

Unit 9 Education

Text A

Preparatory Work

(1)

Hidden curriculum is a concept that describes the often unarticulated and unacknowledged things that students are taught in school and is an important issue in the sociological study of how schools generate social inequality. For example, female students, students in lower-class families, or those belonging to subordinate racial categories, are often treated in ways that create or reinforce inferior self-images. They are also often granted little trust, independence, or autonomy and are thus willing to submit to authority for the rest of their lives. On the other hand, students who belong to dominant social groups tend to be treated in ways that enhance their self-esteem, independence, and autonomy and are therefore more likely to be successful.

(2)

Harlem is a large neighborhood in the northern section of the New York City borough of Manhattan. Since the 1920s, Harlem has been known as a major African-American residential, cultural and business center. For many decades, Harlem has been a center of controversy over the lower quality of public education in African American and lower-income communities in the United States.

Hollywood is a neighborhood in the central region of Los Angeles, California. The neighborhood is notable for its place as the home of the U.S. film industry, including several of its historic studios. Its name has come to be a metonym for the motion picture industry of the United States. Hollywood is also a highly ethnically diverse, densely populated, economically diverse neighborhood and retail business district.

(3)

Assemblies are groups of people who have been elected to meet together regularly and make decisions or law for a particular region or country.

Parents' nights are evening events held in schools for parents to meet the teachers, peek into their children's school performance and get acquainted with other parents.

Staff-development days are days when staff are provided the opportunity to improve and increase their capabilities through education and training programs in the workplace, through outside organization, or through watching others perform the job. Staff development is also called professional development.

A **pull-out program** is one in which gifted children are taken out of their regular classroom for one or more hours a week and provided with enrichment activities and instruction.

(4)

Main publications: *Dumbing Us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling* (1992); *The Underground History of American Education* (2001).

The problems:

1. It confuses the students. It presents an incoherent ensemble of information that the child needs to memorize to stay in school. Apart from the tests and trials, this programming is similar to the television; it fills almost all the "free" time of children. One sees and hears something, only to forget it again.
2. It teaches them to accept their class affiliation.
3. It makes them indifferent.
4. It makes them emotionally dependent.
5. It makes them intellectually dependent.
6. It teaches them a kind of self-confidence that requires constant confirmation by experts (provisional self-esteem).
7. It makes it clear to them that they cannot hide, because they are always supervised.

His proposed solution:

He promotes homeschooling, and specifically unschooling and open source learning.

Critical Reading

I. Understanding the text

1.

(1) Gatto addresses the unwritten aspects of schooling, that is, the attitudes, values, and unwritten rules of behavior that schools teach other than the formal curriculum. Clearly the hidden curriculum focuses on the structure of schooling rather than its content. The lessons are not explicitly taught, but are implicit in school procedures and organization.

(2) The first lesson he teaches is confusion. Consequences: 1. Students leave school with only a vague memory of some superficial jargons derived from economics, sociology, natural science, rather than genuine knowledge and genuine enthusiasm. 2. Students do not have any idea of the system of knowledge, because things taught are unrelated to each other, lacking in logical coherence and full of

internal contradictions.

(3) By class position, Gatto means class hierarchy. Schools teach students to accept the status quo (para.8: at least to endure it like good sports), to know their place within the class hierarchy (Para. 8: ...the kids can't even imagine themselves somewhere else...; You come to know your place.) and to defer to their betters (...I've shown them how to envy and fear the better classes and how to have contempt for the dumb classes.)

(4) The rule of the class bell at the start and end of lessons teaches indifference, as it suggests that no lesson is ever so important that it can carry on after the bell sounds, so why care too deeply about anything?

(5) Gatto says that by using stars and red checks, smiles and frowns, prizes, honors, and disgraces, he teaches students to surrender their will to authority figures. He will permit an act he deems legitimate and exercise discipline for behavior that threatens his control.

When free will appears, he will decide whether to grant it or deny it based on whether the students have displayed good behavior or not, and he may withdraw the privileges as he likes. In this way he conditions the students to depend on his favors.

(6) Teachers make sure that students are intellectually obedient by punishing deviants who resist being told what to learn and to think. They make sure that students wait for experts to make decisions for them. They will not let students' curiosity take important place in deciding what to learn and when to learn, only conformity. Teachers have tested procedures to break the will of those who resist and guarantee intellectual obedience.

Clearly, students trained in this way will out to be lacking in independent thinking, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, mindlessly obeying the rules and the authority figures.

(7) Because if kids are fully self-confident, it will be difficult to make them conform, as they will always assert their individuality. Besides, the world wouldn't survive a flood of confident people very long, either. Self-confidence jeopardizes social conformity and social order. Schools teach provisional self-esteem by convincing the kids that their self-respect depends on expert opinion. They should be constantly evaluated and judged by certified officials.

(8) Students are evaluated by the casual judgment of certified officials

in the form of report cards, grades, and records, in which self-evaluation never plays a role. Report cards, grades and tests drive home the idea that children should not trust themselves or their parents but should instead rely on the evaluation of experts. They also help to create a perpetual feeling of dissatisfaction that a parent may have with the child, which clearly works to the advantage of the school.

(9) The last lesson taught is that being under constant surveillance is normal. By way of homework, and by encouraging parents to file reports about their own children, the effect of surveillance is effectively transferred to the home environment. The effect of this “all-time” surveillance is that children lose their freedom and free time to learn something unauthorized from a father or mother, by exploration or by apprenticing to some wise person in the neighborhood.

(10) “A different way” could mean unschooling or homeschooling.

II. Evaluation and exploration

(1) Gatto definitely means what he says by the “seven lessons”. The general tone is strongly critical. Whether he goes to an extreme depends on personal view (with textual evidence). In fact, conflict theorists constantly stress that the hidden curriculum helps to perpetuate social inequalities. For example, in their highly influential study of education in the U.S., Bowles and Gintis (1976) argued that a hidden curriculum exists within education systems, through which pupils learn discipline, hierarchy and passive acceptance of the status quo. Though Gatto did not take Marxist perspective, he reached a similar conclusion. In fact, one of the most controversial theorists to explore the consequences of the hidden curriculum is Austrian anarchist, Ivan Illich (1926-2002). He argued that schools, like prisons, have become custodial organizations because attendance is compulsory and young people are therefore ‘kept off the streets’ between early childhood and their entry into work. Since schools do not promote equality or the development of individual creative abilities, why not do away with them altogether in their current form? Illich advocated what he called the deschooling of society.

(2) The answer depends on students’ individual understanding. The following two paragraphs (one from our text and the other from the original text) can be used to provide a hint to the students. Ask them to comment (whether they agree or not).

What big ideas are important to little kids? Well, the biggest idea I think they need is that what they are learning isn't idiosyncratic—that there is some system to it all and it's not just raining down on them as they helplessly absorb. That's the task, to understand, to make coherent.

Meaning, not disconnected facts, is what sane human beings seek, and education is a set of codes for processing raw data into meaning. Behind the patchwork quilt of school sequences and the school obsession with facts and theories, the age-old human search for meaning lies well concealed. This is harder to see in elementary school where the hierarchy of school experience seems to make better sense because the good-natured simple relationship between "let's do this" and "let's do that" is just assumed to mean something and the clientele has not yet consciously discerned how little substance is behind the play and pretense.

(3) Despite controversy over standardized tests, most schools in the United States use them for **tracking**. Tracking supposedly helps teachers meet each students' individual needs and abilities. However, one educational critic, Jonathan Kozol (1992), considers tracking an example of "savage inequalities" in American school system. Most students from privileged backgrounds do well on standardized tests and get into higher tracks, where they receive the best the school can offer. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds typically do less well on these tests and end up in lower tracks, where teachers stress memorization and put little focus on creativity. The result is that students from lower social classes and minority groups are clustered in the lower tracks and complete fewer years and lower levels of school.

Tracking can help match instruction with students' abilities, but rigid tracking can have a powerful impact on students' learning and self-concept. Young people who spend years in higher tracks tend to see themselves as bright and able; students in lower tracks end up with less ambition and low self-esteem.

The negative effects of tracking can be reduced if the system of placement is flexible, allowing students to be placed in different tracks by subject matter and ensuring reevaluation of students frequently so that they are not locked into placements.

(4)

Reinforcing the existing social inequality

a) Through hidden curriculum, schools teach obedience to authority and conformity to mainstream norms, reinforcing acceptance of

the status quo.

- b) Some students receive elite educations and others do not in part because of class, race, and gender differences. Because elite schools are very expensive and highly selective, elite members of society have the most access to them.
- c) Most schools in the U.S. practice tracking, sorting students into different groups according to past academic achievement. Studies found that higher-income students tend to be in higher-track classes and lower-class and minority students in lower-track classes. It was further discovered that higher-track students were taught "a more independent type of thinking – self-direction, creativity, critical thinking, pursuing individual assignments, and active involvement in the process of learning." By contrast, lower-track students were taught "a more conforming type of classroom behavior– working quietly, punctuality, cooperation, improving study habits, conforming to rules and expectations, and getting along with others." Higher-income students were, in effect, taught to be high-paid professionals, while lower-class and minority students were taught to become low-paid manual workers.

A path to upward social mobility

American sociologist, Talcott Parsons, argued that a central function of education was to instill in pupils the value of individual achievement. This value was crucial to the functioning of industrialized societies, but it could not be learned in the family. A child's status in the family is ascribed – that is, fixed from birth. By contrast, a child's status in school is largely achieved, and in schools children are assessed according to universal standards, such as exams. According to Parsons, schools, like the wider society, largely operate on meritocratic basis: children achieve their status according to merit (or worth) rather than according to their sex, race or class. Though Parson's view has been subject to much criticism, it is believed by some functionalist theorists that schooling increases meritocracy by rewarding talent and hard work regardless of social background and provides a path to upward social mobility.

(5) Functional and conflict theorists view hidden curriculum in a different light. For functionalists, it is through the hidden curriculum that students learn the expectations, behaviors, and values necessary to succeed in school and society. For conflict theorists, the hidden curriculum serves to differentiate social classes: more is expected of members of elite classes, and they are given greater responsibility and opportunities for problem solving that result in

higher achievement, whereas non-elite schools stress order and discipline over achievement obey.

Although some behavioral norms such as conformity and obedience are essential for occupational success, in a classroom that is overly focused on obedience, students will be conditioned to remain quiet rather than creative. In our age of computers and other electronic technology, critical thinking, analytical skills and creativeness may be more important than conformity and obedience. So in regard to hidden curriculum, we should consider both its positive and negative sides.

(6) The question is open to answer.

(7)

Advantages:

- a) Their curriculum—although it includes the subjects that are required by the state—is designed around the students' interests and needs.
- b) Homeschoolers receive intense, one-on-one teaching.
- c) Contrary to stereotypes, homeschooled children are not isolated. As part of their educational experience, their parents take them to libraries, museums, factories, and nursing homes. Moreover, they develop social skills by associating with people of different ages and backgrounds rather than mostly with their peers.

Disadvantage:

- a) Without official transcripts, home-schooled children may have some difficulties being admitted by colleges.
- b) Home schooling reduces the amount of funding going to local public schools, which ends up hurting the majority of students.

(8) one or the other; or both

"The one continuing purpose of education, since ancient times, has been to bring people to as full a realization as possible of what it is to be a human being. Other statements of educational purpose have also been widely accepted: to develop the intellect, to serve social needs, to contribute to the economy, to create an effective work force, to prepare students for a job or career, to promote a particular social or political system...The broader humanistic purpose includes all of them, and goes beyond them, for it seeks to encompass all the dimensions of human experience." —Arthur W. Foshay, "The Curriculum Matrix: Transcendence and Mathematics," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 1991

Maslow describes the self-actualized person as having full use and

exploitation of talent, capacities, potentialities, etc. Every person is unique. Every person has individual needs, desires, dreams, hopes, fears, and aspirations. Every person is limited in his capacities, but it is not the job of the school to try and diagnose these capacities by means of some curve of normality and thereby deprive any person of the chance to develop those capacities to less than the maximum. The needs of the individual being paramount, it is conclusive that we must approach education with a school program that is geared to the needs, interests, and abilities of each of the students. This is exactly what is necessary: a separate curriculum for each student within the school, a personalized program of study for each student.

Language Enhancement

I. Words and phrases

1.

- (1) Used in “assembly line”, which refers to a system for making things in a factory in which the products move past a line of workers who each make or check one part
- (2) A group of people who have gathered together for a particular purpose
- (3) A group of people who are elected to make laws for a particular country or area
- (4) The right of any group to meet together in order to discuss things
- (5) To make sure that a particular set of rules is obeyed
- (6) To go around a particular area to make sure that nobody is breaking the law there
- (7) The act of supplying sb with sth that they need or want
- (8) Preparations or arrangements made to deal with sth that might or will happen in the future
- (9) A condition in an agreement or law
- (10) To train sb/sth to behave in a particular way or to become used to a particular situation
- (11) To have an important effect on sb/sth; to influence sb over a period of time so that they do certain things or think in a particular way
- (12) To bring into a proper or desired state

- (13) A person who needs other people to take care of them, because of illness that they have had for a long time
- (14) Not based on all the facts, and therefore not correct
- (15) Not legally or officially acceptable

2.

- (1) C (2) B (3) C (4) A (5) D
(6) B (7) C (8) C (9) B (10) C

3.

- (1) deem/consider (2) consider/deem (3) regarded/considered (4) reckoned (5) regarded (6) considered
(7) intervened (8) interferes/intrudes (9) interfere (10) intervene (11) interrupted
(12) intruding
(13) reputation (14) prestige (15) fame (16) prestige
(17) vanish/fade (18) disappeared/vanished (19) fades (20) fade

4.

- (1) hinted at (2) rained down on (3) entail (4) conditioned to (5) on the grounds
(6) wrestle; into line (7) fobbed; off on (8) exhort (9) a testimony to
(10) looked on

II. Sentences and discourse

1.

- (1) Anyway, it is not my concern whether streaming students can really accomplish what is intended or why parents would allow their children to be streamed. My responsibility is to make sure that the students contentedly stay in a class with other students who have more or less the same study abilities.
- (2) Although different ability classes are generally designed in such a way that 99% of the children are bound to stay in their assigned class, I still make an open effort to urge the children to strive for higher levels of success in tests, hinting that if they can achieve that, they might be transferred from the lower class to a higher one as a reward.
- (3) Teachers will not approve students' free will in matters beyond their knowledge. They will only give students privileges, which they can withdraw, depending on whether the students have displayed good behavior or not.

(4) If you do not keep the kids fully occupied with their homework, they are likely to diverge from the goal of our school education.

2.

(1) In 1976 he was found to be suffering from a spinal disease which was unrelated to the accident but which rendered him totally unfit for work.

(2) The soldiers rendered great sacrifices during the disaster relief and have set examples which other relief teams would like to follow.

(3) At first, there wasn't much evidence in the case in his favor. But his lawyer was so experienced that by patient questioning he managed to elicit enough information from the eyewitnesses.

(4) The solution to the drug problem is not legalization, which would only perpetuate the addiction and all the drug-induced diseases and accidents.

(5) Some high schools now strive to increase the number of students taking such courses, and this nationally certified program has been rapidly growing in popularity.

(6) The constitution provides that no organization or individual shall in any way compel voters to elect or not to elect any candidate.

(7) The key to the problem lies in that extreme concentration of income is incompatible with real democracy.

(8) Before deciding whether world population growth is a curse or a blessing, we have to ask ourselves whether an extra person added to the planet uses more or less resources than he or she creates.

(9) I hinted at his imprudence and folly in dealing with interpersonal relationships, but he did not take my hint.

(10) According to materialism, matter is the fundamental and consciousness is derived from the material world, not the material world from consciousness.

4.

即使是在最好的学校，仔细考察其课程及其系列，就会发现存在着缺乏连贯性和诸多内部矛盾

的现象，庆幸的是，当学校将这种总是违反自然规律和次序的课程当成优质教育来哄骗学

生接受时，孩子们并没有相应的语言能力来表述他们的惊恐和愤怒。学校思维的逻辑是：学

生最好带着一套肤浅的、来自于经济学、社会学、自然科学的专业术语离开学校，而不是对

某一学科真正的热忱。然而优质教育需要深度的学习，太多陌生的成年人将困惑强加给孩子，

这些成年人每人单独工作，相互之间只有极其微弱的联系；他们通常自认为拥有专业知识，

而实际上并无专长。