

# The Hidden Curriculum: Social understanding, Social Skills, and Belonging in K-12 Settings, Post-secondary, and Beyond

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Scenario Handout

David is a third grader who attends his neighborhood elementary school. David has no friends. David doesn't even know how to make a friend; much less know how to get a friend from school to his house. David is unaware that he should be extending relationships outside of school and building friendships. All he does in the hall is focus on his next class and all he does at lunch is eat and not talk to anybody.

As the result of having no friends, David is always by himself at lunch and recess. He almost never gets invited to any activities, play dates, or birthday parties outside of school. David mostly goes to school for the academics and then gets on the school bus to go home right after school as the result of getting no invites. He is unaware of any of the extracurricular activities after school.

- 1) How can you help David learn the "skills to be a friend" and teach him how to make friends and how to "be a friend"? What skills would you teach him?
- 2) What kind of direct instruction should you teach him for this if you were his teacher and how and in what settings?
- 3) How would you go about teaching David the correct protocol to get a friend from school to his house for a play date or birthday party?
- 4) In what ways could the school adapt their policies, procedures, and practices to make sure other kids like David don't go through the school year without friends?

Elaine is a fourth grader who attends her neighborhood elementary school. Elaine does well in her academic classes but has trouble understanding how to “play” the games at recess the other kids play.

Elaine has no idea how to play basketball, volleyball, tetherball, softball, soccer, hopscotch, jump rope, Frisbee, or any of the other games played on the playfield. During her recess, she sits and watches the other kids and occasionally goes down the slide. Sometimes she swings but does not know how to “pump” to keep going and has to ask a teacher.

Additionally, Elaine sees some of the other kids playing games like Duck Duck Goose, Mother May I, Tag, Freeze Tag, Capture the Flag, and others and she doesn’t understand the rules of them and doesn’t know how to play them.

Additionally, Elaine has no idea how to join in a group of other kids who already started a game of something. This means that Elaine is alone and bored. All the teachers and recess monitors do is say to her “Go Play, Elaine” but Elaine doesn’t understand how to play well or know the protocols for joining in a group.

1) How could you help Elaine learn the commonly played games and sports that happen at recess?

2) What types of direct instruction should be given to Elaine for the activities in #1 and what knowledge does Elaine need to know to do well in recess activities?

3) How can the school better train its staff to adopt better policies and procedures so kids like Elaine don’t end up having a boring recess because they are not self taught experts in the games, sports, activities played on the playing field and playground most days? Which staff in the school should get this training and why?

Jonathan is a first grader at his local elementary school. Jonathan is a handsome little boy. However, he struggles with playroom environments with kids he doesn't know and there is no adult around.

When Jonathan's parents bring him to his friends and relatives houses, Jonathan wants to stay with his mother and the other parents instead of going in the back room with the other children of the house he is visiting.

Jonathan has trouble understanding how unpredictable the other children can be and how to organize games and play with baby toys without an adult there organizing the action. He also doesn't understand the play methods and stories behind the action figures, toys, and other things in the playroom.

Moreover, he is uncomfortable being sent into a room with two other kids he doesn't know very well. These kids sometimes do things they are not supposed to do, make jokes and talk in joke and slang language. Jonathan takes these things literally and tells the adults when he is in there constantly.

- 1) How can you help Jonathan understand how to play better in an unstructured play area with other kids where the adults are away in another room? What skills would you teach him and why?
- 2) How can you help Jonathan understand that adults and younger kids are segregated as guests when they visit a house and why that is?
- 3) How can you help Jonathan understand the stories behind action figures characters and how they are used in play?
- 4) How can you help Jonathan understand the unpredictability of other children and how to cope better?
- 5) How can you help Jonathan learn to organize a play a game with another child on his own?

William is a fifth grader who attends his neighborhood elementary school. He sees that there is an upcoming school talent show and wants to enter. However, he doesn't know how to develop a talent to enter or where the other kids developed their talents or even what talents are acceptable for this show.

Moreover, William has no idea where he should go or who he should talk to about developing a talent. He doesn't even know if he should ask his parents, his friend, or his teacher. You learn of this finally when he expresses this to his teacher.

William is very good at moving his body and has a pretty voice. However, he is not sure if he should try singing, dancing, acting funny, or the like.

William has never been on stage before and he is a little afraid of doing it for the first time but at the same time he is excited. His concern is to not bomb his first stage performance.

- 1) How can you help William develop and rehearse a talent that would be acceptable for an elementary school talent show?
- 2) What should William know about entering the show? How would you teach him the correct way to enter?
- 3) What skills should William learn and practice to get over his fear of stage fright? How would advise him on this?
- 4) How can the school adopt better policies in training so that children like William are not left out of talent shows and other stage shows due to a child's lack of knowledge of how to perform in them?

Jennifer is a first grader who attends her local elementary school and her birthday is next month. Jennifer knows several classmates as friends that she likes and they are Sarah, Amy, Lauren, Tara, Billy, Melvin, and Amanda. Jennifer has no idea of how to invite other guests to her party and how to make sure this is OK with her parents and the parents of her friends so they can come to her party.

Additionally, Jennifer is unsure if the kids she picked that she wants to come to her party are OK to invite over to her house with all the safety messages the school gave her about not talking to strangers and how to be safe with people from public settings which she took very seriously.

- 1) What skills and steps does Jennifer need to learn to invite others to her house?
- 2) How can you help Jennifer determine which friends are safe to invite to her house and who isn't?
- 3) What are some party etiquette rules that Jennifer should be taught in order to be a good host at her birthday party? What are some strategies for teaching them?
- 4) How can the school adopt better policies at explaining this safety message so that kids like Jennifer don't take the message "Don't talk to strangers" as "Don't ever talk to or meet new friends" or "Don't ever invite someone new to your house".

Sarah is a seventh grader who attends her local middle school. Sarah does well in her academic subjects but struggles socially.

When Sarah was asked to go into the school theater one day for an assembly, Sarah struggles with audience interaction. Sarah in her mind always wonders why some people start clapping at various times during the assembly and play that took place during one of her class periods as a special day.

When Sarah was at the assembly, Sarah screamed when the house lights went out as if she was scared of the dark. Sarah did not understand that this was supposed to mean “be quiet, the show is starting”.

When Sarah quieted down after the show started, she also wondered in her mind why sometimes the audience clapped, went “wow”, and the like. She copied the other audience members on this but did not know what made the first student know to clap or go “wow”. Sarah was afraid to ask the teacher because she was told to be quiet in the theater during the assembly, and when the assembly was over she was escorted back to math class for Math.

- 1) How would you teach Sarah the rule on when to clap while in an audience? (Note: “copy the other kids” is not an acceptable answer here!)
- 2) Which other audience interaction topics should Sarah be taught the reasoning behind?
- 3) What message do the house lights convey by being on or off?
- 4) How can school staff be taught not to overlook the fact that some children may need direct instruction in audience interaction skills?

Mark is an eighth grader who attends his local middle school. Mark wants to have his friend Samuel over one night for a sleep over. Mark doesn't know how to host a sleepover and is clueless when it comes to the preparations and how to get Samuel over for the night. Mark is a little afraid to ask because he knows he needs to get permission from his mom Amy and Samuel's mom, Melissa first.

Moreover, Mark doesn't realize that he needs to make sleeping arrangements and that he needs to be prepared to serve dinner to his guest. Additionally, he needs to plan activities for the sleep over which he is not sure what activities he should choose for his night together.

- 1) What should you teach Mark to think about in terms of his home environment when having a sleepover?
- 2) What would be some activities that Mark and Samuel could do together at the sleepover?
- 3) How could you teach Mark approach the parent approval procedure to get permission from Amy and Melissa for Samuel to come to Mark's house on the set day?
- 4) How would you help Mark learn the steps to plan sleepover?
- 5) What signs should school staff look for that might indicate a child is struggling with extending friend relationships outside school settings?

Loretta is a sixth grader who just entered middle school. Loretta heard on the bulletin that the school will be having “twin day” on Friday.

“Twin Day” is a day where a student and their friend dress in the same clothes or same color clothes. However, Loretta is clueless about this day and she has no idea of how to get a “twin”. Loretta for the most part just ignores the bulletin’s announcements and for the most part goes home right after school.

A few students she knows ask Loretta a few days before who she is going to be twins with, but she doesn’t know to answer and says “I don’t know” to them. Loretta has no idea as to which students have the same color or design of clothes as her and she never had any idea of how the other kids figured this out in order to dress the same on “twin day”.

- 1) How can you help Loretta become a “twin” with someone for “Twin Day”?
- 2) What is the proper protocol for Loretta to inquire with her friends as to what clothes they have and if they have something that will look similar to what Loretta plans to wear on “Twin Day”?
- 3) How can school staff help teach other kids like Loretta who struggle with understanding what “twin day” and other school spirit activities are and give direct instruction to kids in how to participate in them?
- 4) What signs should school staff watch out for that might indicate a child does not understand school spirit activities and lunchtime special activities well?

Robert is a sixth grader who attends his local middle school. Robert is doing well in his academics but struggles socially. Robert is interested in checking out the extracurricular activities of his school and would like to join a club or an organization.

He hears on the bulletin that his school offers math club, science club, drama club, and cooking club as well as basketball. When Robert hears this, he is curious about Science Club and trying out for Basketball. However, he is unsure about the procedure to join an after school club.

- 1) How can you help Robert learn what he needs to do in order to find out when Science club meets and how to inquire about joining it?
- 2) What skills does Robert need to know to join science club?
- 3) What are some protocols and manners that Robert should know when it comes the club meetings and events?
- 4) What are policies the school could implement so students like Robert can find the help the support they need who may be a novice when it comes to after school clubs?

Stewart is a 10th grader who attends his local high school. Stewart loves sports and would like to join a high school sports team. However, he doesn't know much about the tryout process and how to get onto a team. Stewart's favorite sport is football and he likes throwing the ball and tackling people and is very good at both but he hasn't played competition sports before.

Stewart needs some help in understanding the rules of the game and the tryout process. He is unsure what terms like "Varsity" and "JV" stand for. Additionally, he has never tried out for any sport before. Stewart goes to find the football coach and he says, "May I join the football team" and the coach says, "you must try out tomorrow".

- 1) Can you explain to Stewart the process of trying out?
- 2) How can you help Stewart learn the rules of playing football formally?
- 3) Assuming Stewart makes the team, what things can you teach him about good sportsmanship?
- 4) How can the school adopt better policies so that it is simple for students like Stewart to join sports teams and find out about tryouts?

Louise is a senior at her local high school. She hears that the kids at her school will be attending something called "grad night". Louise has no idea what "grad night" is and thinks instead that she should just come home after graduation. She has no idea for what the PTA and the grad night team are planning for the grad night all night party. You read that the grad night party will be held in the schools gym and will include dancing, a DJ, carnival game booths, a mini-casino (using play money), a maze, laser tag, a ladder climb inflatable, video game racing, tarot card readers, a pool table, ping pong, a hypnotist, and numerous other events. Many kids who see the flyer and the video from last years grad night just want to rush out and buy their tickets. The school offers Grad Night as a safe alternative to parties where illegal drugs and alcohol are present.

Louise on the other hand hasn't experienced many of these things before and isn't sure about going. Louise hasn't been to carnivals much, never played Blackjack or Poker, not danced much, or know what a Tarot card reader is about and therefore doesn't know how to do these activities well.

- 1) How can you help Louise learn the skills needed to have a fun grad night?
- 2) What skills would you teach Louise to understand carnival games, casino games, dancing, and the other skills needed at grad night?
- 3) Louise doesn't understand what a Hypnotist does and what hypnosis is. How would you explain this to her?
- 4) How can the school adopt better policies so kids like Louise don't fall into the cracks when it comes to the skills needed for fun activities like grad night and to provide more support for those students like Louise who struggle with understanding extracurricular activities?

Roger is a freshman at his local high school. Roger is interested in music and would like to join his high school band. However, Roger has never played an instrument before. He watches other kids play and to him it looks like a lot of fun.

Roger sees several instruments he likes. Roger is interested in playing either the trombone, tuba, or drums. Roger is unsure of the process of joining the band or how to select instruments.

- 1) How can you help Roger go about trying out for joining the band?
- 2) What are the skills Roger would need to learn to participate in Marching Band?
- 3) What time commitments would Roger have to make in terms of practices and rehearsals?
- 4) What practices should the school adopt so that people of all levels of music ability can learn to participate in marching band and to provide support for students like Roger who may be novice when it comes to joining extracurricular activities like band?

Mary Ellen is a high school senior at her local high school. Mary Ellen sees that Prom is coming up in a couple of months. She sees that all her friends are going and would like to go to Prom. However, Mary Ellen never learned to dance and therefore doesn't know many dance routines, nor does she know anything about how to prepare for prom. Additionally, Mary Ellen doesn't know anything about asking someone to dance with her, or the etiquette protocols of Prom at all.

On the flyer for it, it mentions that the dress code is "Formal Dress". Additionally, the flyer recommends going as a couple or a group. However, Mary Ellen doesn't have a Boyfriend and she has never dated anyone and doesn't know how to get a date or a boyfriend.

Additionally, some of Mary Ellen's classmates expressed to her that they are going to a nice restaurant before the Prom and to the school's After Prom Party. Others expressed the possibility of going in a limo.

- 1) How can you help Mary Ellen learn to Dance? Which dances or routines do you think she should know for Prom?
- 2) What should Mary Ellen be taught in terms of the protocols used for asking someone to dance with her and the etiquette of prom?
- 3) How can you teach Mary Ellen how to get a date or to arrange to go with a group?
- 4) How would you teach Mary Ellen to go about preparing for her prom night in advance?
- 5) What should Mary Ellen know about going to a nice formal restaurant in terms of skills and extra manners needed in this environment?
- 6) How can the school staff be better trained to provide support and direct instruction so that kids like Mary Ellen don't miss out on prom because they have never learned how to prepare for formal events like prom and may have never learned the protocols for so?

Dana is an 11th grader at her local high school. Each year the high school gives the students an election form for the school's Student government officers. Dana is clueless about how to know to who to vote for or even what the functioning of student government is.

Student government is in charge of providing some of the special programs the school offers such as the type of decorations at dances, organizing the pep rallies, running the student store, creating school spirit activities, and helping out with various extracurricular events.

Dana is unsure on how to decide who to vote for when this form comes around . She is unsure the different issues the student candidates are dealing with and their views on them. As the result, she has no idea who to vote for because she doesn't know any of the kids running personally.

- 1) How can you help Dana learn the functions of student government? What type of direct instruction would you provide her for this?
- 2) How can you help Dana find out and understand the various issues that are facing the school that student government is addressing?
- 3) How can you help Dana understand what each officers position does?
- 4) How can you tell Dana to look into each candidates position on each school issue and make a good choice for each office?
- 5) How can the school adopt better policies so that kids like Dana aren't left out when it comes to knowing about student government and the election process for student government?

Jacob is a college student at his local college. A couple of friends are in a fraternity and he wishes to join. Jacob is interested in joining but he is not sure how. Jacob is interested in the community service and other functions fraternities offer.

Jacob has no idea how to "rush" into a fraternity nor is he sure which ones he should pledge too. Some of them he heard have done bad things like hazing so he wants to be careful. The school offers several fraternities to offer.

- 1) How can you help Jacob learn about the different fraternities available?
- 2) What questions should Jacob ask to the fraternity to determine if it is a fraternity he might like to pledge to or not?
- 3) How can the college have better policies and procedures to assist students like Jacob who are unsure about how the fraternity rush process works ?

Arlene is a college student at her local university. She was invited to a banquet that will be held at a very nice, fancy restaurant. Arlene has never been to such a place before and when she arrives she is taken to a table where the place setting has three forks, two knives, and two spoons and is served a seven course dinner. Arlene has no idea as to which fork and knife to use for which course and doesn't know her table manners well for a formal setting. Arlene grew up in a family which didn't do many formal dinners and was very casual and informal.

Arlene also starts eating before the host sits down sometimes. Arlene also doesn't know to ask someone to pass things across the table. In addition, there are other manners that she doesn't know like knowing how to eat difficult foods with her utensils.

Arlene also likes to talk about things she likes in too much detail and doesn't know how to make "small talk" conversations.

- 1) How can you help Arlene know which set of utensils to use for which course?
- 2) What are some manners that Arlene should follow in a formal dining environment that are not used as commonly in a casual dining or informal dining environment?
- 3) How can you help Arlene learn to make "small talk" in conversations?
- 4) What are some policies a school or college could implement with older teens or young adults like Arlene to help them understand the proper dining etiquette for nicer restaurants?

Darlene is a college student at her local college. Darlene is invited to the dining hall with her friends one day for lunch. When Darlene sits down for her lunch, she has noticed that her friends are engaged in a banter conversation of laughs. In this conversation they use some jokes and slang words. Darlene is clueless about slang word meanings and assumes they mean what they mean in Webster's dictionary. She also was trained by her speech therapist to wait for a pause in the conversation before speaking.

However, Darlene waits and waits and waits for her turn to talk and it never comes. Darlene treats banter conversations as if they were casual or formal conversations. As such, she never gets to say much.

- 1) How would you help Darlene learn when to join in when it comes to banter conversations?
- 2) How would you help Darlene learn what makes good banter in a banter conversation?
- 3) Where can Darlene learn the "slang meanings" and uses of common slang words?
- 4) How can the school or college have better policies to help kids like Darlene learn these skills so kids like Darlene are not made fun of when it comes to use of jokes.