

# The Hidden Curriculum

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**Communication, thinking, problem solving, interpersonal skills, and collaboration are all 21st-century skills students must practice in school to be ready for college and careers. Effective instruction covers different types of curriculum: the one mandated by the state, the one the teacher is passionate about, the tested curriculum, and the hidden curriculum.**

The hidden curriculum is perhaps the most challenging to cover because it is often taken for granted. Usually, the hidden curriculum is missing in those students who need it most. The hidden curriculum refers to the set of rules or guidelines that are often not directly taught, but assumed to be known (Garnet, 1984; Hemmings, 2000; Jackson, 1968; Kanpol, 1989).

Much has been written about the hidden curriculum, but its practice early on determines the outcome of a well-rounded 21st-century student. The hidden curriculum includes the assumption that students know how to manage time, how to study, and how to solve problems. Teachers must ensure students learn hidden curriculum skills by embedding them into daily lessons.

The following hidden curriculum skills, along with the taught and tested curriculum, can be part of a teacher's repertoire of best classroom practices.

## TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS

A self-directional and proactive learner knows how to manage time. Learning this skill takes discipline and practice. Teaching this skill requires being intentional about showing how to manage schedules, timelines, priorities, study time, playtime, etc. It may be difficult at first, but the investment will pay students huge dividends in the end.

## PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

A coveted skill in the 21st-century is the ability to problem solve. The world outside the classroom offers countless opportunities to make decisions. Therefore, creating situations to problem solve during the K-12 years prepares students to solve professional and personal problems in the real world. Problem solving fosters a collaborative classroom environment where students are not given the answers, but challenged to create answers from what they are reading and talking about.

## STUDY SKILLS

Study skills demand the self-discipline that comes with time management and problem solving. For example, the ability to take notes can be a challenge when students are presented complex material. If note-taking has been taught, this skill can make a favorable impact in the outcome of a college course and consequently in a professional meeting.

**As students move through their K-12 years, they will learn the hidden skills that so often make the difference between success and failure. By intentionally teaching young men and women how to use 21st-century skills, educators ensure their readiness for college and the work force.**



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