

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my father, Hj Mohd Ihsan bin Hj Abd Manan.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia
in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

**THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION
PROGRAM IN A MARA JUNIOR SCIENCE COLLEGE IN MALAYSIA**

By

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This study was on the hidden curriculum of the Special Education Program (SEP) at the Gemilang (a pseudonym) MARA Junior Science College. The main objective was to explore facets of the hidden curriculum in a MARA Junior Science College from the perspective of students labeled as gifted. It seeks to answer two research questions: 1) What is the hidden curriculum of the Special Education Program at Gemilang MARA Junior Science College? 2) What are the resultant learning from the hidden curriculum of the Special Education Program of Gemilang MARA Junior Science College?

A qualitative approach was chosen to generate data from former students and present teachers of Gemilang MARA Junior Science College. The data was generated from three focus group interviews with 24 former Gemilang MARA Junior College students, individual interviews with four students

and 12 teachers, observations of school activities and document review. The data was analyzed manually; codes and categories were identified; and a rich description based on the categories was written to answer the two research questions.

To better understand the various strands of schooling experiences that form the hidden curriculum in this particular context, Dewey's (1938) collateral learning and Cornbleth's (1990) social context theory were used as a guide in the interpretation of data. The study showed that the hidden curriculum of Gemilang can be described as the routinized and ritualized daily activities, the collaborative efforts in problem solving, the regimented living conditions, the values driven social environment, the tension between doing well and living up to expectations, the selfless approach to nurturing growth of individuals and the disparity between policy making and actual support. These resulted in the learning of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. The structural and sociocultural context of the SEP which contributed to the hidden curriculum are the physical setting, the academic setting, the affective setting and the social setting of a residential school with an Islamic based daily school routine, a selected student intake and the SEP curriculum with its differentiated instructional and learning orientation.

The study concluded that the hidden curriculum facilitated the transmission of social norms while the learning helped mold positive interpersonal and

intrapersonal skills in the students in spite of the restrictive nature of the Special Education Program. Among the implications of the study were flexibility and creativity in instruction promotes positive traits in students and teachers. As such, the study recommends that teachers be empowered to be creative and flexible in their instructional approach in order to provide more opportunities for students' investigative projects.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**KURIKULUM TERSEMBUNYI PROGRAM KHAS PENDIDIKAN
SEBUAH MAKTAB RENDAH SAINS MARA DI MALAYSIA**

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Kajian ini adalah mengenai kurikulum tersembunyi Program Khas Pendidikan (PKP) di Maktab Rendah Sains MARA Gemilang (bukan nama sebenar). Tujuan utama kajian ini ialah untuk meneroka pelbagai aspek kurikulum tersembunyi di Maktab Rendah Sains MARA dari perspektif pelajar yang dilabelkan sebagai pintar cerdas. Ia bertujuan menjawab dua soalan kajian: 1) Apakah kurikulum tersembunyi Program Khas Pendidikan di Maktab Rendah Sains MARA Gemilang? 2) Apakah hasil pembelajaran daripada kurikulum tersembunyi Program Khas Pendidikan di Maktab Rendah Sains MARA Gemilang?

Pendekatan kualitatif dipilih untuk mendapatkan data daripada bekas pelajar dan guru yang sedang bertugas di Maktab Rendah Sains MARA Gemilang. Data dikumpul melalui tiga temu bual kumpulan berfokus

melibatkan 24 orang bekas pelajar MRSM Gemilang; temu bual individu empat orang pelajar dan 12 orang guru; pemerhatian aktiviti maktab dan semakan dokumen. Data telah dianalisis secara manual; kod dan kategori telah dikenalpasti dan huraian berdasarkan kategori berkenaan telah ditulis bagi menjawab dua soalan kajian tersebut.

Untuk lebih memahami kepelbagaian pengalaman persekolahan yang membentuk kurikulum tersembunyi dalam konteks ini, pembelajaran *collateral* oleh Dewey (1938) dan teori konteks sosial oleh Cornbleth (1990) digunakan untuk memandu interpretasi data. Kajian menunjukkan bahawa kurikulum tersirat di Gemilang boleh di gambarkan sebagai a) rutin dan ritual aktiviti harian, b) usaha secara kolaboratif untuk menyelesaikan masalah, c) suasana hidup yang dikawal, d) suasana persekitaran sosial yang menekankan aspek nilai, e) mengimbangi antara kejayaan dan memenuhi pengharapan, f) tidak mementingkan diri sendiri dalam mendidik individu dan g) perbezaan antara pembentukan polisi dan sokongan sebenar. Ini telah mengakibatkan pembelajaran kemahiran intrapersonal dan interpersonal. Konteks Program Khas Pendidikan (PKP) yang membawa kepada kurikulum tersembunyi adalah latar belakang fizikal, akademik, afektif and sosial dengan rutin hariannya yang berlandaskan ajaran Islam, pelajar yang terpilih, kurikulum PKP dengan orientasi pengajaran dan pembelajaran yang berbeza daripada kurikulum yang diamalkan oleh MRSM lain.

Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahawa kurikulum tersembunyi memudahkan pemindahan norma-norma sosial manakala pembelajaran daripada kurikulum tersembunyi membentuk kemahiran interpersonal dan intrapersonal yang positif walaupun Program Khas Pendidikan ini bersifat *restrictive*. Antara implikasi kajian ini ialah guru perlu *flexible* dan kreatif dalam pengajaran kerana ia menggalakkan kemahiran yang positif dalam kalangan pelajar. Oleh itu kajian ini mencadangkan agar guru diupaya untuk menjadi lebih kreatif dan fleksibel dalam pendekatan pengajaran mereka supaya boleh mengadakan lebih banyak peluang untuk projek pelajar yang bersifat penyiasatan.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or other institutions.

FATIMAH MOHD IHSAN

Date: 26th March 2010

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDC	Curriculum Development Center
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
MARA	<i>Majlis Amanah Rakyat</i> Council for the Trust of the Bumiputeras
MJSC	MARA Junior Science College
MoE	Ministry of Education
MSED	MARA Secondary Education Division
PMR	<i>Penilaian Menengah Rendah</i> Lower Secondary Assessment
SEM	Schoolwide Enrichment Model
SEP	Special Education Program
SPM	<i>Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia</i> Malaysian Certificate of Education
SPP	<i>Sijil Penghormatan Pengetua</i> Principal's Honor Certificate
UKKM	<i>Ujian Kelayakan Kemasukan MARA</i> MARA Qualifying Entrance Test
fgi	Focus group interview
dsp	Document review of school planner
mc	Member check
ogd	Observation Graduation Day
or	Observation of Registration Day
of	Observation of Type III Fair