

ESL or You Weren't Here: The Hidden Curriculum of Academic English

For many students, the transition to higher education can be a challenging one. They must not only adjust to a new academic environment, but they must also learn the unspoken rules and expectations that govern success in that environment. This hidden curriculum can be particularly difficult for students who are not native speakers of English.



ESL or You Weren't Here by Martin Elsant

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Print length	: 122 pages
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The hidden curriculum of academic English is a set of unwritten rules and expectations that students must learn to navigate in order to succeed in academic settings where English is the language of instruction. These rules and expectations can include things like:

- The expected level of formality in written and spoken communication
- The conventions of academic writing, such as the use of citations and references
- The expectations for participation in class discussions

- The assumptions about cultural knowledge and background information

Students who are not native speakers of English may not be aware of these hidden rules and expectations, which can lead to feelings of exclusion and discouragement. They may feel like they are not "smart enough" or "good enough" to succeed in academic settings, when in reality they simply need to learn the hidden curriculum.

It is important to recognize and address the hidden curriculum in order to create more equitable and inclusive learning environments for all students. This can be done through a variety of means, such as:

- Providing explicit instruction on the hidden curriculum
- Creating opportunities for students to practice the hidden curriculum
- Encouraging faculty to be aware of the hidden curriculum and to make their expectations clear
- Creating a supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable asking for help

By recognizing and addressing the hidden curriculum, we can help to create more equitable and inclusive learning environments for all students, regardless of their native language.

The Impact of the Hidden Curriculum on ESL Students

The hidden curriculum can have a significant impact on ESL students. They may feel like they are not "smart enough" or "good enough" to succeed in academic settings, when in reality they simply need to learn the hidden

curriculum. This can lead to feelings of exclusion and discouragement, which can make it difficult to succeed in school.

In addition, the hidden curriculum can also lead to students being misjudged by their teachers. For example, a student who is not familiar with the conventions of academic writing may be seen as "unintelligent" or "lazy," when in reality they simply need to learn the expected conventions.

It is important to remember that ESL students are just as capable of succeeding in academic settings as native speakers of English. However, they may need additional support to learn the hidden curriculum. By providing explicit instruction on the hidden curriculum, creating opportunities for students to practice the hidden curriculum, and encouraging faculty to be aware of the hidden curriculum, we can help to create more equitable and inclusive learning environments for all students.

How to Address the Hidden Curriculum in the Classroom

There are a number of things that faculty can do to address the hidden curriculum in their classrooms. These include:

- **Providing explicit instruction on the hidden curriculum.** This can be done through a variety of means, such as handouts, workshops, or class discussions.
- **Creating opportunities for students to practice the hidden curriculum.** This can be done through assignments, group projects, or presentations.
- **Encouraging faculty to be aware of the hidden curriculum and to make their expectations clear.** This can be done through faculty

development workshops or by providing faculty with resources on the hidden curriculum.

- **Creating a supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable asking for help.** This can be done by creating a welcoming classroom environment and by being responsive to students' questions and concerns.

By addressing the hidden curriculum in the classroom, faculty can help to create more equitable and inclusive learning environments for all students.

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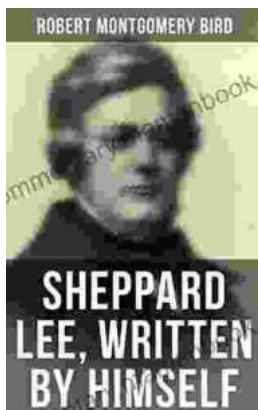
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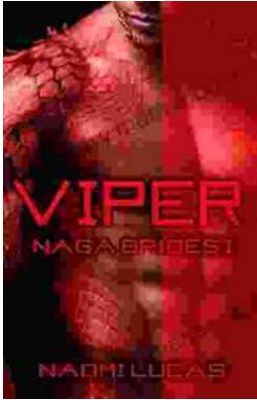
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