

A narrative study of the hidden curriculum in a private higher education institution

In terms of the lecturing dimension, the 'hidden curriculum' can be understood as 'what else teaching brings into the classroom' because learning is a social experience and students often learn things other than subject-related knowledge. This is present throughout all levels of education and is an important component within the higher education curriculum, yet remains a challenging concept to understand and define.

Research on the practical experiences of this in higher education, specifically private higher education, is limited. It is a (highly to flexible) situational and subjective concept, therefore, different role players and educational institutions are relevant dimensions to explore in gaining a more holistic understanding of the hidden curriculum.

This study aimed to understand lecturers' experiences of the hidden curriculum in their classrooms. A review of existing literature and concept mapping enabled the development of a conceptual framework, focusing on the hidden curriculum in private higher education. Ten lecturers in a private higher education institution were interviewed about their stories of teaching.

Further dimensions were considered: The curriculum as the foundation of the hidden curriculum, the influence of the world of work and the lecturer. The analysed data from the interviews provided valuable information regarding the importance of lecturer reflection, the relevance of private higher education institutions and the main areas where lecturers enact the hidden curriculum in their classrooms.

This study contributes by enhancing the understanding and importance of the hidden curriculum. The conceptual framework outlines the interplay between different elements of the hidden curriculum, thereby demonstrating the relational and dynamic nature of it. The study furthermore contributes to a more holistic understanding of the enactment of the hidden curriculum in private higher education and what lecturers experience it to be. Researching the hidden curriculum was necessary to enable an enhanced understanding of its power and potential so that it can be utilised more effectively and deliberately in higher education.

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