Revealing the Hidden Curriculum in Higher Education

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Revealing the Hidden Curriculum in Higher Education

José Víctor Orón Semper[1] · **Maribel Blasco**[2]

Abstract The so-called 'hidden curriculum' (HC) is often presented as a counterproductive element in education, and many scholars argue that it should be eliminated, by being made explicit, in education in general and specifically in higher education (HE). The problem of the HC has not been solved by the transition from a teacher-centered education to a student-centered educational model that takes the student's experience as the starting point of learning. In this article we turn to several philosophers of education (Dewey, Kohlberg, Whitehead, Peters and Knowles) to propose that HC can be made explicit in HE when the teacher recognizes and lives his/her teaching as a personal issue, not merely a technical one; and that the students' experience of the learning process is not merely individual but emerges through their interpersonal relationship with the teacher. We suggest ways in which this interpersonal relationship can be strengthened despite current challenges in HE.

Keywords Hidden curriculum · Higher education · Teacher role · Philosophy of education · Teacher–student relationship

Introduction

Higher education (HE) has come under fire lately in a number of contexts due to its shift towards a logic of efficiency, standardization, productivity; and for reproducing social and economic inequalities (Zajda and Rust 2016; Bennett and Brady 2012). In this approach, learners are seen as human capital, and curricula are understood as value-neutral delivery

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systems for a fixed set of testable knowledge, performable skills and competences assessed through explicit learning objectives (Lundie 2016; Olssen and Peters, 2005). The goal is to standardize both the objectives and outcomes of learning, with a view to tailoring HE to the demands of the labour market (Zajda and Rust 2016; Karseth and Solbrekke 2016). Although this does not mean that learning outcomes always have the intended effect or exclude the possibility that other outcomes may result from a course of teaching than those specified in them (Souto-Otero 2012; Nusche 2008), the assumption is that it is possible to transmit to a learner a predefined set of competences in standardized ways that largely ignore the teacher–student relationship. Education thereby becomes a matter of technical transmission of knowledge (Lundie 2016; Lynch 2006), with students as 'trainees' (Giroux 2009: 45) making it seem unproblematic to define curricular outcomes.

In this article, we mobilise the concept of the *hidden curriculum* (HC), defined as 'what is implicit and embedded in educational experiences in contrast with the formal statements about curricula and the surface features of educational interaction' (Sambell and McDowell 1998: 391–392), in arguing that it is impossible to extirpate the teacher and student from the learning equation. This overlooks both parties' unique individual features, their experiences and relationship, differences in learning contexts (Saari 2016; Kohlberg and Mayer 1972), and the rich diversity of unexpected, 'collateral learning' that can therefore result from the encounter between a teacher, a curriculum and a student (Dewey 2007). The HC concept enables a necessary critique in an era when HE is increasingly regarded as a technical matter of 'checking boxes' (Bennett and Brady 2012, cf. also Margolis et al. 2001; Biesta 2016). We propose that the increasing emphasis on student experience in HE (e.g. student-centred learning), may, paradoxically perpetuate the HC, in ways that may be counterproductive for stated learning objectives. First, we offer a theoretical and philosophical discussion of the HC concept; we then leverage this to question the current emphasis on the 'principle of experience' in HE, both in Europe where a regional system based on standardized, competence-based learning outcomes has been most systematically implemented, but also in other parts of the world that are adopting these tendencies (Knight 2012; Hazelkorn 2015). Based on that, we propose ways to make the HC explicit in higher education. Our conclusion is that the curriculum can only become explicit if educators acknowledge the interpersonal dimension of learning, both as it pertains to themselves and to their students.

What is the Hidden Curriculum and Why do we Need to Pay Attention to it in Higher Education Today?

Researchers have long documented that 'schools teach more than they claim to teach' (Vallance 1974: 5). Notably, the school context, exercise of authority, curricula, and the characteristics of the staff and students have an implicitly socializing effect, transmitting norms that strongly influence students' values and behavior (Välimaa and Nokkala 2014; Trevino and McCabe 1995). Students may also actively accommodate and sometimes resist learning in the sense defined by the teacher (Higginbotham 1996; Willis 1981). This is especially pertinent in HE, where teachers have greater leeway in defining and imparting the curriculum than at lower levels of schooling featuring standardised national curricula. Higher education is therefore no more a matter of technical training and transfer (as in Freire's (1974) critique of 'banking education') than is basic schooling.

Peters ([1966](), [1967]()) stated that in education (as opposed to training), the educator's life cannot be separated from his/her teaching activity. He defends this position not only for basic education but also for higher education and technical studies (Peters [1966]() pp. 69–72). Knowles, writing about adult education, takes a similar position to Peters. He proposes abandoning the mindset that understands education as a set of instructions or as a technical issue and instead, following Rogers and Maslow, he regards the educator as a facilitator who enables self-directed personal growth (Knowles [1973]()). Indeed, concerns about learning becoming overly technical date as far back as the origins of education itself, notably Plato's *Republic*[1] in which the philosopher bemoans the use of dialectics as a tool for confrontation. To Plato, this resulted in one's own beliefs and life being sidelined—thus delinking education and life—since young people who learned dialectics, following in their masters' footsteps, ended up not believing in anything anymore, with evil consequences. Socrates, for his part, strove to link school and life to the extent possible.[2]

Kohlberg and Mayer ([1972]()) invoke the concept of the 'hidden curriculum' (HC) to address this implausible detachment of 'being' from education. They posit that the hidden curriculum arises when an educator splits his/her own life off from the act of teaching. The HC concept serves as a reminder that students' learning is not only a product of teachers' and students' *doing* but also of their *being*; and that learning outcomes are the result of unique encounters between a teacher's being and a student's being that produce unpredictable effects—and therefore resist confinement to predefined learning goals or capture by standardized measurements (see also Sigurðsson [2017]()). The HC concept is designed to explore exactly these effects, by uncovering differences between 'curriculum as designed and curriculum in action' (Barnett and Coate [2005](): 3), i.e. inconsistencies between a school's formal standards and the subtext communicated among school actors about 'what really matters' (Sambell and McDowell [1998](): 392; Donnelly [2000](); Vallance [1974]()). It therefore covers the 'collateral learning' (Dewey [2007]()) of attitudes and other residual effects or 'by-products' of schooling, and focuses on what schooling actually does to people (Vallance [1974](): 6) through, *inter alia*, the structuring of time, school traditions and beliefs, rules of conduct, assessment procedures, interaction, socialization routines, behavioural incentives and sanctions, teachers' interpretation and delivery of the curriculum, and students' characteristics and response to learning (Gair and Mullins [2001](); Wren [1999](); Sambell and McDowell [1998]()). Seen from this perspective, both teachers and students influence learning through interaction.

The HC concept was coined by Jackson ([1970]()) in response to disillusionment because of the ineffectiveness of mass schooling from the 1950s onwards in eradicating class, racial and gender inequalities. Rather, schools seemed to play a role in reinforcing social norms and reproducing the status quo outside the classroom (Vallance [1974](); Bowles and Gintis [1976]()). The concept was quickly taken up by critical educational scholars concerned with understanding the 'non-academic functions and effects' of schooling (Vallance [1974](): 7) and 'the tacit teaching that goes on in schools and … the ideological messages embedded in both the content of the formal curriculum and the social relations of the classroom encounter' (Giroux and Penna [1979](): 21).

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[1] Plato ([1969]()) República. Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, vol. VII–VIII.

[2] For a more detailed description of these ideas, see: Lipman et al. ([2002]()) La filosofía en el aula, Third edition. Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre pp. 31–36. And García Moriyón ([2006]())) Pregunto, dialogo, aprendo. Cómo hacer filosofía en el aula. Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre. p. 34.

This critical intention can be traced to the HC concept's roots in the critical pedagogy tradition which seeks to understand power relations in educational settings and to link what happens in classrooms to broader societal ideologies and contexts. From a critical pedagogy perspective, curricula are regarded as seemingly neutral classroom expressions of political and ideological agendas that must be uncovered if they are to be critically addressed (Apple 1990).

Some scholars suggest the 'hidden curriculum' is not actually hidden, but merely constituted by all those things that are so taken for granted that they are rarely given any attention (Ng in Gair and Mullins 2001: 23). As Vallance (1974: 5) points out, the HC is hidden only inasmuch as social control is nowadays not acknowledged as a rationale for public education, especially not for HE. Conversely, in the 19th century, 'much that is today called a hidden function of the schools was previously held to be among the prime benefits of schooling' (Vallance 1974: 5), notably values and morals, discipline and socialization. Indeed, Vallance argues, the HC only became hidden 'when people were satisfied that it was working' and once the justification of schooling as a social institution shifted from' the control of groups to the welfare of individuals'. Apple and King (1977: 346) similarly note that the HC was historically 'not hidden at all, but was instead the overt function of schools during much of their careers as institutions'.

Also, 'hidden' is relative to who is looking—the HC might be hidden to some groups but not to others, and this may change over time and depending on context (Martin 1976). Hidden also relates to *intent*: a HC may be purposefully hidden (e.g. to ensure that educational institutions serve the interests of capitalism) or merely hidden in the sense that nobody notices it (Martin 1976). Portelli (1993: 345) identifies four main meanings of the HC concept: (i) the HC as the unofficial or implicit expectations, values, norms and messages conveyed by school actors (ii) the HC as unintended learning outcomes (iii) the HC as implicit messages emanating from the structure of schooling (iv) the HC as created by the students who infer and anticipate what they need to do to be rewarded. Portelli points out that whatever interpretation one chooses, the 'hidden' part of 'hidden curriculum' always expresses a *relationship*—something is being hidden from someone by someone or something, whether intentionally or not; or something is not being recognised by someone. He further asserts that all interpretations of the HC raise moral issues, since as a collaborative activity teaching requires trust, and this is only possible when one's real intentions are revealed (Freire 1974 in Portelli 1993: 355). For these reasons, concerted attempts should be made to uncover the HC. We return to these key points later.

The HC concept has mostly been used to study basic education, and has not been applied systematically to HE learning environments, perhaps because, as Greene (1983: 3) points out, the hidden curriculum 'always has a normative, or "moral" component' and HE has traditionally been perceived as an arena for dispassionate knowledge and therefore as sceptical of a priori moral standpoints. The notion that HE could play a socializing role has perhaps also been less prominent since students reach HE institutions at a higher age when their formative primary socialization is considered by many to be complete (Parsons and Platt 1970). However, socialization through interaction has been found to continue at least during early adulthood and probably also throughout life (Trevino and McCabe 1995; Cranton 1994; M. Jones 1989; Kolb 2015; Lengnick-Hall and Sanders 1997); and HE also involves socialization processes e.g. into academic, professional and disciplinary norms and through service learning (Gardner 2007; Weidman and Stein 2003; Merton 1957; May et al. 2014; Mezirow and Taylor 2011; Ehrlich 1999; Bringle and Hatcher 1996). Moreover, at HE level students are typically engaging in key life transitions and decisions that

often involve a moral component, and are often ready to engage with this in facing these new challenges (King and Mayhew 2002).

Several studies do recognize the important role of the HC at HE level (see Margolis et al. 2001; Bergenhenegouwen 1987; Jones and Young 1997). Snyder (1971) investigated contradictions between explicit and tacit curricular goals in HE. He discovered that despite the explicit aim of formal curricula to promote skills such as independent thinking, teaching and assessment processes actually conveyed the message to students that they would be rewarded for rote learning (Sambell and McDowell 1998: 392). The HC concept has also been used in medical education, revealing how formal instruction plays only a minor role in shaping the formative 'moral community' at medical schools (Hafferty and Franks 1994: 861; Lempp and Seale 2004). In management education, Ehrensal (2001) showed how undergraduates were socialized to identify with the interests of capital; and Trevino and McCabe (1995: 406) recommend a 'just community' approach to business ethics learning based on the HC concept, whereby students learn to 'live' ethical practices in their daily lives (Trevino and McCabe 1995: 408). Blasco and Tackney (2013) similarly discuss a positive hidden curriculum at a Danish business school.

Although there is no consensus about how to define the HC, most scholars concur that the concept enables valuable insights into implicit aspects of educational settings and encourages insights into the interactional nature of education, and that it is therefore pivotal in the teaching and learning of values and ideologies (Gair and Mullins 2001). A key point is that teaching always communicates, both explicitly and implicitly, a 'right' way to understand life—and that the explicit and implicit objectives of teaching may be at odds. We must therefore address the question: how can the HC be made explicit in higher education? First, however, we delve deeper into these two different ways of understanding education: as a technical issue or as an interpersonal issue.

Conceptual Origin of the Hidden Curriculum

Since the sixties, education has experienced a conceptual change from teacher-focused to student-focused (Segrera and Alemany 1997). Teacher-focused pedagogies regard learning as emanating from the teacher; conversely, student-focused methods recognize that learning arises from what the student does. This change, which enshrines the "principle of experience", was approved by the UN declaration when dealing with university education (United Nations 1998).

Dewey (1934, 1938), a prominent proponent of the "principle of experience", emphasized the student's experience as the starting point of all education: i.e. a student has to live (experience) before s/he can learn and grow; and that learning experiences arises not from the transmission of abstract ideas but from social relationships. This principle is nowadays widely supported even by authors who are usually considered cognitivists (Kolb 2015). Piaget (1965) states that cognitive development occurs to the extent that it is useful for social cooperation; and Vygotsky (1978) and Freire (1974) are key advocates of the importance of social relationships in learning. For these authors, the principle of experience was, however, attenuated by their acknowledgement of the complexity of the learning process as a whole.

We maintain here that in the current HE scenario, the principle of experience is—seemingly counterintuitively-overemphasized, since the student's individual experience alone is assumed to guarantee learning (Altarejos and Naval 2000, p. 38). Emphasis is on how the *student* needs to change as a result of the learning experience, diverting attention away

from the crucial student–teacher relationship and by extension for any need for change in the *teacher*. The "something" that needs to change in the student is nowadays formulated in terms of *competences*, since the contemporary economy's reliance on versatility and creativity revealed the inadequacy of the simple 'skills' (Delors et al. 1996, pp. 99–103). Such standardized, objective competences (paradoxically cf. the experience principle) are not mediated by subjective experience. Learners become the equivalent of 'robot vacuum machines' who learn by adapting to the different conditions they are placed in by the teacher, whose job is reduced to that of a coach who creates the right environment for autonomous learning, but without any personal involvement in the students' world (Biesta 2016); and without needing to undergo any changes him/herself. Yet subjectivity is not exercised through individual production alone but through inter-personal encounters (Biesta 2016: 387–388). We should clarify here that proponents, such as Dewey (1938) of the principle of experience have also noted the importance of social and moral education for good citizenship, so their intention is certainly not to exaggerate its individual aspect. However we suggest that this is what happens when, despite good intentions, the principle is applied in practice in the current HE scenario.

In that regard, the UNESCO report "Learning: the treasure within" (Delors et al. 1996) applies the term "competence" to education, but it is striking that this term is used with a certain restraint, since the document presents education as about much more than becoming competent. Indeed, the report even warns against educating solely for competences, since this may exacerbate inequality (Delors et al. 1996, pp. 16–18). Delors et al.'s proposal is far more wide-ranging, establishing no less than four pillars for education,[3] of which the term "competence" is only mentioned within one of them—"learning to do"-and is understood as an instrumental function to serve the other three (Delors et al. 1996, pp. 99–103). What is more, the report "insist[s] particularly on one of the four pillars presented and illustrated as the basis of education: namely "learning to live together"" (Delors et al. 1996, pp. 21–22) which entails developing a better understanding of others by encouraging common projects guided by the recognition of our growing interdependence. Thus, although the four pillars are not attributed equal importance, they cannot be separated since education must be understood as a whole rather than as parts (Delors et al. 1996, p. 109). For UNESCO, then, the guiding principle is "learning to live together" and the organization stresses the need to understand personal situations, interdependence and values (Delors et al. 1996, pp. 103–106). Following this reasoning, it becomes impossible to understand education as purely competence-based.

One cannot 'blame' competences for failing to fulfill the principle of experience or for overlooking the student's personal involvement in education. After all, competences pertain to the *student*, and they are clearly experience-based since they are acquired as a result of the practical dimensions of the learning process. However, HE has increasingly espoused competences as its main guiding principle, resulting in a technical understanding of education whose biggest limitation is that competences are assessed mainly by gauging how efficiently a student solves problems, and therefore on factors that are external, rather than internal, to the person. This produces a HC, since the competence model teaches one of UNESCO's pillars while omitting the other three, and the interpersonal dimension of the learning experience remains unaddressed and unacknowledged. However, even though they are overseen, or hidden, they are still *present*, and taught, albeit implicitly.

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[3] Learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together/live with others, learning to be (Delors et al. 1996).

Alternative Educational Model Where There is No Room for a Hidden Curriculum

In our search for an alternative to the competence model, we draw on Peters who noted that a competence-based approach to education will produce a "skilled" person but not an "educated" person (Peters 1966, p. 34, 1967); on the work of Whitehead, Kohlberg and other educational philosophers who have reflected on HE; and on the psychological approaches of Kolb and Knowles, who focus on adult education. We will argue that these authors' proposals leave no room for a HC, since they are conducive to explicitness in relation to all four of UNESCO's pillars. Notably, they all allow for the fact that: (a) life in all its complexity is present in education, which cannot be reduced to a technical matter; (b) that the teacher also experiences a process of change and growth; and (c) that the key to learning lies in interpersonal relationships.

Peters (1966) claims that the purpose of education is the improvement of men and women, which cannot be achieved by merely training them to master certain skills. Education is about teaching a way to live, so it cannot be conceptualized in a utilitarian way alone (Peters 1966, 1967). For Peters, education cannot be reduced to a specific type of activity but it must be valuable in and of itself, and it involves a moral dimension because, as he sees it, success is tantamount to virtue (1966, pp. 24–26). Because education is personal and intrinsic to each individual (1966, p. 27), and cognition develops as a result of transformation of the whole person, it cannot be achieved by training 'parts' of a person (1966, pp. 29–30). For Peters, education is focused on the student's *system* of beliefs, whereas training is focused on 'isolated' abilities or competences (1966, pp. 30–35).

Experiences trigger a development process in which emotions, awareness, beliefs, and what is meaningful all take shape and differentiate themselves "*pari passu*" (1966, p. 49). Therefore, competence development without personal development is a mistake (1966, p. 56), and a focus on mastering competences can become obsessive if it is not connected to something which makes those competences meaningful (1966, p. 61). However, Peters' rejection of the "skilled person" model does not mean that he entirely dismisses the ambition to develop skills. Instead, Peters offers us a holistic proposal which regards ethics as the foundation of education (1966, pp. 89–113), presenting a series of ethical principles which can be used to design curricula: equality, value, interest, freedom, respect and solidarity (1966, pp. 117–236).

Whitehead (1978) bases his educational proposal on his holistic philosophy of the organism (Whitehead 1978) which involves considering everything in terms of its relationships. Thus, a person's growth automatically implies a growth in that person's relationships, a point of view that does not allow for technical reductionism or the intellectualization of reason. Whitehead connects reason to life because reason's purpose is none other than to promote the art of living (Whitehead 1929, p. 2). Each organism has an inner principle that motivates the way s/he lives and behaves, and which seeks to maximize the satisfaction of living (Whitehead 1929, pp. 5, 23) For him, a good life is the best life for the person concerned (1929, p. 30), and "usefulness" is not understood as associated with efficiency, efficacy, practicality, competence or an external benefit, but with acquiring the art of living, which is the purpose of education (1957, p. 20).

Kohlberg concurs that personal growth is the aim of education (Kohlberg and Mayer 1972). He developed his own position on this after initially espousing a cognitivist stance in which he viewed moral development as resulting mainly from the theoretical discussion of cases—a view that he later considered limited (Power et al. 1989, pp. 33–34; Power,

Higgins and Kohlberg 1989). Instead, he proposed the concept of the "just community" (Power et al. 1989), which transforms the academic community into a community for life which focuses not on the acquisition of knowledge but on sharing people's lives. This eliminates the distance between school and life, as life is lived at school in exactly the way the educators want to promote it—an approach entirely in line with making the HC explicit.

Peters, Whitehead and Kohlberg concur that education should not be separated from life and interpersonal relationships. In their models, there is no place for a HC because the curriculum explicitly includes all personal dimensions and is not reduced to a mere technical transfer of knowledge and/or competences. After this brief review, one might wonder whether this vision also applies to university education? It could be argued that if primary and secondary education are imparted in a personalized way, then one could attend university in order to acquire technical skills. Indeed, research on interpersonal relations between teachers and students focuses mainly on earlier stages of education, where they have been found to to be a significant factor affecting learning outcomes (Hagenauer and Volet 2014; Frymier and Houser 2000). However, Peters indicates that the university should also educate students in the way outlined above (Peters 1966, pp. 64–74). Whereas Peters distinguishes between the "skilled" and the "educated" person in writing about compulsory education, when addressing the university he differentiates between the "specialist" and the "cultivated" person. The cultivated person has a sense of wholeness in everything he does and experiences. That wholeness runs counter to the departmental divisions which usually characterize universities. According to Peters, this broad vision of the university's mission should be maintained even in courses of study which are considered by definition to be technical (Peters 1966, pp. 68–72).

Kolb (2015) concurs agrees with Dewey that things cannot be separated from the experience we have of them. At university, it is therefore not possible to separate the study of something from the experience we have of it. Moreover, that experience is social, personal and highly elaborate, and it is shaped by each person's own beliefs. Through Kolb's 'learning cycle',[4] the whole person can promote his/her creativity, wisdom and integrity (Kolb 2015, p. 240). And, since university is considered the transition to 'real life', learning should involve broad personal development, since every job requires more than just specialization (Kolb 2015, pp. 261–263). Kolb even maintains that "the specialized choice may result in professional deformation" (Kolb 2015, p. 262). Following Kierkegaard, he suggests that a good teacher is one also learns from his/her students.

Knowles (1973) similarly associates the term "learning" with the process lived by the student, and "teaching" with the relationship between the teacher and the student. He differentiates between "pedagogy" (teaching children and adolescents) and "andragogy" (adult's learning) (Table 1).

His andragogy proposal relies on two humanist psychologists: Maslow (1970, 1972) and Rogers (1951, 1961, 1969). From Maslow, he borrows the term 'self-actualization'; from Rogers the idea of becoming a person and the vision of the teacher as facilitator; and from Maslow and Tough the vision of the teacher as helper. Knowles draws on Maslow in defining wonder and interest as the starting point of all learning. This excludes fear, encourages enjoyment of the experience, and equates learning with personal processes of self-acceptance which enable personal knowledge to expand indefinitely. Knowles also adopted the

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[4] The Kolb cycle consists of 'concrete experience', 'reflective observation', 'abstract conceptualization', 'active experience'. As he was criticized for the apparent sequential mechanics implied in this cycle, he later preferred to refer to these elements as aspects.

Table 1 Different mindsets of education according to Knowles

Pedagogy	Andragogy
Learning	
Acquiring skills and knowledge following someone's instructions	Self-guided process which goes beyond skills and knowledge to focus on personal development/growth
Teaching	
Instructors who remain removed from the learning process since the one who must change is the student	Facilitator of growth, notably thanks to the type of relationship established with the student; the teacher also grows

change suggested by Rogers in psychotherapy, which involved focusing on the client, to the field of adult education. Rogers emphasizes, following Allport, that education must allow a person to become him/herself through a learning dynamic that is understood as a *process*, not a result or a product. Following Tough, he proposes that knowledge is holistic since it includes practical aspects as well as clearly personal ones (Knowles 1973, pp. 30–40).

After presenting this conceptual framework, Knowles puts forward his own learning proposal (Knowles 1973, pp. 40–49). He states that the singular feature of andragogy is that it takes into consideration the person's ability to be self-directed; and for each type of self-directive ability there are different ways of understanding education. To Knowles, the opposite of dependence is never independence, but self-direction, which has to do with personal agency. In that sense, self-direction never encourages individualism in the sense of disconnection from others or the prioritization of individual freedom over collective freedom, but rather pertains to the ability to exercise agency vis-à-vis others. He maintained initially that a person is ready to be self-directed at the age of 18—i.e. the age when a young person can enrol at university.

Knowles starts out, like Rogers, by rejecting the concept of "instructor" and replacing it with "facilitator", which refers to the latter's personal participation in the learning process, specifically: (a) s/he is a genuine and authentic person, (b) s/he initiates a relationship of trust and respect and is therefore non-possessive and (c) s/he has empathy and sensitivity and knows how to listen. He insists that interpersonal relationships, understood as "encounters", are the basis of good education. He considers the teacher to be a "helper" who initiates friendly, kind relationships, and who must believe in the student's potential and interact through a real dialogue. Thus, the helper—and this is essential for our own proposal—is also in a process of personal growth thanks to his/her relationship with the learner. Research on teacher–student relations at university supports this: positive relations have been shown to positively affect teacher emotions (Hagenauer and Volet 2014). Implementing this idea is clearly a challenging proposition in the current university climate, and both requires teachers who are able to embody these dispositions, and, as we shall outline later on, institutional support and resources.

Knowles understood that educators rely on their students' capacity for self-direction. He suggests a training approach for low complexity tasks which barely require learning abilities, whereas for complex tasks requiring a high level of ability he suggests self-direction. Knowles (1973, pp. 102–123) highlights that his andragogy model is focused on procedures, not content. The teacher facilitates the following in the interrelationship with the

student: (1) establishes a climate conducive to learning; (2) creates a mechanism for mutual planning; (3) diagnoses the student's learning needs; (4) formulates program objectives (and suitable content) that will satisfy these needs; (5) designs a pattern of learning experiences; (6) conducts these learning experiences with suitable techniques and materials; and (7) evaluates the student's learning outcomes and re-diagnoses his/her learning needs.

In his 1980 article, Knowles abandoned the distinction between primary and secondary education compared to university education, acknowledging that competence-based education is not a good method even for the earliest stages of learning. Instead, he proposed that andragogy was an effective approach to learning, no matter what the student's age (Knowles 1980, p. 43). He even stated that "the difference between children and adults are not so much real differences, I believe, as differences in assumptions about them are made in traditional pedagogy" and suggested "a more andragogical approach to the education of children and youth" (Knowles, 1980, p. 58). Knowles also pointed out that a second principle must be added to self-direction, namely self-identity. While a person matures, education must adjusted to encourage his/her self-identity growth (Knowles 1980, pp. 45–46). He thus further emphasizes the importance of personal development for learning.

This shift towards andragogy as the educational model for all ages brings Knowles' proposal into line with that of Peters, Whitehead and Kohlberg, all of whom recommend an education process focused on the person rather than on the 'student' (which would only take into account competences and abilities). This is the core difference between a technical, competence-based approach to education as opposed to an interpersonal approach.

It is in the "competence-based" approach where the HC appears, whereas, in the "interpersonal" method, the hidden curriculum is explicit from the outset. The competence-based method may give the impression of delivering an aseptic, values-free education, but this does not mean that values are not still very present, since all education communicates a way of understanding life. In fact, for the authors discussed above, asepsia is never possible since learning always occurs through personal relationships, whether these are acknowledged or not. With this in mind, Orón (2018) proposes moving from "student-centered" education towards "interpersonal relation-centered" education.

This explains why it is not enough to make explicit the HC through explicit institutional positions e.g. through values expressed in official documents like mission, vision and values statements—because it is the teacher who teaches, not the official documents.

Discussion: How can we Make the Hidden Curriculum Explicit?

The above discussion presents strong arguments for paying attention to the HC in contemporary HE, and for making it explicit. HE today is characterised by an increasing emphasis on teaching as a *technical* and *ends-oriented* matter of training *performable, specialised competences*. But drawing on Peters, Whitehead, Kohlberg and Knowles and the UNESCO document, we posit (without rejecting the notion of competence in itself) that education remains an interpersonal issue at HE level, but that the inevitably value-laden, interpersonal and experiential character of learning (see above), has been lost from view and has thereby become part of the HC. The massification of HE, with its heavy reliance on didactic lectures as an economically efficient teaching tool (Jones 2007), further obscures the interpersonal and experiential dimensions of teaching, making it appear to be a question of one-way transmission rather than of facilitation and dialogue rooted in the students' personal experience and agency in their relation with the professor' personal experience and

agency, in the sense intended by Knowles. Compared to students at earlier levels of education, adult students have a larger reservoir of personal experience on which they draw when integrating new learning, either through relearning or unlearning what they already know, and following Portelli (1993) and Kolb (2015) this reservoir forms part of the HC inasmuch as it affects the way in which students *receive new learning* and give it *meaning*. Adult students also remain highly receptive to the socialising influences of the educational environment in HE in terms of their own personal development and growth. Therefore, while training the competences needed for the labour market is clearly an important and long-standing function of formal education in all industrial societies (Shear and Hyatt 2015), including HE, university managers and educators also bear a responsibility for, and must be alert to, the socialization dimension that is transmitted to students through the HC.

Portelli (1993: 343) asserts that teachers have a moral responsibility to make the HC as explicit as possible to the students and to see whether they endorse it or not—and that striving to do this is one way in which an undesirable HC may be eliminated (1993: 351). To uncover the hidden curriculum, Giroux and Penna (1979, citing Apple) recommend critically examining 'not just "how a student acquires more knowledge" (the dominant question in our efficiency minded field) but "why and how particular aspects of the collective culture are presented in school as objective, factual knowledge." In other words, teachers must ask themselves, and discuss with students, in what ways the curriculum they teach represents the dominant ideological interests in the society in question, and how their institution legitimates these forms of knowledge as 'truths'.

In operationalizing these recommendations in a university setting, a challenging aspect for teachers is that rather than just attempting to change their *students*, they must also be open to change *themselves*. This requires that they turn a critical lens on aspects of their own teaching that they may take for granted (Giroux and Penna 1979). How should these taken-for-granted aspects be made apparent? Martin (1976: 141) recommends attempting to discern 'which elements or aspects of a given setting help bring about which components of that setting's hidden curriculum'. She points out that "Since a hidden curriculum is a set of learning states, ultimately one must find out what is learned as a result of the practices, procedures, rules, relationships, structures, and physical characteristic which constitute a given setting" (Martin 1976: 139). Apple recommends searching for the HC in at least three areas of school life: (1) Basic everyday institutional routines; (2) how particular types of curricular knowledge reflect these ideologies; and (3) how these ideologies may be reflected in the way teachers organize and give meaning to their own activities (Apple 1990, pp. 210–211). Portelli's four versions of the HC, outlined above, add further depth to these recommendations by conceptualising the HC as a four-pronged phenomenon (i) as the unofficial or implicit expectations, values, norms and messages conveyed by school actors (ii) as unintended learning outcomes (iii) as implicit messages emanating from the structure of schooling (iv) as created by the students who infer and anticipate what they need to do to in order to be rewarded.

Based on these proposals, we suggest the following framework composed of areas of focus, questions and examples to raise awareness about the HC operating in HE learning environments, thereby making explicit and strengthening the relationship between professor and students (Table 2):

However, teacher awareness about the HC is not enough on its own—making the HC explicit also involves, for teachers, discarding the notion of a technical, value-free education and cultivating a learning approach that acknowledges and strengthens interpersonal relations. This has a number of implications. First, it renders a competence-based approach quite futile, since the outcome of the interpersonal encounter between teacher

Table 2 Strategies to uncover the HC

Institutional structures	Curriculum	Relationships
Incentives and sanctions (e.g. what kind of performance is rewarded with good grades, prizes and/or praise? What kind of behaviour is sanctioned? What behaviours do students adopt in response to the incentives/sanctions/structures, and do these behaviours reflect the institution's declared learning objectives? For instance, are students sanctioned for turning up late? Rewarded with grade points for attending or participating actively in class? What implicit messages do students take away from these incentives/sanctions/structures about the 'right' way to behave?	*Content of formal curricula* What type of curricular content is selected and what is omitted? What ideological assumptions underpin these choices, and what societal interests do they represent? What kinds of cases, images and examples are chosen to exemplify the formal curriculum? What implicit messages do students take away from this?	*Nature of relationships* What is the character of relationships between different actors in the learning environment (e.g. formal/distant, punitive, friendly, dialogue-based etc.)? Does the nature of these relationships reflect explicit school values (e.g. for just, caring, sustainable communities)? Do teachers and other school actors actively model the qualities they want students to emulate? e.g. consider-ate behaviour, professionalism, engagement with and expertise on their subject, enthusiasm, etc.?
Routines, practices and rituals What routines, rituals, and practices exist in the institution (e.g. competitions, ceremonies, induction courses, meetings, clubs and associations)? What kind of messages and values do the students take away from these?	*Delivery of formal curriculum* Are there particular bod-ies or types of knowledge (e.g. information, theories or models) that are presented as 'fact' or 'truth'? Are there particular didactic strategies (e.g. lectures, groupwork, case studies) that predominate? What knowledge biases and behaviours do these types of knowledge and didactic strategies promote, and what implicit messages do students take away from them?	*Accessibility* Are teachers accessible to students? Are there times and spaces set aside for interaction between teachers and students (e.g. for feedback, clearing up doubts and questions)? What forms does this interaction take? Is it scheduled, e.g. as office hours, is it ad hoc and dependent on the teacher's discretion, does it take place in rushed breaks between lectures? What implicit messages do students take away from this about the interpersonal relationship with teachers
Structuring of time and space e.g. how do students learn to organise their time? Are their timetables cramped and stressed? What types of physical settings frame their learning experience, and what kind of rela-tionships and behaviours do these settings seem to promote?	*Assessment* Which competences are rewarded (e.g. compliance or independent thinking, experimenta-tion or safe, pragmatic approaches)? What form does assessment take (e.g. individual/group, written sit-in/oral exam, continuous assessment/term exams)? What behaviours do these assessment forms promote, what and implicit messages do students take away from them?	*Informal communication* What kind of stories, jokes, anecdotes etc. circulate among school actors? What kind of HC do the students themselves create, e.g. through resistance? What implicit messages do these send, and what behav-iours do they promote?

and student cannot be evaluated in its entirety using a predetermined, standardized defi-nition (e.g. a learning objective defining a specific competence that a student must be able to perform) as each student might be expected to grow in a different way from the encounter. Moreover, not all students can necessarily demonstrate their abilities through performance in the required ways, at the required times, and to the same degree—factors like test anxiety, motivation and effort, past failures, as well as the personal improve-ment undergone by a student (which may be significant even if the required competence levels are not reached), mediate this (Nicholls 1984). A competence-based curriculum also runs the risk of reducing learning to test results, 'criteria compliance' and omit-ting to evaluate the rest of the learning experience (Torrance 2007: 281)—and worse, training students to make this association. Abandoning this values-neutral 'instructor/ trainer' approach means acknowledging that the learning process and its outcomes also impact, and are shaped by, the teacher's personal development as well as the student's. In other words, to return to the dichotomy raised at the beginning of the article, teachers should seek to reattach their *being* to their *doing* in the classroom. The teacher then ide-ally becomes attentive and open to how his/her life impacts the divergent outcomes that can result from his/her encounter with students.

However, for the reasons outlined earlier, this is no easy feat at today's resource-con-strained mass universities where time constraints are ever-increasing and there is little opportunity for teacher–student contact (Hagenauer and Volet 2014). Existing compe-tence-based evaluation systems also produce inertias. Therefore, making the HC explicit should not be seen as yet another set of requirements that it is up to *teachers*—who are often already under great pressure—to comply with, and which is disconnected from the complex reality of today's universities, but as an endeavor that must be supported and tackled at all levels from university governance downwards, in order to provide the necessary resources—time, training, incentives—to facilitate the teachers' endeavors. Below, we therefore offer some suggestions as to how the interpersonal dimension may be consciously strengthened in a university context characterized by these challenges, with a view to making the HC explicit and to inspire teachers to view their professional activities as intrinsically internally related to their personal growth and development:

1. When introducing courses, teachers could devote some time to self-disclosure by pre-senting more personal aspects, such as own motivation for studying the subject in ques-tion, what s/he finds particularly fascinating about it, and his/her own developmental trajectory in teaching the course—what has s/he learned. This obviously in addition to, not instead of, delivering standard information such as topics, readings and exam formats. Self-disclosure has been found to strengthen the teacher–student relationship, with positive effects on learning outcomes, at earlier stages of education (cf. Frymier and Houser 2000).

2. Fora could be established where school management and/or teachers and students dis-cuss educational policies as jointly affecting both groups, for instance joint teachers' and students' union meetings.

3. Inviting students to provide feedback during the semester through class representatives, anonymous written feedback, or dialogue at regular intervals.

4. Improved access to teachers for students, e.g. by devoting more time to tutoring in smaller classes rather than using all hours on large lectures; earmarking course hours for personal office consultation hours, and/or for pre- or post-lecture consultations (when students are at the university anyway) where students can clear up doubts and discuss

issues of concern to them (cf. Hagenauer and Volet 2014, who point out that such access is widely expected by students starting university). This will open up spaces where students can interact on a more personal level with teachers.

5. Reworking student course ratings/evaluation forms so that they include rubrics for students to self-report on their own personal development during the course/semester (in addition to standard questions about teacher and course satisfaction). Such self-report could also take place in the framework of examinations (both oral and written), and could be integrated into learning objectives.

6. Promotion of activities, events and projects where school managers, teachers and students participate on an equal footing and learn together with one another. These could include community service initiatives, sporting events, quizzes, own art exhibitions, environmental initiatives to 'green' the campus, etc.

7. Raising awareness about university counselling services, which are often underused by students (Ryan, Shochet and Stallman 2010; Raunic and Xenos 2008). These services provide an important space for students—which should also be made available for teachers—to discuss issues relating to their academic and personal development.

8. Create a joint student–teacher commission to analyse the implicit biases in textbooks and course materials, disseminate these findings and discuss alternatives with other students and teachers.

9. Peer mentoring initiatives, both for students and teachers, would support a sense of social connectedness and promote personal and academic development both for mentor and mentee (Glaser et al. 2006).

Finally, a number of factors other than massification and systemic inertia may militate against rendering the HC explicit through strengthening the personal and interpersonal dimensions of university learning. First, both students and teachers themselves may resist such a move. Given that their teachers are also their evaluators, students may be reluctant to discuss challenges affecting their academic performance, fearing that this might have repercussions for their grades. Cultural dispositions towards collectivism and respect for hierarchy may also prevent students from entering into personal discussions with those perceived to be in authority; and shame about using counselling services may hinder this (cf. Raunic and Xenos 2008); or they may simply consider a more personal type of interaction with teachers inappropriate or may not see what they have to gain from it (Hagenauer and Volet 2014). Along similar lines, teachers may be reluctant to relinquish habitual authority dynamics vis-à-vis the students by engaging in a more personal way with their students, and/or scrutinising their own teaching practice; or they may consider students as independent adults who should not need this kind of personal relationship (Hagenauer and Volet 2014). The increasing service-orientation of universities may also work against a more personal teacher–student relationship, with students seeing themselves as consumers or customers and teachers as service providers (Ball 2012; Willmott 1995), and teachers, in turn, becoming reluctant to adopt a personal approach in teaching. Time constraints may also work against greater teacher–student contact, notably from the teachers' side (cf. Frymier and Houser 2000). Institutional incentives (including induction regarding university culture for students; and hours, salary bonuses and promotion for teachers) could be put in place to support initiatives such as those suggested above.

Conclusion

In the article, we discuss why the HC still merits attention—perhaps more than ever—in contemporary HE, despite the apparent shift from a teacher-centred model to a student-centred one. Although these two approaches to education may appear radically different, we argue that they share two important features: namely, that the student remains the target of change, not the teacher; and that both approaches sideline the all-important interpersonal relationship between teacher and student. The 'principle of experience' plays a vital role here: university students are expected to use their learning experiences in order to grow and acquire competences that will equip them for adult work and social life, but excessive emphasis on this principle of experience leads to a blind spot regarding the teacher's own growth, learning and change process. So, although the role of the teacher has ostensibly changed significantly, from that of an instructor (teacher-centred education) to that of a facilitator (student-centred education), s/he remains a marginal figure in the learning encounter.

We support our argument by drawing on various educational theorists and philosophers (notably Dewey, Knowles, Peters and Kohlberg) who argue that learning is not just a result of the student's experientially-based development in a learning-conducive environment created by the teacher, but also of the teacher's personal engagement in the learning process—including his/her own learning experiences and change. The UNESCO document "Learning: the treasure within" emphasizes the central importance of learning to live together—a 'together' which should encompass the teacher given his/her key role in learning. For his part, Peters rejects the idea of the student as 'trainee' in favor of the 'educated' student whose learning encompasses all human dimensions and appeals to the whole person including his/her interpersonal relationships—an idea also supported by Whitehead, who shows that it is impossible to contemplate a person independently of his/her relationships with other people. Along similar lines, Kohlberg's 'just community' concept seeks to eliminate the distance between school and life. Knowles uses the term 'facilitator' to mean 'facilitator of growth', i.e. thanks to the relationship established with the student, the teacher also grows. Knowles' notion of the facilitator is based on a humanistic foundation, not a technical one—according to him, educators should bring their entire human experience into the educational relationship in an attitude of respect and equality. He views the educational relationship essentially as an interpersonal encounter.

The above-mentioned authors all concur that teachers must view their teaching as a personal issue, since they also need to learn and grow. They all reject, in different ways, a technical vision of education in favor of one in which both parties—teacher as well as student—achieve personal growth as a result of their encounter. In this way, the distance between the teacher's educational activities and his/her own life is eliminated.

It is this very distance between education and life that produces the HC. The conclusion, and the central idea in this article, is that as long as university teachers fail to see their teacher role as a personal issue that is inextricably linked to their lives, the HC will remain a problem in HE, leading to learning outcomes that sometimes have little to do with the stated objectives. Therefore, we also conclude by offering some suggestions as to how the HC might be made apparent in HE through activities that foment the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

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