

Topic:

THE TEACHING OF VALUES IN TEACHER EDUCATION:

Values are not only taught overtly, but are also embedded in the patterns of social relations and interactions, the codes of conduct, modes of discourse amongst students themselves as they partake of school life, and in their interactions with teachers and administrators etc.. So the encounter of values education is a complex cultural practice.

Abstract:

In this paper I employ a critical theory approach in reviewing literature as it pertains to the hidden curriculum of values education in the training of teachers. Various definitions are presented and examined, the role of the school as an institution of learning in shaping and producing value systems within societies and the power relations concomitant in the system. I argue that the process of schooling although viewed by many as good; it carries with it a lot of unexamined ills and conflicts most often never traced back to the process of schooling. In conclusion I raise the following questions and how if possible teacher educators could to some extent address them.

1. If the hidden curriculum could be exposed to teacher educators would they change their behavior or approaches to teaching?
2. How does the hidden curriculum influence the training of teachers?
3. What strategies can teachers employ to minimize negative values education impartation in their teaching?
4. What implications do these have for teacher training?

Introduction:

Teaching is both an intellectual and moral enterprise; therefore there isn't a point in time or stage during the teaching or preparation that values aren't a part of the process Ball and Wilson (1996). The two are inseparable, thus in looking at the issue of values of the hidden curriculum we are actually asking the question 'what is it that teachers are unconsciously teaching students? Ball and Wilson (1996) further argue that in the process of teaching teachers are striving to establish and maintain the integrity in teaching, this process being dependant upon the interplay of commitments, values, beliefs and understanding of students, subject matter, professional communities and parents. How well can teachers know their students? This is not an easy task given that there is a hidden curriculum that students learn yet it is not part of the evaluation and assessment process which leads to the awarding of credentials.

Teachers plan lessons and research information needed for effective teaching. What is often forgotten or overlooked is that in the selection of what information to teach they use their own value systems for this selection. What messages this selected information pass on to students go unattended and unevaluated. It is important to note that the process of content and teaching approaches selection includes ways of thinking, warrants of what is valid knowledge to be taught and modes of discourse. It is like there is a prescribed way of thinking that all teachers ought to follow yet this is not the case.

Since values are standards by which human beings judge and assign worth to something. Teaching them is a mammoth task because it entails choice of what is worthy to teach and why. Making this choice is compounded by the diverse nature of our students' backgrounds and upbringing. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject, many teachers do not conceptualize from these perspectives when required to provide guidance in this respect.

In this paper, I call those values that teachers unconsciously and unintentionally transmit to their students "The Hidden Curriculum of Values Education". The hidden curriculum of values education is an area that has often been neglected. This paper, therefore discusses the issues concomitant in the teaching of values education to teachers and the challenges it poses.

Definition of Hidden Curriculum:

The concept of the hidden curriculum is said to have been coined by the sociologist Phillip Jackson in his book "Life in the classroom, (1968). Many definitions have since been coined in an effort to define the concepts "Hidden Curriculum". It is important to note that some scholars have argued that a hidden curriculum can be found or can be known to some and yet be hidden to others. In the context of this paper I refer to the hidden curriculum of values as those values that are never really explained or made explicit enough to those they are used for and yet they govern their academic lives in many ways. This hidden curriculum of values is hidden to the teacher too since the teacher does not plan it and is never really able to tell what students are learning from what they teach them.

Chipeta (1997) defined the hidden curriculum as that type of curriculum which is not developed or planned for implementation but is learnt by the students alongside the planned curriculum. This include such issues as liking and disliking the teacher, associations to peers and many others which students are not officially evaluated or graded. On the other hand, Meighan (1981), in defining the hidden curriculum argued that the hidden curriculum is taught by the school, not by any teacher...something is coming across to the pupils which may never be spoken in the English lesson or prayed about in assembly. They are picking-up an approach to living and an attitude to learning. Haralambos (1991) argues that; the hidden curriculum consists of those things pupils learn through the experience of attending school rather than the stated educational objectives of such institutions. The above scholars are in agreement as to what the hidden curriculu entails and that it is acquired through different means which vary from one individual to the other and teachers are never able to detect what the students are learning. Thus, every school has unspoken rules that impact everything from navigating the campus and classroom layout to the schedule and the social scene. Schools do more than simply aid the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next.

The Role of the Hidden Curriculum Values in Education:

In their day to day planning teachers are most likely not aware of the role of their own personal academic values in selecting content and methods to use in their teaching. They are also not cognizant of the impact of their values over content selection, students conduct and right or wrong as it pertains to their relationship to the students. Yet the students and their peers develop value judgments about their values and react as

according to their own personal beliefs and values. This to a large extent explains why as unique as people maybe, they react differently to the same person, spoken words or action. This is merely reflex form their hidden value systems. In short, the place from which power is exercised is often a hidden place. Margolis, (2001) argues that “Curriculum is both a site of and one of the stakes in conflicts between various social groups (p.4).

The aim in social research is to reveal the hidden hands and mechanisms that control the social structures and above all personal values of teachers as they pertain to content and methodology selection of what to teach. More to that it also helps in revealing the most likely beneficiaries of the hidden curriculum in schools while the oppressed continue to be oppressed. Thus, the hidden curriculum is one point that can best serve the purpose of evaluating education and its products.

The values, dispositions and social and behavioral expectations that bring rewards in school for students and learning what is expected along those lines is a feature of the hidden curriculum (Jackson, 1968). Such features of the schools system although not written as expectations for passing academically they are essential for satisfactory progression through school. Further to that schools teach students to accept the legitimacy of categorical treatment by submerging their personal identities and formation of transient relationships. However, it is important to point out the homogeneity that schools produce among societies is mostly in the area of obedience and acceptance of regulations without questioning them.

The reproduction of capitalist ideas and values is daily perpetuated in schools such that upon graduation students have these capitalist values and norms ingrained in them. The skills and attitudes for such a capitalist society are even embedded in the school type and location. Where private schools are for the rich and government schools for the poor or ordinary, such attitudes go further beyond imaginable heights in life in a world of socio-economic stratification. Just as much students in low income schools and surroundings tend to be limited by such factors; their aspirations are constricted because of such. While those in high income schools have high aspirations, even their levels of motivation have been found to differ significantly (Bowel and Gintis, 1976). An excellent example occurred in a school where I was supervising students on teaching practice, the student teacher asked pupils what they wanted to be when they grew up, the teacher pointed to one boy for an answer and he said; "I want to be a driver for the council vehicles". In that class none of the pupils ever mentioned wanting to be a chartered accountant, a medical doctor or even a lawyer. Most wanted to be teachers, nurses and social workers whilst some did not know. The message here is that these children were limited by their social and physical environments in their aspirations.

- That is, a process that involves the transmission of norms and values as well as a body of socially-approved knowledge (that also involves socially-derived conceptions of what constitutes valid knowledge, acceptable levels of understanding and so forth). There is need to understand the way the teaching and learning process is socially-constructed. The hidden curriculum refers to ways in which pupils learn to accept the denial and interruption of their personal desires

and wishes. The basic idea behind the concept of the hidden curriculum, therefore, is that pupils learn things that are not actually taught in the formal curriculum.

What we do not tell students about the courses we teach them may shout louder than what we do. Thus we as teachers need to be continuously conscious of what we impart despite the fact that we may not know all of the values we impart to different students. These do not contribute to the students grades at the end of the course, but they greatly shape their academic achievement and out put. It is imperative not to undermine the power of the hidden curriculum in reinforcing societal and national values systems. Soltis (1986) argues that schools through educational practices preserve and reinforce existing power relations and values systems through the hidden curriculum.

According to the Wikipedia Encyclopedia, the concept hidden curriculum expresses the idea that schools do more than simply transmit knowledge, as laid down in the official curricula. Behind it lies criticism of the social implications, political underpinnings, and cultural outcomes of modern educative activities. Jackson (1986) argued that there was dire need to look deeper into the process of education, that is looking beyond what is presented as the prescribed curricula and view education as a socialization process through which what we produce and our impacts on students can never be fully measured or accurately evaluated. There is also need to recognize the reactive, adaptive, and multifaceted nature of learning. By so doing many educators would be forced to slant their perspectives, practices, and assessments of student performance in particular

directions which would affect their students drastically. The global practice of prescribed curricula with its presumptive teaching affects students, schools, and society as a whole.

All areas of education are undergird by values and the most basic decisions to be made about what to teach and not to teach are value based decisions. However, it is important to raise awareness of the fact that some of the value related issues especially those within the hidden curriculum have no answers or prescriptions that can be followed. How many of us have wondered over the role of education in the transmission of some of the values that we so often talk against. Thus, it is important to realise that in as much as the school is considered a social institution where generational morals values and beliefs are being transmitted we should also be aware that it is the centre of most of the immorality that societies face today. Students going on strike, dropping out of school by delinquency or pregnancy are all products of the values that students learn at school without parents and teachers being aware. The question is how best can societies and nations control or put a restriction on some of the values that nations today disapprove of. Urging schools to take leadership roles in value and moral issues is always accompanied by leading in the least approved values within societies.

Power and Values:

Educational institutions invariably have been controlled by the groups or class holding reins of power, and they have used the schools to advance their own interests. Thus, education for centuries has continued to serve the elite. But, we need to realise that in as much as education serves the needs and interests of the elite, the less privileged are not

unaware of this, this produces feelings of anger, resentment, jealousy and rebelliousness in some of the students. This goes unattended and at most students are punished for such conducts. Let's take time and evaluate the role of the hidden curriculum of values in such deviant student behaviors. Selection of knowledge content to be taught is a very difficult task which is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Educators should study values critically in selecting content and methodologies for teaching because in most cases it is always the values of the elite and powerful which are perpetuated through the schooling process of most nations.

DEFINITION OF VALUES:

The definition of values does not carry a lot of differences across disciplines but rather it's what constitutes values that is at the center of the debate. Values in general speak to the worth of something or its merit. Common to all the definitions of values is the fact that

...they refer to principles, fundamental convictions, ideals, standards or life stances which act as general guides to behaviour or as points of reference in decision-making or evaluation of beliefs or action and which are closely connected to

personal integrity and personal identity (Halstead, 1996: 3).

However, the definition of the term values still faces some controversies as with regards to being subjective or objective, relative or absolute. These are questions which complicate the definition but not their role and usage in our lives. **ADD!**

Role of the Hidden Curriculum in Course Evaluation:

It is not advisable to use the perspective of the "hidden curriculum" to evaluate our own courses in terms of what students are learning by default, simply by participating in them, rather than what we set out to teach them. In the field of education values are constantly reflected in what teachers choose to teach and how they choose to teach it. The school organizations, disciplinary procedures and policies are all reflective of the values most upheld by the school as a representative of the society. How teachers respond and react to students' questions, complaints and comments are all value loaded (Halstead, 1996). The underlying factor is that as teachers we are constantly putting students under our value system some of which though personal are from a professional perspective while others are not.

In our efforts to choose what to teach and not to teach we use our values in this process of selection. Our levels of thinking and quality therefore are influenced by our socio-economic classes; hence these govern the selection process whether consciously or unconsciously. In some case the selection process is governed by our levels of understanding, quality and comprehension levels of the content. Thereby assigning our values to the curriculum. Those topics labeled controversial or not in some cases it's due to our lack of information on the topic or religious affiliations which we use to make selections for students whose affiliations are different from ours.

Apple (1982) from a critical theory perspective argued that it is wrong to view schools merely as places where students are instructed, organized and controlled by the interests of the dominant class. Students are not merely passive vessels but creatively act in ways

that often contradict expected norms and dispositions that pervade the schools. Therefore schooling must be understood as an arena of conflict, compromise and struggle. The cause and reason for these unexpected behaviours is found in none other than the hidden curriculum which carries negative meanings to students. So the struggle is born out of the teachers desires to control and expectation of conformity which if not reciprocated results in conflict. The school is a battle ground of societal expectations carried out by teachers and students interpretations contradicting the intended or expected outcomes. Thus evaluation procedures should take into considerations some of these unplanned values which influence students' attitudes and performance in the taught curriculum.

In as much as it is the general consensus that education serves to preserve societal values hence its heritage, we need to be cognizant of the fact that the same institutions serves as a platform for the acquisition of values not accepted by society and these are perpetuated through our education system. Issues such as socio-economic class, pride, arrogance, and delinquencies are some of the values that students learn in schools for reasons best known to them. How many times have students in higher institutions gone on strike for their rights. Do schools teach students to go on strike? The answer is very clear, "no". As we all know or have heard many times in our lives, schools are always urged to take a leadership role in reconstructing the society, the direct opposite is true for if not how then would we need as part of evaluation to evaluate school curriculum and set up commissions of inquiry on our education systems. Is it not true that educational institutions are the most yet hidden battlefields of power struggles within nations in the world? As one prominent scholar once said "the world is a stage, where each one of us performs his/her role in the acts of our lives. Since the values that are being reinforced

are those of the elite, being perpetuated at the expense of the values of those less elite or illiterate groups of our societies there is need to consider the socio-economic backgrounds of the low class students in our evaluation. A uniform form of evaluation could disadvantage either one of the groups. Thus, practices such as national examinations need to be carefully scrutinized in order to cater for both classes or even avoid them if resources permit. For what use are resources if education does not cater for the needs of children across all classes of the economic level. Bowles and Gintis (1976) explicitly put it that; "...what appears on the surface as necessary and neutral processes of social reproduction serve the demands of more powerful institutions and dominant social groups" (p. 7).

Schools promote submissiveness, social and economic domination. Given a good chance schools can promote values such as docility, obedience and orderly performance of routines through the use of a system of rewards and punishments. But what values are we instilling in those students we reward or punish for certain behaviors? The authority acts on assumptions and these are not always true hence the concept of docility accompanied by rebelliousness on the flip side is being promoted. At best schools can be described as sailboats on a stormy sea. Due to this factor schools turn and toss to the voices of demands of the society.

What is needed apart from sound planning is an understanding of the hidden curriculum of values as imposed or developed in students by the prescribed rules, regulations and curriculum standards and knowledge base offered in schools. It is a very highly complicated process to determine what exactly is being transmitted because the process is

both qualitative and quantitative. It is quantitative in that the amount of values and what the society expects to be transmitted to students is very wide hence only a small portion is selected by the teachers. It is qualitative in that it is the teachers assumed value quality that is being super imposed to the students.

How then do we transmit national heritages as expected at the present and at the same time prepare the students for the future of which none can accurately predict. The diversity of answers for the preceding question is unquestionable but the reality is that the hidden curriculum of values that accompany such is also very diverse.

Cultural capital

The concept of cultural capital evolved from the theory of Bourdieu and Bernstein and the structuralist cultural theory. This is where by culture is passed on from generation to generation recognizing culture as a less autonomous sphere. Since students vary in the nature of their socialization thereby bringing to school different cultural packages this therefore means that those students whose cultures dominate the education system are more likely to be less affected by the hidden curriculum as compared to those from the lower social structures. What is hidden to one student would not be hidden to the other or even meaningless. Thus schools in their roles as institutions of learning perpetuate an uneven cultural reproduction. This is better summed up by Weiler (1988), when she argued that;

...different class language and knowledge lead to different paths; schools, by employing and legitimating the language and culture of the existing dominant groups, act to reproduce existing class culture (p.11-12).

Recommendations:

The recommendations on issues of the hidden curriculum of values education are as diverse as the societies within the global village. This does not however stop one from making recommendations.

1. Teacher educators need to exercise a reflective and flexible approach in their teaching of teachers in order to keep in touch with their students' expectations.
2. A fresher needs analysis. This would operate whereby upon admission student teachers are given an exercise and chance to express their expectations of the program. This would serve as a guiding point as to who the students are and what they expect. What they bring into their training impacts their worldviews of the profession greatly. We could coin our approaches and curriculum evaluation upon their expectations. This would also help teacher educators to discuss and inform the trainees on matters they feel need attention in terms of their expectations.
3. A tracer program could be put in place to follow up students who have graduated to hear their views in relation to their training and the reality they experience in the profession. The findings could be used to modify and inform teacher educators in the colleges and universities.
4. An annual evaluation of the student teachers at the different levels of their training accompanied by the opinions of those in the field could provide a

coherent body of knowledge useful for curriculum evaluation and training procedures.

5. Research and teaching are inseparable, thus teacher educators and student teachers should be encouraged to embark on researches aimed at improving the training process. This could be enhanced by providing remunerations such as awards and or research being a requirement for promotion or recommendation for further studies.

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