J. CURRICULUM STUDIES, 1993, VOL. 25, NO. 4, 343–358

Exposing the hidden curriculum

JOHN P. PORTELLI

Curriculum theorists usually distinguish the formal (or official or mandated) curriculum from the actual curriculum. The formal curriculum is that curriculum which is officially recognized. It is public, available to all who ask for it and it is meant to be explicit. If there is agreement upon it and if in arriving at the formal curriculum the appropriate considerations have been taken into account, it is also, in a sense, an idealization (that which we seek to attain). The actual curriculum, that which is actually carried out, could be identical to the formal curriculum (although this may be difficult to achieve) and it could be made explicit. The hidden curriculum is usually contrasted with the formal curriculum and may form part of the actual curriculum.

The major aim of this paper is to argue for (1) the claim, made for example by Greene (1983: 3), that the hidden curriculum 'always has a normative or "moral" component', and (2) the related claim that, all things being equal, educators have the responsibility to make the hidden curriculum as explicit as possible. Such positions, it will be argued, arise from the very nature of the *notion* of the hidden curriculum itself rather than, as it is usually claimed, from the kind of things that are often referred to as being learnt implicitly. To argue for these positions it will be necessary to analyse the concept of the hidden curriculum, as well as briefly to look at how the notion is employed and understood by educationists who have defended different conceptions of it. While the analysis will also eliminate some common but misleading misgivings about the notion, it will identify logically possible and meaningful kinds of curricula not always captured, or at least not clearly identified in the literature, but which we need to be aware of for moral and educational reasons.

The hidden curriculum: its origin, importance and existence

The expression 'the hidden curriculum', is relatively new in curriculum discourse. Although the term was first employed in the late 1960s, the concept had been employed earlier. Eisner (1985: 78) refers to the work of Waller in the early 1930s, and Cornbleth (1984: 35) reminds us of Dewey's reference to 'the "collateral learning" of attitudes that occurs in schools that

John P. Portelli is an Associate Professor in the Department of Education, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3M 2J6. From 1988–1991 he was Coordinator of the Graduate Programme in Elementary Education. He co-edited *Philosophy of Education: Introductory Readings* (Ditselig, 1988).

0022–0272/93 $10·00

may have more long-range importance than the explicit school curriculum'. According to Apple (1979) and Gordon (1982) the term was coined by Jackson, while Bennett and LeCompte (1990: 188) attribute 'the invention of the term' to Friedenberg who 'used [it] in a conference in the late 60s'. Since then, the hidden curriculum has captured the attention of curriculum theorists and some philosophers of education, especially those interested in political and social issues.

There are other expressions for the hidden curriculum: 'the unstudied curriculum', 'the implicit curriculum', 'the invisible curriculum', 'the unwritten curriculum', 'the covert curriculum', 'the latent curriculum', 'the silent curriculum', 'the by-products of schooling' and 'what schooling does to people' (Cornbleth 1984, Dreeben 1968, Eisner 1985, Giroux and Purpel 1983, Hicks 1971, Kelly 1977, Martin 1976, Overly 1970, Vallance 1973–74). Various meanings have been attached to the hidden curriculum. While in many cases it is used to identify some specific learning, some, like Sharp and Green (1975), have used the hidden curriculum to mean almost 'a perspective' or 'world-view'. And there is disagreement about its origin, its importance or role, as well as its existence. While Barrow (1976: 137) maintains that the idea of a hidden curriculum 'has a recorded history since the time of Plato', Vallance (1973–74: 6) argues that 'the function of the hidden curriculum had been explicit from the beginning... it went underground only when schooling as a social institution was secure enough to turn for its justification from the control of groups to the welfare of individuals'. She contends that in North America this occurred at the end of the 19th century.

With regard to the importance of the concept, deschoolers such as Illich (1973, 1978), and critical theorists such as Giroux (1988) believe that consideration of the hidden curriculum should play a central role in investigation of the educational process, and especially formal processes such as schooling. Others such as Chiang (1986: 9) hold that the notion of a hidden curriculum 'is now dead'. And Phillips (1980) and Burbules (1980) argue that the hidden curriculum as a latent function no longer has the central role radical educationists ascribe to it, since the notion, they conclude, merely describes rather than explains. Cornbleth (1984: 29) reiterates a similar point when she writes that 'while "hidden curriculum" is an intuitively attractive phrase, one that gives the appearance of accounting for the complexity of how schools affect students and why schools resist change, it tends to label more than to explain'. She also seems to doubt the use of the phrase 'the hidden curriculum' as this 'implies some sort of conspiracy', for which, according to Cornbleth, we lack evidence. My analysis will show that the notion of conspiracy is not always implied by the concept and that one does not need to defend a form of conspiracy theory in order to argue for the importance of the hidden curriculum.

With regard to its existence, certain educationists of a conservative bent maintain that the hidden curriculum is a figment of the imagination created by leftist ideologues. From this perspective, educators need no longer be worried about the negative or positive effects of the hidden curriculum (Lakomski 1988). On the other hand, radicals give more emphasis to the hidden curriculum than to the formal curriculum since they believe that the

hidden curriculum is a prevalent form of knowledge that creates the fabric of false consciousness.

My analysis of the concept will indicate that we need to be cautious with both extremes. Denying the existence of the hidden curriculum seems just mistaken. As Barrow (1976: 137) stresses, 'the fundamental insight [of deschoolers] is surely correct. There is a hidden curriculum. Schools undoubtedly do influence children in more ways than by overtly instructing them or otherwise consciously teaching them'. This fact, however, is not a good reason to conclude that the hidden curriculum is *always* a product of false consciousness although, indeed, it may be. Excessive fixations, whether rooted in conservative or leftist positions, need to be closely scrutinized and, if found faulty, rejected.

Different meanings identified in the literature

One can identify four major meanings of the hidden curriculum in curriculum discourse:

(*a*) the hidden curriculum as the *unofficial expectations*, or implicit but expected messages;
(*b*) the hidden curriculum as *unintended learning outcomes* or messages;
(*c*) the hidden curriculum as *implicit messages* arising from the structure of schooling;
(*d*) the hidden curriculum as *created* by the students.

I will briefly elaborate on each.

(*a*) When Jackson (1968) first used the expression 'the hidden curriculum' in *Life in Classrooms* he captured the meaning identified in (*a*). He talks about unnoticed aspects of school life, and particularly about 'three facts of life' found in schools: the system of crowds, praise and power. These three factors in his view give rise to norms and values which 'collectively form a hidden curriculum which each student (and teacher) must master if he is to make his way satisfactorily through the school' (Jackson 1968: 33–34). Jackson contrasts these norms with 'academic demands' or 'the official curriculum'. For Jackson, the hidden curriculum refers to unofficial expectations, implicit values and norms. He claims that these play an important role, in that failure to attain certain official expectations, such as a student not doing well in arithmetic, can be explained in terms of failure to comply with hidden expectations – the student is unmotivated because he or she does not try to cope with certain systems in schools, has not 'caught on' to the hidden rules of the game. The main characteristic of the hidden curriculum which emerges from Jackson's treatment is that the hidden curriculum is the sum total of unofficial institutional expectations, values and norms aimed at by educational administrators, and perhaps teachers and to a lesser extent parents, and which are initially completely unknown to the students. The hidden curriculum is contrasted with the official curriculum, in which sense the former is hidden because it is not public. It can also be hidden if it is unnoticed by those directing the schooling process.[1]

(*b*) Another widely used meaning of the hidden curriculum is that which focuses on the unintended learning outcomes. While Jackson's seminal work focused on expectations, educationists such as Martin (1976), Gordon (1982) and Connelly and Clandinin (1988: 154–156) have focused on unintended outcomes or messages. Since 'even the most mundane of activities are often accompanied by unintended consequences' (Dale 1990: 191), these outcomes or messages may never be recognized or identified, and even if they are they may never be formally acknowledged. Thus a stronger element of hiddenness is present in this meaning.

(*c*) This notion of the hidden curriculum is put forth by Illich (1978: 82) who focuses on 'the impact of the invariant structure of the school'. According to Illich (1978: 82) this is a hidden structure: it is not officially recognized and it 'constitutes a course of instruction that remains forever beyond the control of the teacher or of the school board. It *necessarily* conveys the message that only through schooling can an individual prepare for adulthood in society, that what is not taught in school is of little value, and that what is learned outside school is not worth knowing'. He also refers to the hidden curriculum as a ritual which hides from 'its participants the contradictions between the myth of an egalitarian society and the class-conscious reality it certifies' (Illich 1978: 88). The hidden curriculum inevitably 'alienates' its participants because of the very nature of the schooling.[2] This kind of hidden curriculum is similar to the one described by Aronowitz and Giroux (1985) in their discussion of Bowles and Gintis's correspondence theory': '... those classroom social relations that embody specific messages which legitimize the particular views of work, authority, social rules, and values that sustain capitalist logic and rationality. ... The power of these messages lies in their seemingly universal qualities – qualities that emerge as part of the structured silences that permeate all levels of school and classroom relations' (Aronowitz and Giroux 1985: 75).

(*d*) This notion of the hidden curriculum is defended by psychologist Snyder (1971) who contrasts the expectations of students with the expectations stated by professors or teachers, and the way in which students react to formal statements of tasks expected from them. Students' views about what it is in fact necessary to do are usually different from the tasks as expressed by teachers. According to Snyder (1971: 6), we end up with 'latent, covert tasks that students (and others) infer as the basis for the rewards in the particular setting'. These latent tasks form part of the hidden curriculum. According to this view, students *know* the content of the hidden curriculum since it arises out of their own reactions and attitudes toward the formal curriculum. Snyder (1971: 7) refers to this as the hidden curriculum since it 'is rarely talked about openly with the faculty or with deans. There is some distrust of those who set its tasks'.

The logic of the hidden curriculum

While the previous section briefly surveyed the major meanings of the hidden curriculum available in the literature, this section will take a closer

look at the logic of the concept. The first point to note is that the word used is 'hidden' and not 'hiding'. '*X* is hidden' could mean either:

1. *X actually* hid himself or herself, that is, *X* is responsible for the hiding, *X* is an *agent*. This corresponds to the meaning of 'to hide' when used as an intransitive verb: 'to conceal oneself'. (As when someone is playing hide and seek, and is not 'It'. In this case, '*X* is hidden' means '*X* is hiding', that is, '*X* is doing the hiding'.)
2. *X* was intentionally concealed by someone else (*Y*). *Y*, an *agent*, knows that *X* is concealed. *Y* knows where *X* is. In this case, *X* is not necessarily an agent. *X* could be either a willing agent or a thing.
3. *X* is concealed, *X* is hidden unintentionally. No one meant to conceal *X*. It might also be the case that *X* does *not know* that he or she is in fact hidden. Again, *X* could be a willing agent or a thing.

The hidden curriculum could not refer to (1), for the hidden curriculum is not an agent. So, when we talk of a curriculum that is hidden (*Z*), we could mean either that *Z* is intentionally hidden from *A*, *B*, or *C* by someone, or that *Z* is concealed (its existence or presence, is unknown and/or unrecognizable) and no one meant to bring this situation about.

The second point to remember is that 'to be hidden' is the expression of a relation. *X* could be concealed from *A* but not from *B*. We could *find* a hidden curriculum yet meaningfully refer to it as 'hidden' if it remains hidden for someone else. Thus, Martin (1976: 143) writes, 'a hidden curriculum can be found and yet remain hidden, for finding it is one thing and telling is another'. And contrary to Cornbleth (1984: 29), it seems to me that if we want to focus on the 'operation and influence' of the hidden curriculum (because of possible negative effects) then we have to face, at the outset, the what, by whom, from whom and how questions. We must ask not only *what* is hidden, but *by* whom and *from* whom. This is precisely the issue which makes the notion of the hidden curriculum so complex. There are different forms and levels which hiddenness can take.

Given that we are talking about an educational context and about the curriculum, let us consider the possible and meaningful levels and forms hiddenness might take.

Let *T* = Teacher(s), *S* = Student(s) or Learner(s) and *X* = anything that is claimed to be hidden in the curriculum, for example, norms, values and beliefs.

A	**B**
X is unintended by *T*	*X* is intended by *T*
1. *X* unrecognized by *T*	1. *X* unrecognized by *T*
2. *X* unrecognized by *S*	2. *X* unrecognized by *S*
3. *X* recognized by *T*	3. *X* recognized by *T*
4. *X* recognized by *S*	4. *X* recognized by *S*

'Hiddenness' can be subsumed under two broad categories: (1) *A* in which *T* did *not* intend to bring about *X*; and (2) *B* in which *T did* intend to bring about *X*. (In the latter case, one could further distinguish between (i) *T* wants *S* to be aware of his or her intention, or (ii) *T* does not want *S* to be aware of his or her intention). In both *A* and *B*, 'hiddenness' arises in a variety of

ways. Let us see what meaningful possibilities can arise. In all cases X is present.

Situations under category A

Situation 1: A.1.2–this is the strongest sense of hiddenness for T did not intend to bring about X and X is hidden from both T and S although S may have learned X.

Situation 2: A.3.2.–X is hidden for the student. T did not intend to bring about X, but did recognize X. Although S did not recognize X, S may have learned X. If T continues to bring about X and is aware of doing so, we will end up with another situation *B.2.3* which will be identified shortly.

Situation 3: A.1.4.–X is recognized by S although T did not intend to bring about X and is not aware of X.[3]

Situations under category B

Situation 4: B.1.2–Although T intended to bring about X neither T nor S recognized X (although S may have learned X). This may seem odd, however, it is logically possible, at least, that T could fail to recognize that he or she has in fact brought about that which he or she intended. This is the strongest sense of hiddenness under this category.

Situation 5: B.2.3–X is intended by T who recognizes X. S does not recognize X. X is therefore hidden for S.

Situation 6: B.1.4–X is intended by T, unrecognized by T but recognized by S.

Situation 7: B.3.4–Although X is intended by T, and recognized both by T and S, X could still be hidden in the sense that it is not part of the official curriculum (i.e., it is not made public) although it is part of the actual curriculum.

What can one conclude from this analysis of the notion of the hidden curriculum? Although one usually refers to *the* hidden curriculum, which may give the impression that there is some universal essence of the concept, the analysis clearly identifies different kinds of hiddenness which arise from different contexts involving different relationships between at least T, S and X. This ought to show us that statements such as, 'once the hidden curriculum is found, it is no longer hidden' or, more dangerous, 'it can be left alone, because once it is found, it is no longer hidden' (King 1986: 83) are not necessarily the case. It very much depends on *from whom* it was hidden and *who becomes aware of it* once it is found. This remark relates to a point made by Gordon (1983: 215) who, while admitting that students can become conscious of what they have learned via the hidden curriculum, states: 'The hidden curriculum teaches in such a way that the pupils are usually unaware of having been taught anything. This is why we call it a *hidden* curriculum.' The analysis, however, illustrates that the logical possibilities of the students being aware of a hidden curriculum while the teacher is not, are as high as those in which the teacher is aware of a hidden curriculum while the students

are not. Moreover, the analysis also shows that students *can* determine or develop a hidden curriculum of their own (Snyder's work [1971] shows that they actually do).[4]

The analysis also reminds us that something does not necessarily need to be hidden intentionally in order to be a hidden curriculum. In other words, contrary to Cornbleth's position (1984: 29), the hidden curriculum does not necessarily imply 'some sort of conspiracy'. However, this does not mean, as some have concluded (McCutcheon 1988: 191), that the hidden curriculum is primarily, if not exclusively, connected with what is not intended. The distinction between the formal curriculum (in the sense of what is deliberately and explicitly provided) and the hidden curriculum can be very misleading if one assumes that because the former is characterized by deliberateness, then deliberateness has to be missing from that of the latter. The fact that a teacher deliberately aims to teach *X*, does not in itself preclude the possibility that the teacher also aims to keep the students unaware of his or her teaching them *X*. The fact that something is done deliberately or intentionally does not always contrast with it being done in a concealed manner.

There is one more possible confusion which the analysis ought to help us eliminate. Phillips (1980: 276) criticizes the view of the hidden curriculum promoted by radical educationists such as Illich, Bowles and Gintis, and Levin, on the grounds that they have attempted to explain educational events simply or primarily by referring to the hidden curriculum as a latent function, i.e., one which is 'neither intended or recognized'. Phillips (1980: 277) identifies two major problems with this view, which correspond to the third view of the hidden curriculum identified in the second section of this paper: (1) it makes sense to explain something in terms of latent functions only when a manifest function fails to explain; (2) radicals have stated but not demonstrated that 'our particular social system *must* have the hidden curriculum in order to survive'. Phillips (1980: 279) concludes that radical educationists are 'confusing unintended consequences with such hidden functions. It is not a *function* of the curriculum that it trains some students to be obedient to authority, or to accept failure; but it may be an unintended consequence'.

By identifying different *kinds* of hiddenness, our analysis of the concept indicates that the hidden curriculum as unintended consequences is not necessarily meant simply to explain educational practices. It could simply describe or point out things which run counter to our own prescribed aims, or reveal things which we had not envisaged but which in fact are educationally worthwhile. The nature of the hidden curriculum as unintended consequences *in itself* does not necessarily offer any explanation, although it may be very valuable. However, this is not to say that it could not serve an explanatory function. While radicals may be confusing 'unintended consequences' with 'hidden functions', it does not follow that the hidden curriculum has only a descriptive function. To cite Phillip's own example, while training students to be obedient to authority may be an unintended consequence for some, as Barrow (1976: 137) notes, it is not unusual for people to assume and expect schools to teach such things implicitly. Something that is an unintended consequence for someone can actually be an

intended and desirable, although hidden, one for someone else (Bennett and LeCompte 1990: 189). Moreover, the fact that we can explain some educational practice by referring to something that is manifest does not rule out the possibility of there being other explanations which are manifest at the present. Focus, for example, on situation *A.1.4* presented in the analysis. A teacher may assume that students are behaving in a certain way because of a lack of understanding of what he or she had explained. And that may be a reasonable explanation. However, that in itself does not necessarily imply that there were not actually other explanations equally reasonable (and possibly better) than the one that the teacher thought of. For example, the students may have recognized and learned something, which the teacher has not recognized but which actually offers a better explanation of their behaviour.

Consider the following example which I encountered during one of my student teaching supervision sessions in a primary class towards the end of the school year. The student teacher (henceforth *ST*) had planned a lesson intended to introduce the children to subtraction. The children, 30 in all, were divided into five groups of six seated around tables. *ST* had a new box of Cheerios (a breakfast cereal) and she placed a heap of Cheerios in the centre of each of the tables. *ST*, started by asking each child to count 10 Cheerios and place the Cheerios in front of them. Then she asked them to add two more and count the total together. Then she asked them to eat two and count the total again. The children seemed to be quite intrigued by the exercise. *ST* showed several other similar examples using different styles but always with the same intention. After five minutes, one of the groups (let us say group *Z*), which I had been closely observing, suddenly started to make mistakes even though they had earlier correctly worked out similar if not identical cases of subtraction. They got more intrigued in munching Cheerios and chatting. *ST* got a bit impatient and after a while stopped the exercise and moved on to something else. In our post-session conference *ST* noted that the exercise would have to be done again especially because group *Z* had missed the point of the exercise and had not shown any grasp of the concept of subtraction, in that they were consistently making mistakes towards the end. Given that *ST* had to focus on 30 students, one may concede that ST's explanation (based on something manifest) is quite reasonable: the students in group *Z* did not grasp the notion of subtraction, therefore they got bored and distracted since they were making mistakes. As someone who was sitting next to group, I noticed that they seemed to have understood subtraction (actually they seemed to have already known this), but they became more interested in eating Cheerios, and realized that if they made mistakes the teacher would repeat the exercise which would in turn give them more Cheerios to eat. Is ST's explanation more reasonable than mine? Phillips's position would force us to reply in the affirmative. This, to me, is very misleading.

The hidden curriculum and its moral implications

This section will elucidate how each of the possibilities of the hidden curriculum identified earlier involves or raises moral concerns and will argue

that this provides good reasons for us to unveil the hidden curriculum as much as is possible.

Let us start by considering the possibilities under *Category A*. The three situations included in this category have one major thing in common: X is hidden unintentionally, and although X was learned, this happened unintentionally. In these situations, the fact that X has been learned may either be an undesirable or a desirable consequence of our actions in the class. The major problem with the first instance is that since the consequence is undesirable then what we, as teachers, are doing may actually run counter to the very outcomes we sought or to our educational beliefs, and contradict what we think we are doing. Teachers, as responsible persons, have the moral responsibility to diminish undesirable, unintended consequences to the extent that this is possible. Once they are aware of unintended outcomes (and such an awareness is very possible if we reflect critically on our teaching), they need to consider whether or not these outcomes run counter to the nature of an educational process. If an unintended outcome is deemed as being undesirable then (a) teachers ought to keep in mind the possibility of such hidden curricula in their future planning and (b) teachers ought to raise the issue explicitly. If my aim was to teach X, but in fact I realize later that the students or at least some students learned Y, which is deemed to be undesirable and goes against X, then I have the responsibility to address this in class with the hope of trying to correct negative results which may have arisen from this. As Martin (1981: 107) has noted, one way to eliminate an undesirable hidden curriculum is to 'show it to its recipients', and once we find it 'we can raise their consciousness, if you will, so that they will know what is happening to them'. If the unintended learning was not undesirable, then I see no reason why it should not be included in future goals which the teacher intends to bring about and be made explicit.[5]

The kind of obligations identified, as Gordon (1981: 7) has observed, call for sophistication and sensitivity on the part of the teacher. The process of identifying consequences and searching for their causes is not an easy one. Various considerations must be taken into account.[6] However, one may ask: 'What if certain unintended outcomes remain unrecognized no matter how hard one tries?' It is possible that there will always be some unintended consequences of our actions. We cannot guarantee that this will not take place however critical, reflective, sensitive and experienced we are. In such cases, there is not much that one can do. Martin (1976: 148) reminds us, that 'it is impossible to do away with all hidden curricula; hence for any given setting, we must always be on our guard'. My point is to emphasize first that good teaching entails the *moral* obligation to be on guard against these possibilities, and second that there are times when we can become aware of unintended consequences which need to be made explicit, for as Giroux (1988: 51) argues:

> By making both students and teachers aware of the hidden curriculum as it has traditionally operated, both groups can develop an understanding of its components and effects and work to form new insights about it. Once the hidden curriculum becomes obvious, students and teachers will be more sensitive to recognizing and altering its worst effects and can work to build new structures, methods, and social relationships in which underlying classroom norms and values will work so as to promote learning rather than adjustment.

Let us now turn to the possibilities under *Category B*. The only common quality in these situations is that the teacher intends to bring about *X*. In two of these situations (*B.1.2* and *B.1.4*) *X* is not recognized by the teacher. The element of hiddenness in these two cases is similar to that in *A.1.2* and *A.1.4* since in both *B.1.2* and *A.1.2*, *X* is not recognized by *T* and *S*, and in both *B.1.4* and *A.1.4*, *X* is not recognized by *T*. The lack of recognition on the part of the teacher in *B.1.2* and *B.1.4* may be considered to be more serious than those in *Category A* since in the situations in *Category B* the teacher had actually intended to bring about *X*. This lack of recognition may be interpreted as a lack of interest or ability to teach on the part of the teacher. Although surely that may be the case, one might argue that this is not always very serious since it is not always easy and possible for a teacher to take the stance of the 'outsider' or 'stranger' as interpreted by Greene (1988: 188)– the stance of the 'homecomer [who] notices details and patterns in his or her environment he or she never saw before'. Yet, as argued in the preceding paragraph in the discussion of *A.1.2* and *A.1.4*, teachers do have the responsibility to be aware of what they are actually doing and to make this explicit. And as Connelly and Clandinin (1988: 155) suggest, 'the only way to be sensitive to the hidden curriculum in our own teaching is . . . by reflecting in detail and in depth on [our] own classes . . . [we] will need to look at [our] bodily behaviour, [our] instructional practices, and so forth'.[7]

B.3.4 may be seen as the least problematic of the situations in *Category B*, for in this case both the teacher *and* the students are aware of *X* which was intended by the teacher. This may be considered as the least damaging since those directly involved are aware of what is happening. The hiddenness in this case arises if *X* or the intention of bringing about *X* is not included in the formal or official curriculum, or is withheld from public knowledge. Given that *X* is deemed to be worthwhile, then one could argue that it ought to be formally acknowledged. There are at least two reasons in support of this. First, those responsible for children outside school, that is, parents or guardians, have the right to know what the teacher's aims are. Although this is fair, it raises the issue of how much detail a formal curriculum should include. For example, should a formal curriculum include the aims of all classes? A positive reply is unreasonable. Moreover, a formal curriculum cannot include, prior to experience, the aims which may develop in experience as the teaching in a class unfolds; although, of course, these may be included in future curricula. The distinction between wide aims and specific aims which arise from the wide aims is important here. It is the former which need to be formally included in an official curriculum given that the more specific aims will be consistent with the wide ones. And reflective, self-critical teaching will help ensure that this consistency is the case. Second, we need to make the curriculum as explicit as possible in order to safeguard the possibility of including things which may be morally reprehensible although the teacher and students, for whatever reasons, may not think so.[8] Of course, there may be situations where, given the rigidity in a school or a community, it may not be in the interest of the well-being of the students to publicize immediately certain aims or intentions which are morally and educationally acceptable and of which the students are aware. If made public, the teacher may, for example, be obliged to stop certain

discussions about controversial issues even if these discussions are conducted in a reasonable and educationally acceptable manner. None the less, all things being equal, teachers do have the responsibility to state explicitly their aims and where possible these ought to be included in the formal curriculum.

There is one other possibility to consider under *Category B–B.2.3*. In this situation the teacher had intended to bring about *X* and he or she recognized *X* but the students did not. The situation raises at least two broad questions: (1) should teachers make their intentions (aims) known to the students? and (2) should teachers inform the students that, in their view, they have learned *X* although the students may not be aware of having done so? In either of the cases, an element of hiddenness *could* arise. In the first instance, the students may never know what the real intentions of the teacher were unless they are told. Of course, the students could speculate and their conclusions may actually coincide with the teacher's. This, of course, may create another element of hiddenness on the part of the students unless the students reveal to the teacher what they speculate to be the aims of the teacher. The likelihood of this happening, however, is slim unless a strong element of trust exists – and, in any case, if this trust exists, then the teacher would most probably have shared his or her aims with the students. Another element of hiddenness also arises in the cases ensuing from question (2). This kind of hiddenness is associated with a lack of self-awareness. Students are not always aware or fully aware of what they have learned although their beliefs and actions may be greatly influenced by what they have learned. In either of these cases I am arguing that the teachers have a moral and educational responsibility to do their best to eliminate this kind of hidden curriculum by publicly expressing their intentions and trying to make students aware of what they think the students have learned.

In either of the cases mentioned above, the intentions or intended outcomes are not stated *explicitly* by the teacher either before or after *X* has been brought about and therefore the teacher would have been contributing to the existence of such a hidden curriculum. There are at least two ways in which this hiddenness could take place. In one instance, a teacher may declare his or her intentions to be *A, B, C* while in fact he or she has *D, E, F* in mind. In a second instance, a teacher may seriously intend all his or her intentions although he or she may not express all of them. In other words, a teacher may not reveal all his or her intentions to the students although the teacher aims to achieve them all. The first instance may be deemed to be more serious as the teacher may be charged with attempting to deceive the students. Such a kind of deception, however, may not be the case in the second instance. Nevertheless, the teacher could be described as not revealing the whole story, which can be interpreted as a form of deception or at least as showing a lack of sincerity or openness. A clarification is needed here. The notion of deception I adhere to is based on that proposed by Bok (1978: 13–16). The notion of deception involves an intention on the part of someone who means to make others believe what he or she does not believe. I do not adhere to the notion of deception defended, for example, by Nyberg (1987). According to Nyberg (1987), anything which falls short of telling the whole truth amounts to a deception, or as Morgan (1987: 31) critically depicts this notion, 'telling the truth requires telling all of it to everyone all of

the time'. I am arguing simply that there are times when one has the responsibility to reveal all the aims one has in mind with regard to some specific activity or set of activities to the person or persons who will be directly involved in the activity or activities. This responsibility arises from an element of sincerity, honesty, trust and respect normally expected or presumed in certain circumstances or relationships. Teaching is one of these.[9]

An educational process obliges teachers to treat students with respect. And as Siegel (1988: 114) notes, treating students with respect demands (a) 'recognizing the student's right to question, to challenge, and to demand reasons and justification for what is being taught' and (b) being honest with them. He insists that 'to deceive, indoctrinate, or otherwise fool students into believing anything, even if it is true, is to fail to treat them with respect' (Siegel 1988: 114). In the instances that I referred to above, a teacher *may not* have intended to indoctrinate. However, we have to be careful for if a student is not aware of what is actually being taught, he or she may be pushed, without his or her knowledge, to accept a certain position because in such situations it may not be possible for a student to make his or her own decision in a responsible manner, or as Gordon (1981: 5) puts it, 'as a responsible, autonomous making individual'. Denying awareness or discouraging students from seriously looking at other possibilities or counter-evidence (even if this is done unintentionally on the part of a teacher) is miseducative.[10] The seriousness of the matter increases when one acknowledges that students in general do tend to believe that the teachers' views, beliefs or values are always correct. Moreover, as Hare (1990: 384) has pointed out very clearly, there is no guarantee that the passage of time will help students eliminate beliefs held without consideration of counter-evidence – in fact there are situations where 'the passage of time would make no difference or even make matters worse'. Making students aware of what the class is really trying to achieve, that is, expressing the intentions to one's students, ought to help in reducing these problems. As Martin (1976: 148) warns us, 'consciousness raising is [no] guarantee that a person will not succumb to a hidden curriculum. But still, one is in a better position to resist if one knows what is going on'.

Notwithstanding these objections to *B.2.3* one might argue that certain matters, for example, attitudes, ought to go unrecognized at the time since explicit attention would tend to distort them. And some, such as Oakeshott (1967: 175), insist with regard to intellectual virtues that 'they cannot be *learned* separately', they are 'never explicitly learned . . [they] may be learned in everything that is learned', and they 'cannot be taught overtly, by precept'.[11] In the same vein, Warnock (1984: 168) insists that 'all moral education . . . must be by means of the so-called "hidden curriculum" . . . Education in morals must be by example'.

This line of thought allows, actually calls for, the presence of implicit learning. In some cases it is defended on the grounds that otherwise there will most likely be a distortion of the attitude being transmitted. In the other cases, implicit learning is justified on the grounds that moral education can only be taught by example.

There are two objections that can be raised against this view. The first is based on what is involved in 'learning by example'. As Wilson (1988: 292)

explains, 'learning by example' implies imitation which calls for an awareness and reasons of what one is imitating. In order for learning by example to be successful one has 'to grasp the concepts, reasons and point of the whole enterprise' (Wilson 1988: 292). Unless these concepts, etc., are made explicit, the students may misunderstand and misinterpret the teacher's intentions and meanings that might arise from the teacher's example. If certain actions are to be taken as an example, the students need to know what kind of example the action represents and what it intends to achieve – especially since the *same* kind of action may be used for different, at times even opposing purposes. Therefore some explicit instruction and explanation are called for at some stage. Otherwise we might end up with the same kind of distortion the objection itself raises. Of course, being explicit on its own will not guarantee that something will definitely not be misinterpreted or misunderstood. Unintended outcomes cannot be fully overcome. Yet, as was argued earlier, we do have the responsibility to lessen any negative results which may ensue from such outcomes. To be explicit and clear is the first major step in that direction. One may get the impression that I am arguing against learning or teaching by example. This is not the case. The second point that needs to be made is that just as teaching is a polymorphous concept which therefore takes different forms, likewise learning can occur in different ways. And these different ways include more than simply learning by example or precept. As Wilson (1988) argues, teaching does not involve learning merely by example or merely by precept. It involves both; the two are not necessarily in opposition. And in certain instances, I hope in many, teaching would also involve the give-and-take of discussion which goes beyond either. Moreover, linking learning by example solely to certain areas, and learning by precept solely to other areas leads to a false dichotomy which 'tempts us to omit not only the cognitive or "intellectual" elements in morality, literary appreciation, music and other such areas, but also the affective or "feeling" elements in science, history and so forth . . .' (Wilson 1988: 292) – this in itself creates another hidden curriculum.

This discussion raises several basic questions. To what extent does teaching by means of the so-called hidden curriculum lead to a possible form of distortion? To what extent does a lack of explicitness in aims or intentions amount to deception? Do any of these forms of 'teaching' go against treating students with respect? Are the procedures that ensue from this position morally objectionable? Or, to phrase it in Peters's terms (1966: 45), should these procedures be ruled out 'on the grounds that they lack willingness and voluntariness'? Should an educational process *always* attempt to exclude, minimize or eliminate any element of hiddenness or elusiveness? I have been arguing for an affirmative reply to the last four questions. Ultimately, the position defended in this paper rests on the notion of teaching as an intentional and co-operative activity.[12] And this implies that trust is 'a *sine qua non* of teaching in that in its absence teaching would be a futile exercise' (Pearson 1989: 77). And as Freire (1970: 80) explains, 'trust is contingent on the evidence which one party provides the others of his true, concrete intentions. . . '. How can one, then, build trust if one does not express one's intentions? To paraphrase Baier (quoted by Pearson 1989: 77) and Sockett (1990: 232–235), while getting trust started is more difficult than maintaining

it, the easiest thing is to destroy it. Becoming aware of a hidden curriculum and making it more explicit ought to eliminate such a destruction.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Sharon Bailin, Harold Entwistle, William Hare, Patrick Shannon and Harvey Siegel for helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper which was presented at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education 1986 Annual Meeting in Winnipeg, Canada.

Notes

1. For other examples of the use of this meaning of the hidden curriculum see the following: Eisner (1985: 74–83) and Ellis, MacKey and Glenn (1988).
2. Illich does not rule out the possibility that those who are in the end responsible for the actual setting or structuring of schools and what goes on in schools are aware of these outcomes, in most cases *unintended* by teachers and *unrecognized* by both teachers and students.
3. One may want to identify a fourth situation under *Category A: A.3.4.* In this case although X was unintended by T, X is recognized by both T and S. If this situation is subsumed under *Category A* it would be the weakest sense of hiddenness under this category since both T and S, who are the most directly involved in the teaching–learning act, are aware of X. X, however, may never become part of the official or publicly advertised curriculum. I will not be classifying this situation under *Category A* for the moment the teacher recognizes and continues to proceed in the same manner, then this situation would fall under *Category B.* And this possibility will be discussed later under the situations that arise in *Category B.*
4. That students can and do hide things from teachers is also a point made by Freire (Shor and Freire 1987: 22) when he writes:

> People from dominated groups speak several idioms, depending on their situation. When authorities are around, they use a defensive language full of artificial ploys and constructions to 'get by'. These forms of discourse are the linguistic shapes of the larger power of struggle in society. I hear these different idioms and felt the class was going well when they spoke in non-defensive voices. They did this often enough for me to learn about their culture, their consciousness. They are very clever in *hiding from the teacher*, to say what the teacher wants to hear, to confuse the teacher with defensive statements and copycat answering from the teacher's own words. This defensive language prevent teachers from finding out what the students really know and can do. (Emphasis added)

5. This becomes a case of situation *B.2.3* which will be discussed shortly.
6. For an elaboration of this point, see Martin (1976).
7. The authors suggest 'methods' or 'tools' for engaging in reflection which can be done alone or with others. They suggest the following: journal-keeping, biography, picturing, document analysis, storytelling, letter writing, teacher interviews and participant observation. Irrespective of what procedures one uses, one has to be able and willing to analyse openly one's teaching through self-examination and observation from 'outsiders'. And this requires that one moves away from the linear, inflexible and almost secretive kind of teaching associated with 'teacher as executive'.
8. The Keegstra case in Alberta, Canada may be cited as an example. See Hare (1990: 375–398).
9. For an elaboration and support of this point see: Freire (1970, especially Chs 2 and 3), Hibberd (1985), Morgan (1987), Sockett (1990).

10. This point is related to another one Dearden (1988) makes with regard to the inclusion of controversial issues in the curriculum. Dearden's point (1988: 172) is that 'to teach a subject in a way that makes no reference to the controversial parts of it is to misrepresent it'. Likewise, it can be argued that since denied awareness of some points of view of a certain subject might lead to viewing that subject from a narrow perspective, so such a lack of awareness might be seen as leading to a misrepresentation of the subject or discipline in question. And this raises moral issues with regard to the integrity of the subject-matter.
11. One may get the impression from Oakeshott's account (1967) that teaching overtly is identical to teaching by precept. Teaching by precept is *not* the only overt way of teaching.
12. For an elaboration of this point, see Pearson (1989, Ch. 6).

References

APPLE, M. (1979) *Ideology and Curriculum* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul).

ARONOWITZ, S. and GIROUX, H. (1985) *Education Under Siege: The Conservative, Liberal and Radical Debate Over Schooling* (South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey).

BARROW, R. (1976) *Radical Education: A Critique of Freeschooling and Deschooling* (London: Martin Robertson).

BENNETT, K. P. and LECOMPTE, M. D. (1990) *The Way Schools Work: A Sociological Analysis of Education* (New York: Longman).

BOK, S. (1978) *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life* (New York: Pantheon Books).

BURBULES, N. C. (1980) The hidden curriculum and the latent functions of schooling: two overlapping perspectives, 2: Who hides the hidden curriculum? In C. J. B. Macmillan (ed.) *Philosophy of Education* (Normal, IL: Philosophy of Education Society), 281–291.

CHIANG, L. (1986) *Is Our Understanding of the Hidden Curriculum Hidden from Us?* ERIC ED 285 256.

CONNELLY, F. M. and CLANDININ, D. J. (1988) *Teachers as Curriculum Planners: Narratives of Experience* (Toronto: OISE Press).

CORNBLETH, C. (1984) Beyond hidden curriculum? *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 16 (1): 29–36.

DALE, M. (1990) Intentional explanations and radical theories of education. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 10 (3): 179–194.

DEARDEN, R. F. (1988) Controversial issues in the curriculum. In W. Hare and J. P. Portelli (eds) *Philosophy of Education: Introductory Readings* (Calgary, Alberta: Ditselig), 167–176.

DREEGEN, R. (1968) *On What Is Learned in School* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley).

EISNER, E. (1985) *The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs*, 2nd edn. (New York: Macmillan).

ELLIS, A. K., MACKEY, J. A. and GLENN, A. D. (1988) *The School Curriculum* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon).

FREIRE, P. (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury).

GIROUX, H. (1988) *Teachers as Intellectuals: Towards a Critical Pedagogy of Learning* (Granby, MA: Bergin and Garvey).

GIROUX, H. and PURPEL, D. (eds) (1983) *The Hidden Curriculum and Moral Education: Deception or Discovery?* (Berkeley, CA: McCutchan).

GORDON, D. (1981) The immorality of the hidden curriculum. *Journal of Moral Education*, 10 (1): 3–8.

GORDON, D. (1982) The concept of the hidden curriculum. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 16 (2): 187–198.

GORDON, D. (1983) Rules and the effectiveness of the hidden curriculum. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 17 (2): 207–218.

GREENE, M. (1983) Introduction. In H. Giroux and D. Purpel (eds) *The Hidden Curriculum and Moral Education: Deception or Discovery?* (Berkeley, CA: McCutchan).

GREENE, M. (1988) Teacher as stranger. In W. Hare and J. P. Portelli (eds) *Philosophy of Education: Introductory Readings* (Calgary, Alberta: Ditselig), 187–200.

HARE, W. (1990) Limiting the freedom of expression: the Keegstra Case. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 15 (4): 375–389.

HIBBERD, F. N. J. (1985) Must an educator be sincere? *Journal of Moral Education*, 14 (3): 162–169.

HICKS, H. L. (1971) The invisible curriculum. In W. Van Til (ed.) *Curriculum: Quest for Relevance* (New York: Houghton Mifflin), 107–109.

ILLICH, I. (1973) After deschooling, what? In A. Gartner, C. Greer and F. Riessman (eds) *After Deschooling, What?* (New York: Harper and Row), 1–28.

ILLICH, I. (1978) In lieu of education. In I. Illich *Toward a History of Needs: Essays* (New York: Bantam), 68–92.

JACKSON, P. (1968) *Life in Classrooms* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston).

KELLY, A. V. (1977) *The Curriculum: Theory and Practice* (London: Harper and Row).

KING, S. E. (1986) Inquiry into the hidden curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 2 (1): 82–90.

LAKOMSKI, G. (1988) Witches, weather gods, and phlogiston: the demise of the hidden curriculum. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 18 (4): 451–463.

MARTIN, J. R. (1976) What should we do with a hidden curriculum when we find one? *Curriculum Inquiry*, 6 (2): 135–151.

MARTIN, J. R. (1981) The ideal of the educated person. *Educational Theory*, 31 (2): 97–109.

MCCUTCHEON, G. (1988) Curriculum and the work of teachers. In L. E. Beyer and M. W. Apple (eds) *The Curriculum: Problems, Politics and Possibilities* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press), 191–203.

MORGAN, K. P. (1987) Let's play dominoes again. In B. Arnstine and D. Arnstine (eds) *Philosophy of Education 1987* (Normal, IL: Philosophy of Education Society), 27–38.

NYBERG, D. (1987) The moral complexity of deception. In B. Arnstine and D. Arnstine (eds) *Philosophy of Education 1987* (Normal, IL: The Philosophy of Education Society), 3–26.

OAKESHOTT, M. (1967) Learning and teaching. In R. S. Peters (ed.) *The Concept of Education* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 156–176.

OVERLY, N. (ed) (1970) *The Unstudied Curriculum: Its Impact on Children* (Washington, DC: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development).

PEARSON, A. T. (1989) *The Teacher: Theory and Practice in Teacher Education* (New York: Routledge).

PETERS, R. S. (1966) *Ethics and Education* (London: Allen and Unwin).

PHILLIPS, D. C. (1980) The hidden curriculum and the latent functions of schooling: two overlapping perspectives. 1: why the hidden curriculum is hidden. In C. B. J. Macmillan (ed.) *Philosophy of Education 1980* (Normal, IL: Philosophy of Education Society), 274–280.

SHARP, R. and GREEN, A. (1975) *Education and Social Control: A Study in Progressive Primary Education* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul).

SHOR, I. and FREIRE, P. (1987) *A Pedagogy for Liberation: Dialogues on Transforming Education* (South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey).

SIEGEL, H. (1988) Critical thinking as an educational ideal. In W. Hare and J. P. Portelli (eds) *Philosophy of Education: Introductory Readings* (Calgary, Alberta: Ditselig), 107–122.

SNYDER, B. R. (1971) *The Hidden Curriculum* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf).

SOCKETT, H. (1990) Accountability, trust, and ethical codes of practice. In J. Goodland, R. Soder and K. A. Sirotnik (eds) *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), 224–250.

VALLANCE, E. (1973–74) Hiding the hidden curriculum. *Curriculum Theory Network*, 4 (1): 5–21.

WARNOCK, M. (1984) Broadcasting ethics: some neglected issues. *Journal of Moral Education*, 13 (3): 168–172.

WILSON, J. (1988) Example or timetable? a note on the Warnock fallacy. In W. Hare and J. P. Portelli (eds) *Philosophy of Education: Introductory Readings* (Calgary, Alberta: Ditselig), 291–294.