

Gender and Constructs from the Hidden Curriculum

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The school is a foundational instance in the constructionism of gender, because of the rationale of its purposes and the framing of its semantic intentions in organizing awareness of individuals as persons and in their participation as citizens. However, once the school has determined its interventions, it is left unchecked on the implicit or invisible contents which are structurally incorporated in the person, and without this basis, the contributions to the official curriculum would be practically null. This work addresses an integrative epistemology in both official and hidden curricula, and their impact on society. The receptors and learners become partners of the constructs that provide identity or non-identity through symbolic formations of a real culture which is internalized and exercised in everyday life. The gender aftermath of the hidden curriculum from the school curriculum contents are very important in designing the sense of living of the individuals and, in this sense, the school becomes a code of co-participatory citizenship builder. The patterns of education support the basis, out of which are built definitions of the individual identity and of the collectivity, meaning both teachers and learners, managers and actors of the differences of gender.

Keywords: Hidden; Curriculum; Gender; Learners and Identities; Equity; Citizenship

Introduction

The significant progress in the education of women is considered one of the most important silent revolutions of the twentieth century. Once women released, in a certain sense, of the prejudice of their role as the passive, submissive and individuals without autonomy, education today becomes a complex task, since it has been incorporated into education, a female subject when education has been designed for male subjects and it has not structured a specific pedagogical formula for the female gender. Educating now, conveys to the formation of free, assertive, respectful and dialoguing women that contribute to the solution of current world issues and to encourage to live in a more just and democratic society. The task is to transform the classroom spaces into reflexive spaces, capable of creating a civic consciousness, an autonomy of life and of freedom, so that with multitudes of professional women, will recover the importance of women in the world.

The educational space, considered as an instance for reproduction and development of culture, receives the input from the greatly increased number of educated women, as a critical talent that revolutionizes social relations and restructures the parameters which are starting to emerge in the 21st century. The disciplinary contents, educational models, educational syllabuses and everything concerning education are in a constant process of transformation, so that no longer we can speak of a

single model of educational reform, but of a lifelong quest to adapt the increased enrolling of feminization into the educational structures, to incorporate the hypermobility of the phenomena of the economic and political systems and that of information.

Women of the 21st century have emerged from silence to become the workforce that transforms critical issues of development into platforms for the development of goals and purposes of the social work.

Education, in technical terms, can be centered in the concept of syllabuses that contain the knowledge to be transmitted and developed, strictly, through platforms of educational models, (classroom, web, etc.), but to this, it must be added with something that falls in the field of things that are not possible to incorporate, rationally, to the mechanisms of the binomial process, teaching-learning, anything related to the *hidden curriculum* and that, in this work, we intend to develop in terms of the impact on the constructionism of gender.

The term hidden curriculum, coined in 1968 by Philip W. Jackson, stated that "education" was a process of socialization, allowing the visualization of the implicit learning of the students during their schooling. The norms, values and social relations that have hitherto been concealed and often remained in the obvious dimension of school life, have now emerged to the fore and have become visible. The incorporation of the *hidden curriculum* to the designing of new pedagogies has been used

to develop the proposed competencies as the basis of the educational reform of the 21st century.

Stating the Problem

The relationship of gender, education and the hidden curriculum is an epistemological line that has been investigated since the late XX century because of the importance of changing the contents of the male-female paradigm and its influence in the social field. In this sense, Hernandez (2003), considers education as a mechanism that produces social inequities, resulting from the theory of the social reproduction, the theory of the resistance (Bourdieu, 1997), and the theory of the development applied from the ethnographic perspective to education. Meanwhile, Freire (1973), Giroux and McLaren (1997) (pedagogical promoters of the critical theory), consider necessary that the dominated take the word, and that school should foster it; even more, out of this visualization and its incorporation to the educational model of the '*hidden curriculum*' allows the possibility of being aware of the impact in the construction of subjugated identities and of setting the foundations to the struggles for the liberation of the social consciousness. The problem is how to incorporate circumvented stories, to rewrite narratives and give voice to silenced and marginalized groups.

In this sense, the development of the feminist movement has provided theories that allowed the distinction between sex (biological settings) and gender (socio-historical settings); the notions of sexism and patriarchy (male hegemony), the analysis of stereotypes and the determination of the mechanisms of assimilation of gender, (remarking school as the basis for their creation). It should be added to this, the theory of the development of the hidden curriculum, from a sociological perspective, as a social construction of the New Sociology of Education (Pierre Bourdieu, Basil Bernstein, Michael Young, 1970), and the multicultural studies of theories called post-critical theories.

It is important to remark that the creation and dissemination of this discourse and the practices to reposition women as persons with equal rights to men has been a great achievement; this discourse on the role of women and of the reasons of submission and oppression were not included in the revision assigned to masculinity (Jurjo Torres, 2011); this omission fostered that human rights and social justice were affected.

Gender and Hidden Curriculum

The hidden curriculum is defined as a set of norms, customs, beliefs and language forms that are manifested in the structure and functioning of an institution. The knowledge derived from this peculiar mechanism not only affects to students, but also affects to all education stakeholders. It is a source of learning for all the persons within the institution and it produces an appropriation of a culture, acquired sometimes by persuasion and others, by a reaction of "survival". It is perceived as a special phenomenon at both ends of the educational process:

a) On *their admission to school*, it appears in teens, as a "consciousness of their own plural and heterogeneous "reality", eager to participate in the experience, and willing to make the greatest change in their lives.

b) At *the end of their schooling*, it is perceived a certain level of consciousness and interest that emerges from the collective problems and it privileges their individual interests, related to the various fields of their professional training.

The hidden curriculum includes the *environmental, academic and administrative* structures:

a) The physical environment, when it is not adapted to the conditions for the betterment of the school performance, it ends up distorting the policies of control of the institution.

b) The lack of interest of the teachers in continuing their academic upgrading may result into a poor performance in the teaching-learning process.

c) It is found a marked differentiation of teachers involved and committed with the Institutional policies.

d) When the administration is not committed to institutional development reasons but to other criteria such as affinity, sympathy, fellowship, cronyism the identification of students with the mission and vision of the organization can be distorted

How Hidden Is in Reality, the Hidden Curriculum?

The hidden curriculum works in the areas of values, behavior and personal qualities. The importance of values lies in the possibility that teachers and students have to rethink, analyze and freely discuss ideological concepts, different ways of seeing and interpreting reality, in order to gradually build a proper mental framework that contribute to a political and moral autonomy, i.e. to their own ethics, applied to all events of the person.

In the structuring of the "competencies" within the behavioral model of education, the hidden curriculum becomes "a subject-matter" and within the "model by competencies" it is considered as a general axiology or as a field of attitudes, habits, skills and practical categories of personal fulfillment.

The Sociology of Education defines the "hidden curriculum" as the non-explicit aspects of the curriculum. Perrenoud (2004) believes that this type of practices are not really secret (not so hidden); it is known that in school you learn to live in society, to be a good citizen, to work seriously, and in general, to be part of the stereotypes of the social environment.

The Hidden Curriculum of Gender (HOG)

Research on gender has been developed in recent years, (Goldberg, 1973; Sullerot, 1979; Lagarde, 1990, Lee, 2000; Lamas, 2002); they made palpable the hidden curriculum of gender (HOG), which is defined as an "internalized", "not-visible", and "hidden" set made out of the construction of thoughts, values, meanings and beliefs that structure, construct and determine the relationships and social practices from and among men and women. This HCG lies in the unconscious level.

The HOG, contains and defines the cultural conditions of personal development by determining the sexual roles, tasks, and personal and social expectations, and affects largely the success or failure that each social task carries out.

The HOG, for the fact of being embedded in the culture, is acquired in an unconscious way; and it establishes, supports and permeates concepts, values, ways of accessing to knowledge, and holds a discourse that institutes itself as a form of power.

The HOG and School Education

Definition

The HOG, since it constitutes part of the structure of the

personality of men and women permeates the gender stereotypes, such as andro-centrism and patriarchy; these are invisible actions and therefore “natural actions”, and that, at the end of the day turns individuals to be uncritical beings towards their own interests, limiting them to access to a changing reality.

In the educational process, character is modeled, behaviors are defined, but it is from the maternal womb, where “there is no vital space” for questioning, where gender archetypes start to be constructed; the COG is closely related to education both formal and not-formal.

HOG: Its Impact on School Life and Training of People

One of the basic processes by which the COG is set up is because of the inability of teachers to recognize their own history; the failure to not considering their personal learning experiences in the process of teaching-learning; in addition to the low awareness in the reproduction of values, attitudes, behaviors and social skills; this makes that the exercise of teaching be without a necessary critical attitude; therefore, education cannot become really considered as a support for personal and social transformation

What is really important in the hidden curriculum is that students “visualize it”; that they learn that education is valuable when it is acquired in school through critical analysis; besides, the degree of success that the individual will enjoy in society, “depends on the amount of knowledge that he consume; and that the knowledge acquired about the world is more valuable than the knowledge of the world” (Fernandez, 1994).

Education in the Perspective of Gender

In this post- postmodern society, it is an urgent necessity to incorporate the perspective of gender in schooling institutions, because there are still in educational institutes, classrooms and texts, sexist practices invisible to women which place them in a position full of prejudices on the alleged inferiority of women compared with men.

The school, as the most important center in the formation of the personality of men and women should be the primary space for education in the perspective of gender, and in this way, to be able to correct any type of social inequity.

In this scenario, the task of educational institutions is to transmit knowledge devoid of gender stereotypes; to teach students a non-sexist education, and achieve the personal growth of individuals, as free persons.

Education with the perspective of gender involves the formation of the new personality of a different individual; the individual educated on the basis of equity between the sexes, seeks alternatives that allow access to the services that provide an educational system, with equity, without discrimination, or exclusion.

To conduct a research and a social investigation from the perspective of gender implies the realization of an objective analysis on the relationships, their symbolic exchanges, language forms, etc., among genders; it involves the investigation of the factors affecting this oppression; it deepens into the culture of institutions that sanction or legitimize these rules.

From an academic point of view, in Mexico, we find a notorious absence on gender studies in universities; therefore it is urgent to undertake a research to know the current status of

women studying in universities, in order to identify their needs, in terms of their preparation, training, employment, health, their social and family issues. At the same time, it should be considered a movement of transformation that visualizes discrimination and denatures their practices; this must be a movement that denounces, that removes the status quo, that upsets and causes hesitation on the set of the imaginary and of the social settings. To learn to live a transformation in the collective imaginary to experience a new way of living capable of visualizing “the various fissures in the breakdown of the paradigm that, for centuries, have legitimized gender inequities” (Fernandez, 1994).

These two actions are linked like the blades of a propeller that involves a modification of the self-image, and a change in the transformation of sensibility, in the way of thinking, the way of living and even of having dreams.

This task requires some criteria of clarification; since it is needed to disclose the existing relationship between the field of the visible and that of the imaginary; between what cannot be seen in a specific discipline, although it is determined by the structure of the theory and the social practices that are embedded in it.

From the term *episteme*, it is necessary to question where from gender differences come, in order to discover their inner logic, how can problems be designed, understood and legitimized, and therefore, the logic intervention to find alternatives of solution. Thus, culture of gender becomes a symbolic social construction, where the discourse plays a central role to produce, construct and modify the meanings that are part of social institutions, as important as school and family.

First, in the school interactions, can be found multiple actions or events that require visualization and that the daily routine would help to unmask them, in order to be able to create a culture with a perspective of gender. Therefore, it is important that both male and female teachers, produce gender alternatives of differentiation with their students and that these differences be reasoned and explained. In the same sense, professional restrictions or the sub-divisions of branches of the sciences do not become insurmountable obstacles for women seeking inroads into the professional domain. It must be created legislative codes that foster gender perspectives and encourage the free movement of professional careers for women.

Secondly, in the family, as the cell of the social structure, it is where the significance of gender is defined; therefore it is essential that the family practices be established within a perspective of gender in order to live a more equitable life.

Proposals

- 1) To implement, as a public policy, perspectives of gender in all areas of society.
- 2) To promote, out from family, school and society the ability of humans for questioning about the status that women have had up to now, in order to continue the development of feminine consciousness as a structural element of historical, political and social consciousness.
- 3) The perspective of gender must involve articulating processes of change permanently. Changes of consciousness of the contemporary woman, force women, constantly, to recycle themselves, to face the forms that occur in the rapid changes of these postmodern societies.
- 4) Education today must integrate the contributions of gender in the hidden curriculum, either through classical concepts as

the hidden curriculum or from its transformation into the model of competencies.

5) Co-education, that has historically been implemented, leaves way behind its ideal expectations, especially in terms of respect for sex differences, that is, it has been created a third identity (unisex) which destroys the specific differences which occur in real daily life to configure a third one that cannot be located in a real cultural context.

6) It must be carefully watched out the misrepresentations that are understood as the most immoral, unjust and dangerous strategies, since they only present selected texts within a framework of discursive lines which serve to legitimize the social, economic, political, religious, ethnic, linguistic and gender inequities (Jurjo Torres, 2011); the social structures of power have created a schizophrenic and false consciousness.

7) To avoid curricular interventions favoring exclusion.

8) To avoid processes of education created out of reality that perpetuate and multiply the androcentric positions and to seek those theoretical movements that strengthen the link between education and their objectives, within real and symbolic contexts of a contextual culture.

9) One of the consequences of an education out of real life context is the infantilization of the society and of the state (Disneyland), causing a displacement of the civic consciousness which is participatory, deliberative and purposeful, towards a generation of young men and women electors that become abstainer voters, therefore, a model of education for real democracy must be considered.

Conclusions

The hidden curriculum is a knowledge related to processes of internalization of knowledge transmitted in classrooms that create patterns of understanding in students, but these are processes that are controlled only in part.

The apprenticeships, within the family, foster and reinforce the concept of traditional femininity and masculinity, that is, the traditional sexist conceptions, what is it to be a man and what is it to be a woman, and consequently, it reproduces the culture of patriarchy. School and family are two instances that legitimize the contradictions of gender inequities.

The removing of traditions that have prevailed through years (ten thousand years) that have constructed and deconstructed the subjectivity, it is a task of the most relevant commitment and of well recognized efforts. It is not simply a matter of achieving substantial changes with and for women, as a first stage, in the struggle for women rights. It must be promoted a culture of integration of sex differences that reassesses the existing conceptions about gender, and that endorses this just struggle by changing the dynamics of male-female.

Schools, with their hidden curriculum, and family, with its patriarchy and andro-centrism paradigms, need to wake up and start visualizing the roles and stereotypes of gender, from a more equitable bio-politic perspective; it is urgent to develop

the ability of questioning from the epistemological field, from where gender differences were designed, created and legitimized, in order to find alternatives or strategies for visualization and intervention.

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