

THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM IN MILITARY SCHOOLS¹

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Summary

Military education, as an integral and inseparable part of building the army as an institution, is changing its identity and tends to be becoming a place of development, changes, scientific research, quality teaching and education. Adoption of the National Curriculum Framework is creating conditions for these changes. Introduction of the military schools curriculum will inevitably lead to the hidden curriculum. In adult education (andragogy), the hidden curriculum appears in a more vigorous and influential form. The ability to function and the high reliability of the military system are based on hierarchy in which the formation of will is carried out from top downwards. The most prominent factors are command, obedience and reporting. In such an environment, we recognise the positive and negative effects of the hidden curriculum in Croatian military schools.

Key words: hidden curriculum, military schools, andragogy.

Introduction

The work of Croatian officers in the international, complex security environment requires a multidisciplinary approach to education. Managing state-of-the-art defence systems and various technologies and their use requires highly-skilled and specialised personnel that will be able to make use of all the advantages of the

¹ Standpoints mentioned in the article express the personal opinion of the author; they are not official standpoints of the institution the author works in and are not related to the situation and relations in the CAF.

stated systems and technologies in a manner of the highest quality. Within the implementation of the daily tasks that are placed before the armed forces, a need has occurred for constant development of the existing scientific disciplines and the establishment of new ones. As a result, it is necessary to enhance understanding of the importance of creating competent personnel that will be trained to work in joint multinational NATO Commands. Smerić (2002)² states that the complexities of the professional officer's role have grown – requirements for numerous new skills and knowledge require the conduct of i.e. leading new, untraditional military operations (“operations other than war”, “stabilisation operations” and similar). In this process, the educated Officer Corps has concurrently increased its influence on the formation of the policies related to military issues.

Within the adoption of the National Curriculum Framework that has defined fundamental values, the Croatian Defence Academy, “Petar Zrinski”, as the only educational institution of the Croatian Armed Forces, has taken into consideration necessary changes of the curricula for all military schools. Military classes are an integral and inseparable part of building the military as an institution. The identity of military schools throughout the world has changed and they should develop into places of development, changes, scientific research, quality-teaching and education. “Institutions for military education are not a dead end for those who are not needed elsewhere or are not needed at all.” (Genschel, 2001:18)³

The term curriculum has been used for a number of years in global and domestic literature. There are several definitions but it is most important that none of them argues against the other but place emphasis on various elements. It is almost impossible to determine unambiguously the very notion of curriculum. Numerous theories of the curriculum that have an overwhelming influence on pedagogy from different fields of philosophy, psychology and sociology considerably aggravate comprehension of the curriculum. “Thus the co-existence of various comprehensions of the curriculum is a positive sign of the critical deliberation about its complexity and importance and its position in pedagogical theory”.

2 Smerić, Tomislav (2002) “Military Profession, Comparative Orientations and Transformation of the Civil-Military Relations.” *Social Research* 1(57): 67-88.

3 Genschel, Dietrich (2001) “The Place and Role of the Army in Democratic Civilian Societies.” *Polemos* 4: 13-22.

(Jukić, 2010:55)⁴ One of the definitions reads as follows: “it [is] a targeted directed approach to education as a relevantly reliable, precise manner of implementing a flexible planned learning process, education and acquiring competence capabilities.” (Previšić, 2007:20)⁵

For curricular theories, there is no agreement and integral understanding of the curriculum definition and the same applies to its types. Different authors explain and describe various types of the curricula. Allan Glatthorn (2000)⁶ mentions seven types:

- a) recommended curriculum – it is developed by experts or professional institutions;
- b) written or official curriculum – it is in written form and it has become an official document;
- c) implemented curriculum – it is performed by teachers during their lectures and work;
- d) supporting curriculum – resources that provide support in implementation of the curriculum;
- e) measured/evaluated curriculum – it is the tested or evaluated one;
- f) learned/applied curriculum – the one students really learn;
- g) hidden curriculum – the invisible one and that affects the practice specific for the determined educational environment.

Other types of curricula are integral parts of the publications with curricular contents. The following three stated types of the curricular structures are important for understanding the curriculum. Previšić (2005)⁷ clearly differentiates three types of curricular structures in the theory and practice of the educational-school work.

4 Jukić Tonća (2010) „Relation of the Curriculum and Teaching Plan and Programme. *Pedagogical Research* 7(1): 55-65

5 Previšić, Vlatko (2007) *The Curriculum – Theories, Methodologies, Contents, Structure*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga (*School Gazette*)

6 Glatthorn A. Allan (2000) *The Principal as Curriculum Leader*. California: Thousand Oaks, ICAN Home, Modules, Social interventions: Hidden Curriculum. Available on URL <http://www.autismnetwork.org/modules/social/hidden/index.html> (15 November 2010)

7 Previšić, Vlatko (2005) “The Curriculum of Modern Education and School: Methodology and Structure.” *Pedagogijska istraživanja (Pedagogical Research)* 2(2): 165-173.

1. Closed curriculum corresponds to traditional comprehension of the curriculum and reduction of the education to clearly canonised tasks that should be accomplished during education.
2. Open curriculum has a flexible methodology of development, both in selection of the contents and methodology of work. Advantage is given to frameworking an instruction within which the implemental programme is creatively realised.
3. Mixed type of the curriculum is a modern type that tolerates, to a lesser degree, prescriptions or rather regulations that implemental cores are built in; it is realised in a free and creative manner that maximally activates a pupil in his/her acquiring specific competence.

The hidden curriculum involves the learning of standpoints, standards, beliefs, values and presumptions that are increasingly expressed in the form of rituals and regulations (comparison Seddon, 1983, vs. Marsh, 1994)⁸. Bašić (2009)⁹ suggests the use of a terminological concept that is contrary to or the least different from the public (official) curriculum that is perceived as a scientifically based arrangement of the learning process. The hidden curriculum formulates what knowledge, capabilities, skills and forms of behaviour a pupil should acquire, what contents are used, time dynamics involved, with assistance of established forms of teaching and learning, determined teaching aids and how to evaluate efficient academic accomplishment. It occurs in classrooms, in teaching staff rooms and in places outside of educational institutions. It can appear in various forms of the curriculum structures, in closed, open and mixed form. Bašić (2000)¹⁰ considers that the hidden form of the curriculum is responsible for development of the social manners of behaviour, precisely, conformist behaviour (social adaptability of the individual). The hidden curriculum in our country has not been researched sufficiently; most of the research was conducted in the USA and Great Britain. They involve differences in social status, differences in skin colour (differences among races), differences between sexes, medical teaching, interrelations and attitude of physicians in the health care system, teaching the official language of

⁸ Marsh, J. Colin (1994) Curriculum. Zagreb: Educa.

⁹ Bašić, Slavica (2009) "Pedagogical Abecedary: The Hidden Curriculum." Školske novine 8: 5.

¹⁰ Bašić, Slavica (2000) "The Concept of Hidden Curriculum." Napredak (Progress) 141(2): 170-181.

the minorities. Dr. Pastuović (1996)¹¹ states that the hidden curriculum is hidden because it is socially unpopular. The less real goals of education are socially acceptable, a greater part of the curriculum is hidden and the gap between its open and hidden part is bigger. In conformity with that stated above, we can conclude as follows: if some parts of the goals of the official curriculum are unacceptable, a greater part of the hidden curriculum affects education.

According to Wren (1999)¹², there are three paradoxes about nature and the usefulness of the hidden curriculum in schools. The first is: the hidden curriculum is more spontaneous in its nature and less explicit than the official one, it questions whether teachers could do something to change their influence on pupils. The second runs as follows: if teachers can change their influence, will they change the influence of the hidden curriculum? The third is: can or must a teacher request a structured teaching process in schools of a multicultural society in order to reduce the influence of the hidden curriculum? Most teachers are aware of having their own individual hidden curricula based on established individual qualities. If you ask four teachers to evaluate a lecture and the work of one teacher, under the same conditions and in the same premises, you will get four different grades.

The world that surrounds us is a very complex place, filled with rules, regulations, guidelines and policies. (Myles et al., 2004.)¹³ A person feels well in this environment if it is in conformity with his/her behaviour. If the rules are not clear, inconsistent or undetermined, people become agitated, bitter and confused. The hidden curriculum exists in every environment: in classrooms and teaching staff rooms, in school corridors and city swimming pools, in our homes, religious premises, public transportation, during free activities etc. It contains many elements, as expected behaviours, actions and various skills, good manners, responsibilities, even various manners of dressing related to specific qualities of the environment. "If we do not clearly understand what we did and what happened to us, then we

11 Pastuović, Nikola (1996) "Managing and Reforming Educational Systems: Comment on Reforms in Post-Communist Countries. " *Društvena istraživanja* (Social Researches) 1(21): 9-58.

12 Wren, J. David (1999) "School Culture: Exploring the Hidden Curriculum." *Adolescence* 34(135): 593-596.

13 Myles, S. Brenda, Trautman, L. Melissa. Schelvan, L. Ronda (2004): *The Hidden Curriculum Practical Solutions for Understanding Unstated Rules in Social Situations*. APC Co. P. O. Box 23173 Shawnee Mission.

do not have a basis for self-respect. Development of an adolescent's self-respect considerably depends on the emotions and opinions of the people in his/her environment." (Brierley, 2010:11)¹⁴

One and the same form of the hidden curriculum has different messages in different environments. An example would be poorly equipped classrooms. In kindergartens, a poor looking and poorly equipped classroom will not affect the educational process. Maybe parents will complain. Changes in the classroom will already have been noticed in elementary and secondary schools, pupils will complain they do not feel comfortable but will continue to attend classes. In institutions of higher education, one can expect reactions from students who will protest and request the improvement of conditions. Until the classroom or lecture hall is renovated, they will constantly complain, they will be dissatisfied and obstruct lectures. The message sent by the hidden curriculum is that attendees of that class are not worthy and do not deserve better premises.

Difference between Education of the Young People and Adults

Education of adults is the longest phase of the educational process; nevertheless, it is a formal, non-formal or informal form of education. In order to establish a difference between young people and adults, one has to firstly define who an adult person is. Psychologists and andragogists connect the notion of adulthood with the notion of maturity. It is well known that there are several types of maturity: biological, psychological, social, emotional and other types. For a person to be adult they do not have to be or can be mature in all types of maturity. Everyone knows at least one adult person who can not be considered mature. For the education of adults, it is essential to consider the types of maturity of an adult person. Pastuović (2010)¹⁵ points out that the opinion has prevailed that, in fact, education of adults is not possible to a considerable degree. This hypothesis is based on the opinion that

14 Brierly, David (2010) "The Hidden Curriculum." *Školske novine (School Gazzete)* 28: 10.

15 Pastuović, Nikola (2010) "The Education of Adults." *Andragoški glasnik (Andragogical Herald)* 1(24): 7-19.

education of adults is made more difficult, i.e. almost impossible, because adults, unlike children and young people, have already adopted an established system of values and have formed standpoints and habits that can be hard, almost impossible, to change. It is well known that there are basic differences among adults who undergo professional training and young people who are given education. Nowadays, an increasing number of adults decide to make a breakthrough in their careers or in professional training. Adults choose their orientation by themselves i.e. vocational training, but young people depend on other people regarding management of their education. In other words, adults depend on themselves and, unlike children, who learn what they are told, adults learn only when they see they can get some personal benefit from learning. Adult persons decide to join the organised educational process because they wish to advance in service or they wish to be professionally trained regardless of any immediate benefit or they follow the example of people they know or are friends with. (Matijević – Radovanović, 2011)¹⁶ Young people are capable of acquiring knowledge quickly but have insufficient life experience; their standpoints, opinions and cognitions have not been formed yet. They are open towards all ideas and are ready to accept them. Besides that, young people often adopt facts by heart and do not even think about checking them. Adults, unlike young people, have gained their own life experience and their already formed opinions and cognitions. They can very easily negate or refute new information if it cannot become an integral part of their life experience. “Activities that are based on empirical learning are not motivated by the learning of something, but by a need to use them in order to achieve various economic, social or self-attainable goals (people work to earn money, practice sport to entertain themselves, they make war to defend their country ...).” (Pastuović, 2010:9).

Hidden Curriculum in Andragogy

“Unintentional or empirical learning (experimental learning, learning by doing, incidental learning) is carried out spontaneously and it happens in various life

16 Matijević, Milan – Radovanović, Diana (2011) Pupil Oriented Classes. Zagreb: Školske novine (School Gazette).

situations such as: family, school, working, political, war-time, recreational, tourist and other situations.” (Pastuović, 2010:10)¹⁷ In conformity with the stated, hidden curriculum in one part, it can be compared to empirical learning. An adult person, with his/her entire life experience, takes part in various life situations, but not with the intention of learning something. In that process, he/she gains various types of knowledge, skills, values, standpoints and habits although they are not aware of it. In the case when a person possesses extensive life experience, he/she has to stop for a moment to see his/her real character in reactions to new situations. (Cockrell, 2011:72)¹⁸ Changes that occur during this process can be called a person’s experience.

The aim of this publication is to deliberate about the hidden curriculum that runs through all forms of the curricular structures. It is also found in all forms of the curriculum, starting from the curriculum for pre-school education, the teaching curriculum, school curriculum, curricula for higher education, and the national curriculum framework. “On the other hand, or better say, as a ‘supplement’ to the official learning plan that is a basis for conveying knowledge, cognitions and skills, the hidden curriculum is responsible for development of the social manner of thinking.” (Bašić, 2000:171)¹⁹ A special form of the curriculum can be recognised in andragogy as a scientific discipline that exercises the teaching of adult persons. In the education of adults (andragogy), the hidden curriculum appears in a more vigorous and influential form because attendees are already formed adult persons with their standpoints, opinions and extensive life experience.

Military Education and the Hidden Curriculum

Military education has been slowly abandoning traditional military training; it has increasingly opened towards society and the academic community. We must not forget that military education is only given in military schools as sequential-

17 Ibidem

18 Cockrell, Rubin (2010) *The Hidden Curriculum Life Lessons you won’t learn in a classroom*. Nashville, Unlock the champion, Inc.

19 Ibidem

progressive and specialist education. Kozina (2014 85)²⁰ emphasises that “Attendees of the military schools require different interrelations with military teachers”. It is necessary that we provide active duty military persons with the opportunity to develop a personality of a modern, democratic citizen who will be ready to defend his/her homeland and participate in various military operations that ensure security and peace in the whole world.

The existing educational system in military schools provides officers and NCOs with an established level of knowledge, capabilities and skills. On basis of the knowledge gained, officers carry out their tasks related to various duties in the CAF. In conformity with new requirements and challenges and the admittance of the Republic of Croatia to membership in NATO, it is necessary to finalise and change former educational programmes for officers and NCOs. Taking into consideration all elements, we believe that new educational processes will be increasingly oriented towards knowledge and development of the military capabilities. Nowadays, there is only one institution in the Republic of Croatia that provides education and training to Croatian NCOs and officers, the Croatian Defence Academy “Petar Zrinski”. Its components are formed of several schools:

Officer School: its task is to train candidates for officers and junior officers for the first officer’s duty, as well as for command and staff duties at lower level within services of the Croatian Armed Forces and Support Command. The first level of military education is Basic Officer Education (TČI) that is provided in two phases: in the first phase candidates for officers are given education within three year studies at faculties of the University of Split and Zagreb and through three camps they finish basic military training. In the second phase of the first level of education that begins after completion of the studies, candidates for officers attend Basic Officer Education (TČI) that lasts ten months and is provided at the Croatian Defence Academy and units of the CAF. After a successful end of education, candidates are conferred the first officer’s rank (LT).

20 Kozina, Andrija (2014) Key Competencies of the Military Teachers. U: Matijević, M. Žiljak, T. (ur.) Key Competencies in Education of Adults. Miscellany of Papers of the 6th International Conferences on Education of Adults Zagreb: Croatian Andragogical Society, p. 83-100.

The second level of military education Advanced Officer Education (NČI). It is provided at the Croatian Defence Academy and in units of the Croatian Armed Forces and it lasts six months. Advanced Officer Education trains officers for the rank of LT/1LT. This level is the last i.e. highest level of education within services of the Armed forces. The following courses are carried out in Officer School: the course for the first officer's duty, the course for company commander and the course for junior staff officer.

Blago Zadro Command and Staff School: it is tasked with training officers within interservice command and staff education for commanding and leading at joint level. Officers at the level of Captain/Major are given education in this school and they are career officers who will be appointed to commanding duties. Education lasts ten months. The following courses are run in the Command and Staff School: the course for battalion commander, the course for brigade commander and the course for senior staff officer. In addition to command and staff education, it also provides military-vocational education that is sequential progressive education of officers in functional areas (officers who do not carry out command duties). This education is tailored for officers and managers in functional areas to the rank of LTC and it is the third level of military education.

War College "Ban Josip Jelačić": its task is to train officers for the strategic level of the command and staff duties. The War College (WC) is also the highest, fourth level of military education of officers in the CAF. It provides education to officers at the level of LTC/Colonel. Education lasts ten months. The course of strategic planning is run at this level.

Foreign Language Centre "Katarina Zrinska": its task is to provide foreign language training to employees of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia and to members of the CAF. The Foreign Language Centre runs educational courses of English, German, French and Italian (a Russian language programme is being developed), through three levels (beginner, intermediate and advanced) that last three months each. In addition to regular forms of education, the Centre also runs specialist courses for members of the CAF, such as: English language course for staff officers, courses for members of MLOT and OMLOT and a methodology course for English language instructors.

The Program CADET: Since 2003, the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia has been awarding scholarships to students, under the title Civil-Military Education – “Cadet”. A cadet is a scholarship recipient of the Croatian Armed Forces who realises his/her rights and obligations through a contract made with the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia on education or rather the awarding of scholarships for undergraduate studies at faculties of the University of Zagreb and Split and at the Polytechnic of Zagreb. Before conferment of the first officer’s rank, future officers finish Basic Officer Education in Officer School.

In the academic year 2014/2015, Croatian Defence Academy “Petar Zrinski” has initiated education according to a new system. Transformation of the military education has provided cadets with the possibility of being awarded a university diploma for the first time. That means that the CAF, with their military education, are entering the world of civilian universities and are given the possibility of exchange programmes with military academies and schools of other countries. These new military university undergraduate study programmes (pre-commissioning study programmes) last eight semesters and, upon their completion, graduates earn 240 ECTS points. Typical academic content and comprehensive military content has been harmonised and will provide for development of indispensable military competencies necessary for the first officer’s duty in the CAF.

In addition to the stated education, training and courses, the courses of military-diplomacy, courses of informatics, global information systems and personnel information systems are also run at the level of the Croatian Defence Academy.

Everyday classes of military education last from five to eight hours (classes and autonomous work), and up to ten classes can be given daily during practical work and exercises. Classes are conducted in conformity with the curriculum of the military schools. All attendees of military education underwent selection and attend sequential education. All classroom groups are mixed and all attendees have to follow rulebooks and procedures that are in force in the CAF.

We have to be aware that attendees of military schools learn from their environment. In former military education that was not opened towards the academic community, there were not many teachers who could recognise the hidden curriculum and could have influence on it. All attendees of military schools arrive at school with some personal standpoints and opinions acquired from the hidden curriculum of their previous education. Kozina (2013)²¹ states that new viewpoints have appeared on interrelations and interactions among attendees of the schools and teachers, that armed forces have been downsized, modern military systems have become increasingly complex, greater competence is required of officers, and decisions have to be taken in a very short time. Military organisation and democratic society follow various principles of structure. The military organisation is strictly structured in itself. The capability of functioning and great reliability of the military system lies on a hierarchy in which creation of will takes place from top downwards. The most prominent elements are command, obedience and reporting. Some legal rights are limited to active duty soldiers, NCOs and officers (membership in a political party, election of officers at public elections, appearance in mass media of one own's initiative).

Major restrictions of liberty and strictly prescribed rules help development of the hidden curriculum in military organisations. Messages sent through laws and rulebooks exceptionally affect all persons in such big, hierarchically organised systems. Before appointment to their posts at the Croatian Defence Academy, teachers carried out various duties in units of the Croatian Armed Forces. They have extensive life experience and civil-military education. Those teachers who did not attend pedagogical courses of study during their education had to undergo subsequent in-service training at the Faculty of Arts and Letters in Zagreb and Zadar, in conformity with contracts concluded with the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia. "Professionals employed in cultural and scientific institutions (such as academies, publishing, television and radio, artistic sector, higher educational system) have a special relationship with the State because their ideas and the products of their work often have an important role as the

21 Kozina, Andrija (2012.) *Intercultural Education of Croatian Officers*, U: Posavec, K. Sablić, M. (ur.), *Pedagogy and Culture. Scientific Monograph: Intercultural Pedagogy: According to New Developments of the Educational Science*. Zagreb: Croatian Pedagogical Society, p. 197-207.

adopted (generally accepted) tissue of social relations provided by ideology (e.g. artistic, intellectual, legal and scientific). (Anyon, 1980:90)²² In conformity with all this, it can be concluded that the hidden curriculum is recognised in military schools, both within the organisation, in interaction with teachers, and in its life and work. Military institutions and teachers “send messages” to those who take part in military schools, often unintentionally and in a hidden manner. The nature of such a hidden or coded message, given that it does not have an explicit content, is decoded by recipients themselves according to their life experience. Messages are transmitted and coded in countless ways, from the quality of accommodation, availability of teaching aids, renovation of classrooms, and types of lectures; surely with regulations and rules that are in force in military schools, or rather everything else that happens inside an institution. The hidden curriculum can have a negative, neutral and positive side.

The hidden curriculum can intensify or support formal curricula and that is a favorable situation. In the educational process, messages of the hidden curriculum help implementation and development of the formal curriculum. In military schools, some forms of the hidden curriculum can be recognised. They support the public (official) curriculum as e.g. standards of wearing uniforms, wearing a name tag, military selection of all attendees, sequential progressive education and similar.

Messages of the hidden curriculum can dispute or remove formal messages of the curriculum. It can put up resistance and hinder implementation of the formal curriculum and that is a great challenge for implementation of the educational process. The hidden curriculum also exists in military schools that dispute the formal (official) curriculum. It consists of the untopical curriculum, division into “male” and “female” subjects and similar.

Messages of the hidden curriculum do not affect formal messages of the curriculum. This form of curriculum is not interesting to us because it does not affect educational processes.

²² Anyon, Jean (1980) “Social class and the hidden curriculum of work.” *Journal of education* 162 (1): 67-92.

Conclusion

This paper plays only a small part in revealing the hidden curriculum in military schools. If the wish is to improve the educational process in military schools, all hidden curricula that are contained within it have to be revealed. However, an insufficient number of discussions and papers about education beyond the prescribed curriculum have been published so far, at least not in the Republic of Croatia. The hidden curriculum can be found everywhere around us and every day it conveys hidden messages to attendees of the military schools about values, standpoints and principles. Maybe, in practice, the hidden curriculum will not be hidden because it consists of everyday life and accepted norms of behavior. (Hannay, 1985:34)²³

Given that all teachers, school staff and Deanery send their hidden curricula, we have to pay attention to what values are sent to attendees of military schools with those messages. The function of education in military schools consists of conveying necessary social values, education of officers and NCOs for the most responsible duties in the Croatian Armed Forces and stimulating interest in their overall progress.

“Stronger emphasis that is placed on professional quality and quality of the values sent through the official curriculum can result in several beneficial effects.” (Arterian, 2009:279)²⁴ Development of a quality-curriculum of the military schools in which participants will be the Command of the CDA, Commanders of the military schools, the Deanery with its teaching staff, the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies and representatives of attendees of the military schools, will reduce the possibility of the occurrence of the hidden curriculum and its impact on education.

²³ Hannay, M. Lynne (1985) „Cultural reproduction via the hidden curriculum.” American Educational Research Association. 69th. March 31-April 4: 3-36.

²⁴ Arterian, R. Hannah (2009) “The hidden curriculum.” University of Toledo Law Review 40: 280-296.

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