aspects such as languages, values, ways of solving problems, rules, and interaction styles that are part of professional identity. "Students learn to feel and act as they do when they observe how others develop and to the extent that they are guided or socialized during their time at the faculty" (Centeno and Grebe, 2021, p. 5).

This way, the hidden curriculum is conceived as a social phenomenon that is generated in the multiple interactions that are established throughout the career, with different participants, teachers, non-teachers, managers, friends, family, students, among others. The hidden curriculum can be carried out by any of the members of the educational community and its scope can be of greater impact than the formal curriculum, which is why it requires special attention in the training processes.

It is understandable that the future teacher has experienced, as a student, the effects of vocation, commitment, identity, feminization, technologization, the development of knowledge, evaluation, among others, hence it is not strange that has some explanations of the way in which each of these aspects contributes or hinders permanence and school success. For this reason, it is of vital importance that from this accumulated experience and using theory in a critical and reflective manner, we can arrive at the construction of new explanations about training and the teaching profession. (DGESPE, 2012, p. 22).

## DISCUSSION

In the article *the transmission of the hidden curriculum in university teaching practice: socio-educational contexts of socialization*, as a theoretical review, the researcher Almudena Moreno (2016, pp. 177-190), through a theoretical methodology, analyzes how the hidden curriculum It is transmitted from teaching practice within the context. The basis of the research is the teacher's environment and the agents involved in their practice, thus demonstrating that they influence the transmission of knowledge and values unconsciously.

In Cuba, Caram-león and colleagues made a proposal for curricular design through a 5-block course, with the title: Social equity and hidden curriculum: towards new teaching practices (2021, pp. 165-184); where they determine how the teacher's experience plays a fundamental role in the school career of their students, as well as to be able to resolve cases such as diagnosing discriminatory and stigmatizing situations in the school context.

Through quantitative research carried out by Doctor Gladis Brítez (2022, pp. 1-9) through data collection, she determines that: the hidden curriculum is necessary for teaching practice, but points out the importance of knowing and analyzing it. to achieve a link between academic content and social content in students.

The researchers María Domínguez and Laura Vásquez (2021, pp. 284-306), in their research titled: *From the explicit curriculum to the hidden curriculum*. A necessary link for the effective practice of the teacher, highlights the importance of the hidden curriculum in the academic life of students, since it mentions that it provides them with the development of social values that are essential for life.

On the other hand, Wilma López Professor at *Universidad de Puerto Rico* (2015, pp. 147-166), conceives the student as someone

subject to the authority of the teacher and an institution, and based on that, she invites reflection of her own teaching practice, along with an analysis that allows a humanistic bond that allows students to be provided with a reality attached to their ideals.

Professors at `` Martin Luther King Jr. Universidad Evangélica Nicaragüense Bartolomé Monterrosa y Anyi Yanes`` (2019, pp. 30-50), in their article *Hidden Curriculum and Learning*, present an exhaustive review of several authors in a theoretical way, concluding the importance of create a connection between the hidden curriculum and the learning established within the formal curriculum in teaching practice, since the former generates positive learning in students that is not usually considered in their training but that is essential to complete academic learning.

## INTERVIEW

Twelve semi-structured interviews were carried out with four students from the three groups of each grade of the selected universe, chosen at random, to ask them a series of questions related to the hidden curriculum and its various manifestations.

The semi-structured interview script will be validated by a BENM professor who is an expert in the subject of curriculum, an in-depth study will be carried out and each of the responses will be analyzed qualitatively, relying on hermeneutics to present a series of results. based on student responses.

## RESULTS

A semi-structured interview consisting of five open questions was applied to four students randomly selected from groups "A", "B" and "C" according to the universe chosen to develop this research. Below, the following results of the responses expressed by the students are presented in a holistic,

synthesized way and without losing the meaning of their opinions.

## WHAT IS A RESUME?

It is an instrument that dictates the teaching process

Speaking of education, they are the skills and attitudes that a student must develop upon completing a degree as well as the expected learning.

It is the structure and what integrates the study plans, where the expected learning, approaches, methodologies, purposes, which must be developed during the teaching and learning process, are broken down.

The design of the contents that are going to be worked on in a specific area or discipline.

A study plan that tells us the contents and skills that we must address and achieve at a certain school level.

It is the plan where the educational contents are specified in a general way.

It is a pedagogical tool for teachers, that is, it is the set of study plans and programs, methodologies and criteria with the purpose of promoting the comprehensive development of students.

It is evident that the students know different conceptual elements regarding the curriculum and identify various elements that compose it and even mention some authors as references. They are unaware of curricular models or the main theories in their analysis and show great interest in curricular design. During their teacher training, they have taken various subjects that allow them to integrate information regarding the curriculum, specifically primary education, which makes it easier to recognize its importance in the teaching and learning process.

## **WHAT IS THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM?**

What is carried out day by day without it being in plans or programs

They are those norms, customs that characterize the class or school group, which were developed in the school context implicitly.

What is not reflected in the formal curriculum, some of these aspects are the social interactions, between students and the teacher, the experiences and learning that the student constructs outside the formal curriculum.

Those contents that are not explicit in the curriculum, but are promoted during its application.

Certain learning that is achieved by students in an unplanned manner throughout the development of the content and that also helps them develop.

They are the learning that is acquired within the school environment that is incorporated by the students and that is not marked in the official curriculum.

Students are very clear about the concept of hidden curriculum and its various manifestations in the learning process; They recognize and mention some situations in academic life where the hidden curriculum is revealed, accompanying their explanations with everyday examples from the course of their teaching training. They identify that the hidden curriculum is an important part of their training as future teachers and that it is present in educational programs.

## **AT WHAT MOMENTS IN TEACHER TRAINING DOES THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM MANIFEST ITSELF?**

During the development of professional practices.

In the way I relate to my classmates and teachers, in my practice days when I return to

knowledge and experiences, when I develop my classes, relying on what is formally established, in my way of acting and relating to the students.

When I reflect on my practice in primary schools.

Throughout teacher training.

In the development of a class or in the interaction with my classmates.

In situations that have nothing to do with any content or academic nature.

At the moment when we learn how to interact with students, because there is no subject, nor content that teaches us how to do it.

A question generated a series of reflections closely linked to the class sessions and the academic life at 'Benemérita Escuela Nacional de Maestros', mentioning various events and experiences that occurred between the class sessions and at the end of them. The students report various experiences lived among classmates, even outside the facilities, but related to academic life, they describe informal talks with teachers where topics related to their teaching training are addressed, generated through doubts or questions regarding a topic of interest.

## **WHAT IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THING YOU HAVE LEARNED FOR YOUR TEACHING PRACTICE IN THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM?**

Various playful strategies for working with students.

Pedagogical touch and recognize the strengths of each of the students.

Focusing on my practice days, the way I relate to the students, from the greeting in the morning, my attitude when arriving with them, when developing the classes, the words I must use when addressing them so that they understand me, how to take active breaks that are fun and meaningful to them, what

activities must I do to promote their attention and active participation.

Various opportunities for historical, personal and experiential knowledge are generated and influence academic achievement and comprehensive training.

The way in which I can achieve interaction and respect with the students in the group.

Addressing personal situations with students and problem management with parents.

The teachers in training generated an important reflection regarding the various events that occurred during their teaching practice such as teaching, teaching resources, explanations given to students, events presented during school recess, evaluation of learning and interaction. with parents. A special emphasis is placed on mentioning the evaluation of teaching practice at the end of the class sessions, as well as at the conclusion of the practice weeks.

### **HOW DO YOU LINK WHAT YOU LEARNED IN THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM WITH THE FORMAL CURRICULUM?**

The expected learning with the learning strategies as part of the planning.

I link them in practice, in their actions and the making of agreements.

The formal curriculum provides guidance to be based on the theoretical aspects and have a basis, when understanding what the practice entails and this connection arises when I put it into practice, because it is where I am going to determine how efficient or not, I It turns out to apply what is established, during the practice I carry out a more interpersonal process, also focused on recognizing my areas of opportunity and strengths.

Returning to concrete knowledge with experiential knowledge to promote analysis and reflection that promote meaningful

learning.

The relationship I find with each topic through analysis.

I consider that the hidden curriculum is unconscious, so we do not link it as such with the name and leave it only as experiences.

In a more meaningful learning, since skills are developed from the experiences lived at school.

Students assume responsibility for their teacher training by keeping in mind their knowledge acquired in the different training spaces and also those gaps in information regarding what they do not know. They consider their class sessions, the activities carried out, the tasks carried out and the texts addressed to be very important, however, they consider as valuable the various informal spaces where some academic discussion took place, the exchange of opinions, questions that generated debate, opinions. I respect any topic of interest and guidance provided by teachers.

Each of the students answered the questions asked broadly and without haste, in some cases a little unsure of expressing a term incorrectly or of providing the answer that from their point of view was correct. They started from personal experiences, narration of anecdotes and reflective processes that occurred at the end of the practice.

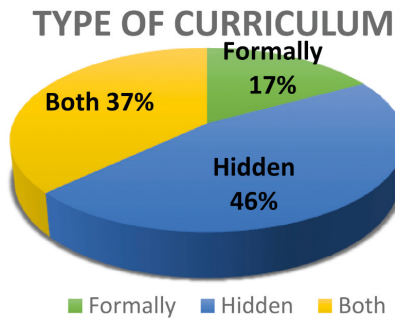
Informal conversations with teachers and students stand out a lot, where through questions or opinions, they report that very interesting and relevant things are learned. The autonomous search for theoretical information in various media that complements their training needs and actions within teaching practice, especially those where they did not do well and needed to make the necessary adjustments.



## QUESTIONNAIRE

A brief questionnaire was carried out, applied to the students of each of the groups selected in the universe of this research; The questionnaire is made up of three multiple choice questions, obtaining the results that are interpreted below:

1.-Where do you think you have learned the most theoretical and practical elements that strengthen your teaching training?

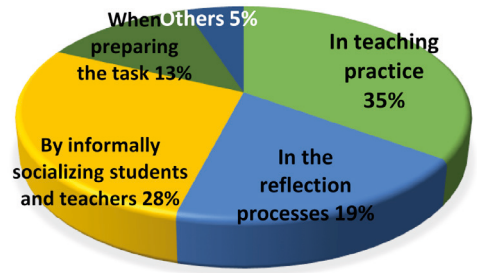


**Figure 1** Graph expressing the percentages of the responses to question 1 of the questionnaire applied to the students

The vast majority of students responded that in the hidden curriculum, however, a significant number of responses expressed that in both, when observing the graph, it can be seen that there is not much percentage difference between these two options.

Based on these results, we ask ourselves the following question: Why are very few students considering the formal curriculum as the space to learn greater elements that strengthen teacher training? which will serve for a subsequent academic discussion and which highlights manifest an important academic reality.

2.-In what actions or processes do you think the hidden curriculum is revealed?



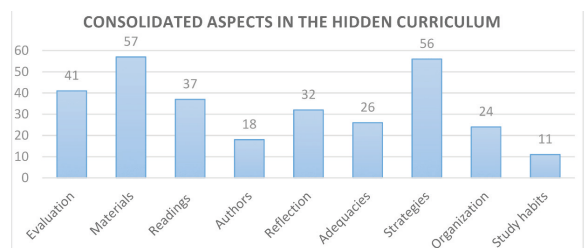
**Figure 2** Graph expressing the percentages of the responses to question 2 of the questionnaire applied to the students

**Figure 2** Graph expressing the percentages of the responses to question 2 of the questionnaire applied to the students

Students consider that the hidden curriculum manifests itself mostly during the activities carried out in teaching practice and it is precisely during these days where the skills and theoretical content worked on in the class sessions are revealed.

Another notable element in the percentages is the socialization of experiences, almost entirely carried out in informal spaces, carried out among a group of students or with teachers, where various questions are generated, opinions are exchanged or some experiences are recounted and in these meetings, they go integrating various significant elements that contribute to their training as teachers.

3.-Mention the names of some processes, skills, attitudes or knowledge that you have consolidated as part of your teaching training, specifically in the hidden curriculum.



**Figure 3** Graph expressing the number of responses selected to question 3 of the questionnaire applied to the students

Students were asked to select the number

of options that, from their perspective, they consolidated as part of their teacher training in the hidden curriculum without there being a limit of options chosen.

It is important to note that the materials, evaluation processes and strategies were the options with the highest number of scores and are directly linked to extremely necessary elements involved in teaching practice.

## CONCLUSIONS

- It is extremely important to consider the characteristics and implications that the hidden curriculum has as part of any training process, since it generates new alternatives that contribute to the development of meaningful learning or scenarios that we rarely consider with an opportunity to learn.
- Based on the research carried out, the students were able to identify substantial differences between the types of curriculum, as well as specific processes and actions that are developed in the hidden curriculum and that complement their teacher training.
- Without a doubt, the hidden curriculum offers a series of elements that contribute significantly to learning in teachers during their initial training, such as diversifying teaching strategies with primary school students, improving some study habits, adjusting in the lesson plans, meet new authors and readings

that support educational theory and multiply the variety of teaching materials used in teaching practice.

- It is of great relevance to consider the different spaces that the hidden curriculum offers us for the construction of meaningful learning, to take them into account when planning the learning sequences, when contemplating more informal spaces such as talks at the end of class, orientations of strategies or generate reflection questions so that they can take them to other spaces outside the classroom.
- Understanding in detail what happens during the hidden curriculum in primary teacher training is an extremely complicated task, but research such as the one carried out allows us to argue its importance and identify some of these spaces to enhance them and enrich the training teacher.
- During the research, many voices were heard regarding a little-discussed topic, the main objective was met, the hypothesis was developed, some questions raised at the beginning were resolved and many more were generated. Without a doubt, the results obtained are a matter of analysis and reflection of our practices as teachers and the door opens to a permanent dialogue in the search for meaning of the hidden curriculum as a space for learning.

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