

The Hidden Curriculum

Myles, B. S., Trautman, M. L., & Schelvan, R. L.

Book Study



Autism Center

Foreword (page 1)

1. Give an example of how social intuition has helped you or someone you know.
2. Describe a possible social challenge for an individual with a social-cognitive learning disability.

“What is the ‘Hidden Curriculum’?” (page 5)

1. Quote: “The hidden curriculum refers to the set of rules or guidelines that are often not directly taught, but are assumed to be known.” Give an example of when you misinterpreted a hidden curriculum situation in your own life. What were the consequences of misinterpreting the situation?
2. What difficulties can result when an individual has problems recognizing the hidden curriculum?
3. Give an example of a situation of a student misreading body language. Explain how you helped him or her understand what was really happening.
4. As educators, it is important that we understand the cultures of the students we teach or supervise so we can help them interpret behaviors, as described on page 9 of *The Hidden Curriculum*. Describe a behavior from another culture that might be considered out of place in mainstream U.S. culture. How could you help a person understand the difference between the typical, expected behavior and the hidden curriculum behavior you listed?

Impact of the Hidden Curriculum (page 11)

1. Identify a hidden curriculum item that has occurred in your school setting. How can you teach about this item?
2. Identify a hidden curriculum item that has occurred in your home or in the home of one of your students. How can you teach about this item?

3. As explained on page 15, what skills can we teach students who are transitioning to the world of work about the hidden curriculum in the workplace?

Teaching the Hidden Curriculum (page 19)

1. Choose SOCCSS, Social Narratives, Cartooning, Social Autopsies, or 5-Point Scale to develop a support for Curtis using the situation below.

Curtis was attending a school assembly in the gymnasium. During the program, one of his classmates released gas. His other classmates laughed behind their hands, but Curtis was loudly commenting about the smell, the sound, and how rude it was to pass gas. A nearby teacher turned around and gave the group her best “teacher look.” This promptly hushed Curtis’ classmates, but Curtis continued talking loudly about the noxious fumes. Another teacher walked up the bleachers and made Curtis leave the gymnasium with him. This really upset Curtis. He tried to explain that he wasn’t the one who farted and did not understand why he was getting in trouble. How can the teacher help Curtis understand this social situation?

4. Think of a special interest a student/child has (or could have) and use it to develop a Power Card for one of the following situations:
 - a. Suzy is 3-½ years old. She communicates with single words and is generally content except when it’s time to go to bed. Suzy cries and won’t go to sleep.
 - b. George is 14 years old. He has decided to only shower once a week. His classmates are making fun of him, and his basketball teammates are ready to kick him off the team because of his offensive body odor.
 - c. Mark is 8 years old and is having trouble approaching his peers to join a group game on the playground.

List of Curriculum Items (page 43)

1. Using the items on pages 43 – 67, list a category (same or new) and at least two hidden curriculum items for that category.
2. Choose an area or item from pages 43 – 67 and describe how you could teach about the item/area.

Choose one area from the list below and describe how the hidden curriculum would be different in various environments (home, school, work, community).

- Bathroom rules
- Clothing
- Eating

3. Describe how a hidden curriculum item could be different depending on who an individual is with, such as friends, classmates, teammates, parents, teacher, extended family, etc. Choose an item and explain how it would be different with at least two individuals.
4. Write a short scenario describing a hidden curriculum item "gone bad." Explain how you would explain the situation to the individual involved and what supports you could provide to prevent similar situations in the future.

Figurative Speech and Idioms (page 68)

1. It may surprise you to realize how many idioms, figures of speech, and slang terms we use in our everyday speech. If you have a student with autism in your class, remember to use more concrete language or to check for understanding. List at least two idioms, figures of speech, or slang terms and their meanings not listed in the book.