THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM: PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING RULES IN SOCIAL SITUATIONS

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Not all handouts are in your slides
WHAT SHOULD THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION BE

• To prepare for
  • Future education/training
  • Independent living to the greatest extent possible
  • Employment
  • Relationships

• In short, to create life success
THE AUTISM PARADOX

NATURAL LEARNING CONCEPTS, INC. (2003-2006)
HOW DO THE FOLLOWING RELATE TO THE PURPOSE OF LIFE SUCCESS?
MATHEMATICS

- 36 X 4 = (4 X 9) X (2 X 2) is an example of which property?
  - a. Commutative Property
  - b. Associative Property
  - c. Multiplicative Property of One
  - d. Distributive Property
SOCIAL STUDIES

• What do the Mayan, Inca, and Aztec civilizations have in common?
  • Horse-drawn carts
  • Guns and gun powder
  • Large planned cities
  • Written alphabet
ECONOMICS

• A family is shopping for a house. They want a house with a big yard in a particular neighborhood. They find an affordable house they like, but the yard is small. If they buy the house, what will be the opportunity cost?
  • A big yard
  • A small yard
  • The cost of the house
  • The cost of remodeling the house
WHAT DO WE TEACH?

• Time is limited …
• We often focus on academics – as demonstrated
• We also don’t take into account the forgetting curve
THE FORGETTING CURVE

- People tend to forget one-half of what they learned over days or weeks if it is not actively rehearsed.
… WITH THE CONCEPT OF THE 5-MINUTE UNIVERSITY
HIDDEN CURRICULUM

• The set of unwritten rules that no one has been directly taught, but everyone knows. Violations of these rules can make an individual a social outcast.

• Phrase associated with hidden curriculum:
  • “I shouldn’t have to tell you but … “
  • “Everyone knows that … “
  • “It’s obvious … “
HIDDEN CURRICULUM

• Differs across
  • Age
  • Who you are with
  • Gender
  • Culture
IF WOMEN CONTROLLED THE WORLD

FROM AN EMAIL SENT TO ME
IMPACT OF THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

• School
  • Rules vs. expectations
  • Cursing
  • How to dress
IMPACT OF THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

• Community
  • Going to the library
  • Dating
    • Camp
    • Stalking
  • Going to a restaurant
THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM OF BOUNDARIES

• The Big Bang Theory
  • If you like organization, what can you organize
  • Sheldon is bothered by Penny’s apparent lack of organization skills
IMPACT OF THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

• Vocation
  • “If I had the courage … “
  • “The is the stupidest thing … “
• The Big Bang Theory
  • Sheldon and Leonard meet their new boss
IMPACT OF THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

• Legal system
  • “If you confess … “
• Police officers
  • Eagle Scout
  • The finished transaction
THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

• Often includes definitions:
  • Rules (not only for games)
  • Directions (not only for driving)
  • Emergencies
    • *What exactly is an emergency?*
I didn't know that the teacher was the most important person in the classroom until secondary school.

That is so very sad.
HIDDEN CURRICULUM ITEMS

• If one small incident occurs and the teacher corrects you, it does not mean the entire day is bad.

• You should talk to teachers in a pleasant tone of voice because they will respond to you in a more positive manner. They also like it if you smile every once in a while.
More Hidden Curriculum …

- When your teacher gives you a warning about behavior and you continue the behavior, you are probably going to get in trouble. If you stop the behavior immediately after the first warning, you will probably not get in trouble.
- Do not tell other students they smell and need to wear deodorant.
• When a teacher tells another student to stop talking, it is not a good idea to start talking to your neighbor since the teacher has already expressed disapproval of that action.

• When hearing someone speak using incorrect grammar, do not correct him every time, especially in a critical manner.
MORE HIDDEN CURRICULUM ...

• If you do something funny, it is usually only funny once.
• Don’t tell the principal that if she listened better more kids would like her.
• When someone else is getting in trouble, it is not the time to show the teacher something.
More Hidden Curriculum …

• When you are taking a shower in group setting, do not sustain eye contact for very long or watch other people taking their shower.

• When you are with classmates/coworkers you don’t know very well and you are the center of attention, do not pick your nose, pass gas or scratch an itch of a private body part.
More Hidden Curriculum …

- A compliment is almost always a good thing -- but know what body parts can be complimented.
- Never underestimate the importance of a good apology. It is almost always better than an excuse; however, know exactly what to say.
More Hidden Curriculum …

• Doctors will not help you if you arrive late, but they will make you wait. So bring along something to do.
• It is almost always better *not* to give unsolicited information on how someone could improve their look or work performance.
HIDDEN CURRICULUM ITEMS

• *Zapping* or *nuking* something means to heat something up in the microwave. It does not mean blowing something up with an atomic bomb.

• When you are in a nice restaurant avoid topics that contain the word *blood* or address a gory topic, regardless of how interesting it is.
MORE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

• When stopped for driving over the speed limit, even though the real reason why you were speeding was that you were pushing too hard on the accelerator, it is better to simply tell the police officer that you are sorry for speeding.
HIDDEN CURRICULUM ITEMS

- Do not tell a waitress or waiter that his/her hair is messed up.
- Sometimes honesty is not the best policy …
SEXUALITY

• Individuals with ASD are overrepresented in the population of those identified as sexual offenders

• The more difficult it is to discuss, the more it should be discussed!
HIDDEN CURRICULUM ITEMS

• When somebody asks if you like her new outfit, it is impolite to say no, even it is the truth. It is better to make a positive comment on some aspect of the outfit such as “pretty color” or “nice style”.
HIDDEN CURRICULUM ITEMS

• It’s O.K. to notice when people look or smell in a way that is offensive to you, but it is rude to share your view even though it is a fact.
• If you make a mistake in balancing your checkbook, it is not necessary to inform the bank.
HIDDEN CURRICULUM ITEMS

- An “adult party store” is a store that sells pornographic items. It is not the place to get decorations for your grandmother’s birthday party, even if all the invited guests are adults.
- It’s wise to be nice to your coworkers, especially your boss, whether you like them or not.
More Hidden Curriculum …

• When other seats are available in the theatre, leave a space between yourself and a stranger.
• If you are at a movie theatre watching a movie you have seen before, do not tell people around you what happens next.
• When leaving a restaurant, never pick up money left on the table.
MORE HIDDEN CURRICULUM ...

• When a sign says “Toilet out of order, please use floor below,” it means to use the restroom located on the next floor/story down.
OTHER HIDDEN CURRICULUM AREAS

• Airplane/airport
• Friends
• Eating
• Public/private swimming pools
• School rules
• Bathroom/shower/locker room
AN OVERWHELMING TASK

• One a day
  • At home
  • At school
  • In the community
• Grab the teachable moment
• *Real Simple*
• Idioms and metaphors
RESOURCES TO TEACH THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

Children

The Hidden Curriculum and Other Everyday Challenges for Elementary-Age Children With High-Functioning Autism
Haley Morgan Myles and Annellise Kolar

Adolescents and Young Adults

Learning the Hidden Curriculum: The Odyssey of One Autistic Adult
Judy Endow, MSW

Adults

The Hidden Curriculum of Getting and Keeping a Job: Charting the Social Landscape
Brenda Smith Myles, PhD, Judy Endow, MSW, and Malcolm Mayfield

Job Seekers and Those Wanting to Keep a Job