

The Hidden Curriculum

Education

What a school teaches through its routines, norms and silences.

The hidden curriculum is the set of values, expectations and social rules pupils learn from how a school runs, distinct from anything in its stated aims.

- Timetables teach that knowledge comes in separate boxes.
- Queueing and bells teach compliance and timing.
- Who is asked questions teaches who is expected to answer.
- Displayed work teaches what counts as good.
- Omissions teach as strongly as inclusions.
- It operates whether or not anyone intends it.

LOOK FOR IT

A school that says it values enquiry but never gives time for an unresolved question has taught the opposite through its timetable.

Educational reference. The concept comes from the sociology of education and is descriptive: it names an effect, it does not measure