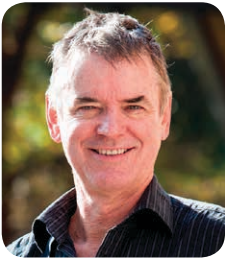


Evidence of *Impact*



Visible Learning^{plus}
case studies

The power of the Visible Learning research lies in helping educators understand which factors have the highest impact on student achievement so they can begin making strategic decisions based on evidence to maximize their time, energy, and resources. Visible Learning^{plus} translates John Hattie’s extensive research into an evidence-based schoolwide process of inquiry, evaluation, and implementation so students experience at least one year’s growth over the course of one school year.



JOHN HATTIE

Browse these inspiring stories of impact to see how schools and districts are implementing Visible Learning practices to maximize student achievement!

What’s Inside

Moving the Whole System Forward..... 2
Konocti Unified School District | California, USA

Using Data to Evaluate Impact..... 4
Valley View School District | Illinois, USA

Changing Mindframes..... 6
Metzler Elementary School | Texas, USA

Inspired and Passionate Teaching 8
Ka’imiloa Elementary School | Hawaii, USA

Empowering Student Learning with Teacher Clarity 10
Caldwell School District | Idaho, USA

Developing a Culture of Teacher Sharing and Collaboration.....12
Oxley College | New South Wales, Australia

A deliberate mindshift from what teachers are teaching to what students are learning

The Research

What affects student learning the most?

World-renowned professor **John Hattie** began his quest to find the answer more than 25 years ago. The resulting Visible Learning research is now **the world’s largest evidence base** on what works best in schools to improve learning.



based on
1,500+
meta-analyses



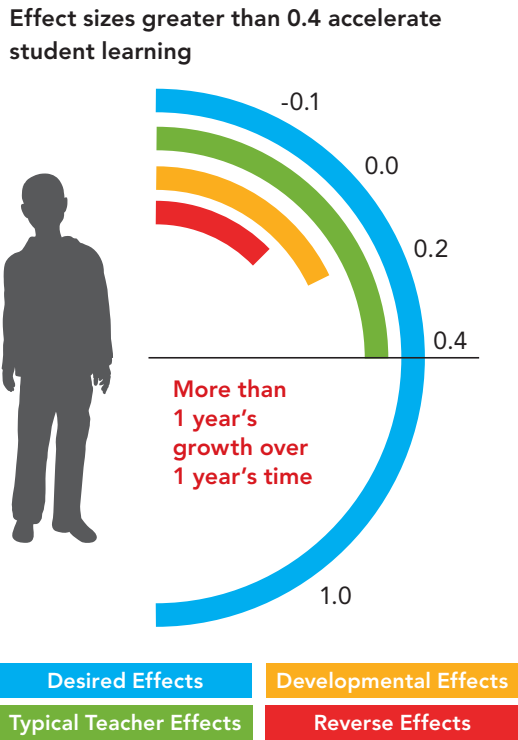
comprising
90,000+
studies



involving
300+ million
students worldwide

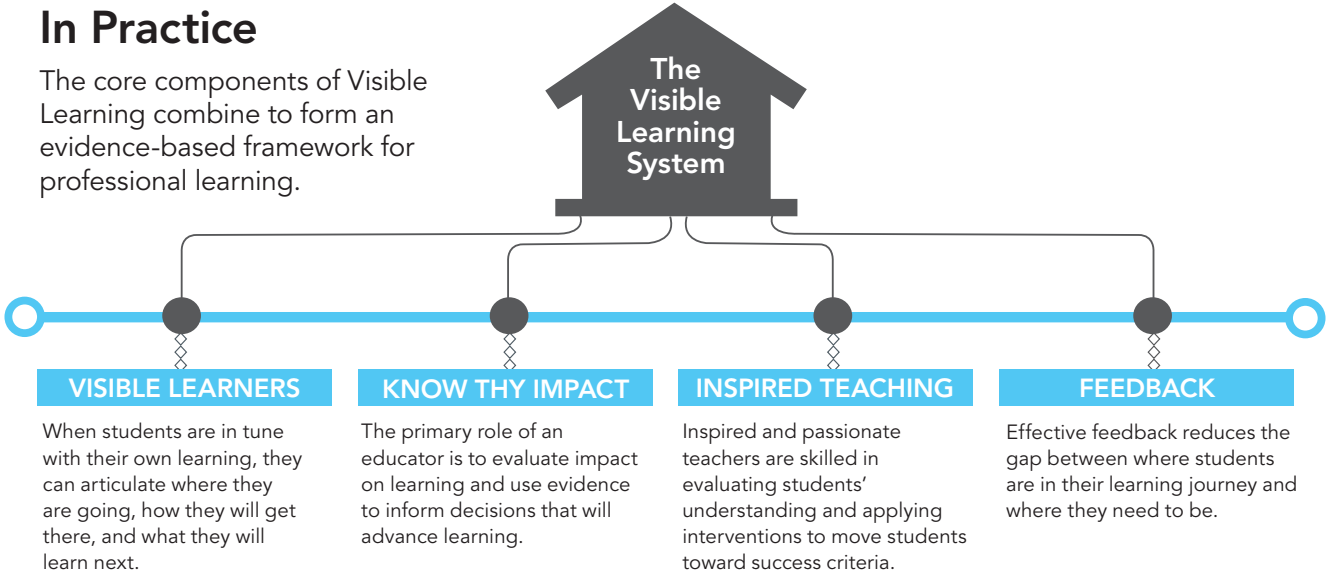
=

over
250
factors that influence
achievement



In Practice

The core components of Visible Learning combine to form an evidence-based framework for professional learning.



Moving the Whole System Forward

The Story of Konocti Unified School District | California, USA

As told by Teresa Rensch, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Students:
3400

Staff:
175

English Language Learners:
23%

Special-Ed:
12%

The Context

Konocti Unified School District is located in the town of Clearlake, California, where the median household income hovers just over the federal poverty line, and over 80% of the students read below grade level according to state exams*. We had conscientiously pursued many promising initiatives, but despite our efforts, student learning and achievement remained low.

To see if Visible Learning might be the help we were looking for, we decided to contact Corwin to deliver one day of Visible Learning^{plus} professional learning. They began with an assessment that evaluated district capability, and then constructed a strategic plan based on John Hattie’s research. Our goals were to make learning visible and ensure at least one year’s growth for one year’s input.

Our Visible Learning Journey

Prior to the start of the school year, Konocti’s leadership team of district leaders, administrators, instructional coaches, and teacher leaders attended an introductory Visible Learning^{plus} Foundation Day session and then the first Evidence Into Action for Leaders session. In those sessions, our Corwin consultant shared with us the key practices that impact student learning, and the influences that can lead to one year of growth or more. Then, when the school year started, the entire staff attended the Foundation Day professional learning session, effectively equipping Konocti Unified with the theoretical knowledge with which we could begin to implement the work and evaluate our progress towards our goal.

Within the first two months, Konocti’s leadership came to understand that teacher clarity, with an effect size of 0.75, was the anchor for all of the other instructional practices and key to our success. We could not give effective feedback, develop visible learners, or appropriately assess progress without knowing the learning intentions and success criteria. Thus, our districtwide strategic plans were modified. By the end of the school year, assessments showed that all teachers and students were clear on what the intended learning was and improving in their understanding of where they were and where they were headed next in their learning.

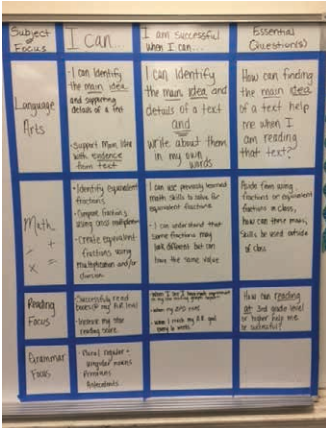
Over 76% of English language learners in grades K–7 made gains of one year or more, increasing the number of students at grade level by end of year by more than 12%.



Knowing Our Impact

Throughout the process, on-site facilitators received professional learning and continuous support from Corwin consultants in leading regular site and district collaborations. At least three times throughout the school year, these collaborations focused specifically on the monitoring of student growth based on the instructional strategies identified as “high impact” in the Visible Learning research.

Throughout the year, staff also brought their effect sizes, which were carefully calculated by analyzing the growth in their students’ reading scores, and collectively discussed their instructional next steps depending on how their students performed. Next, they analyzed the data and began to effectively weave literacy into the daily routine of instruction and assessment and increasingly implemented elements of teacher clarity.



Students at Konocti make their learning visible.

Since we began our Visible Learning journey, over 50% of our students grew one year or more in language arts, as measured by the annual state exam.

In addition to facilitating improved reading, teachers also saw an improvement in student behavior and attendance. Furthermore, Visible Learning’s focus on instilling a growth mindset and emphasizing the importance of academic potential and learning from mistakes, rather than a focus on creating academic perfection, inspired more constructive reactions to feedback.

After one year, we observed that the rate of suspensions dropped from 10.5% to just 2.3% at Burns Valley Elementary and that the chronic absentee rate fell by an average of 5% in the district overall. At one school, the chronic absentee rate fell from 36.4% to 16.3%.

Where We’re Going Next

In the second year of our Visible Learning journey, our educators and leaders will undergo additional professional learning facilitated by on-site Impact Coaches as well as Corwin consultants, specifically around teacher clarity, covering such topics as how to level the success criteria, check for understanding, and give effective feedback. We will also further collaborate to ensure that learning is integrated throughout the system and that everyone, from the top down, is participating in making improvements and maximizing impact.

“I can clearly see from the data I have collected in order to know my impact that Visible Learning has fostered growth in my classroom, and is an effective set of strategies that can improve student learning and success in any academic environment.”

—Kevin Gange, Special Education Teacher

* Achievement results according to California Achievement Assessment for Student Progress and Performance.

Using Data to Evaluate Impact

The Story of Valley View School District | Illinois, USA

Students:
17300

Free/Reduced Lunch:
62%

English Language Learners:
12.8%

The Context

Like all school districts, Valley View School District 365U in Illinois is awash with data. But the data didn’t really serve any fundamental needs—like how teachers could use the data as feedback to themselves in making instructional decisions or how students could use it to figure out what they needed to do next in their own learning. A major concern, notes Karen Flories, executive director for educational services in grades 6–12, was the discrepancy in how students performed on external assessments versus how they performed on learning tasks in the teacher’s classroom:

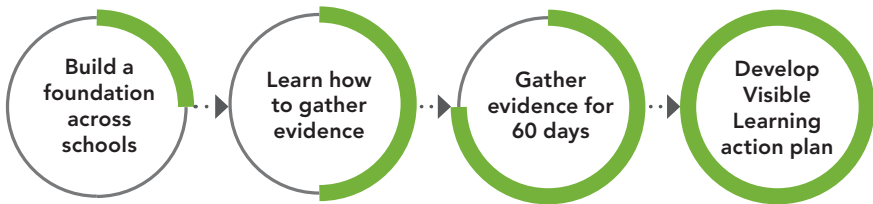
“If students receive consecutive 100% on tasks or assessments, that really is educational malpractice. It prevents teachers from guiding students to their next learning steps. The tasks teachers engineer to elicit evidence of student learning must be designed to align with the standard on which they are focused. Only then can we determine where students are, [so we can gauge] ‘where to next?’”

PARCC scores for middle and high school English language arts and math surpassed state averages after the first year of Visible Learning^{plus} implementation.

The Approach: Unpacking the Evidence

Instead of pursuing a “flavor of the month professional development”, Flories wanted the school system to look at practices that “could be identified, given focus, developed, evaluated and monitored throughout the school year”, so she introduced Hattie’s precepts to others through a mini book study group as a tool for assessing different instructional practices. As she explains, “We had all of this data but we were looking at it in isolation and not in conjunction with research.”

Next, the district brought Corwin’s professional development team in, including Visible Learning^{plus} consultant Dave Nagel, to deliver a two-day Visible Learning^{plus} Foundation Day session to administrators and teacher leaders. The conversations focused on two Visible Learning concepts: effect size measurements to monitor students’ learning progress—regardless of current achievement level—and mindframes, or ways of thinking that can have a powerful effect on student learning.



The Visible Learning^{plus} Foundation Series

As the enthusiasm for Visible Learning^{plus} grew, principals and other school leaders began to feel overwhelmed with the realization of how much evidence they could gather. “That was a learning opportunity for us,” Flories says. “We realized that we had to offer more focus and clarity from our viewpoint at the district level.”

So the district honed the list of practices it considered “crucial” down to three: teacher clarity, formative assessment, and feedback.

As a district, recalls Flories, “We said [to building leaders], if you want to get to feedback, you have to make sure you can first meet the indicators under teacher clarity, and then move into the indicators for formative assessment.” To help with those efforts, Flories’ team customized a Corwin-developed professional learning template so educators could make their learning visible and maximize impact on their students.

Dave Nagel points out, “We must look at the growth [the students are] making—that is paramount. If students aren’t reaching the standard yet, but they’re making huge progress, teachers can stay the course, knowing students will eventually get there.” But the other evidence is just as important, he adds: “Do students know what they’re learning? Why they’re completing specific tasks? You’ve got to ask them. Do teachers feel supported in their professional learning journey...so they don’t feel that professional development is being done to them? Teachers need time and support to practice and try new strategies. We have to ask them just like we ask students, ‘How is your learning going?’”



The Ultimate Goal: Develop Visible Learners

According to Flories, the district is seeing “strong correlations between student voice and student outcome data. In grade levels and content areas where student voice indicates high levels of teacher clarity, student outcomes are higher.” As one example, PARCC scores for middle and high school English/language arts and math surpassed state averages in the 2014–2015 school year and “look very promising” for the latest school year.

But the work continues. Flories notes, “We are working harder than ever to ensure a clear understanding of the focus and direction of Valley View. Similar to Hattie’s mindframe of everyone having a shared language of learning, district leaders want to ensure the vision and mission are understood by all and drive actions to impact student learning.”

“[We’re using Visible Learning so our kids] become their own teachers. And that doesn’t mean to remove the teacher from the classroom; but it means that you give them that advocacy, that grit, that curiosity, that determination that they need. There are going to be so many times when kids are knocked down with whatever harsh realities life entails. If we can create visible learners who are resilient and who say, ‘OK, I might not get it today, but I can figure out how I’m going to get there tomorrow,’ that’s what our dream is.”

—Karen Flories, Executive Director

Changing Mindframes

The Story of Metzler Elementary School | Spring, Texas

Students:
864

Free/Reduced Lunch:
27%

English Language Learners:
6%

The Context

Lakita Combs was in her first year as principal at Metzler Elementary in Klein ISD, Texas. The year before the school's state testing scores had taken a "huge dip. I needed a direction for my teachers to go — something for them to get excited about," she recalls. "We needed that clarity and to develop that common language so that we were all on the same page, going in the same direction."

The Approach

Combs set up a foundation day with Corwin to lay out the basics of the Visible Learning strands for all of her teachers and staff. The school decided to start by immersing itself in the "mindframes" of Visible Learning. School leaders spoke with student focus groups to understand what they thought about learning and what it means to be a good learner. Even the teachers weren't in agreement. "We didn't have a common definition," she admits. "We didn't know that we had to teach kids that. We thought they came knowing these things."

And so Metzler's journey began by defining the qualities of a good learner. As an example, "We said good learners are curious," Combs explains. "Then we described what curious looked like, and we agreed upon that." The educators came up with five different qualities and the traits for each one. They also made a timeline and set what they considered a reasonable period by which they would review their data to see whether they'd made progress. And then they started teaching the kids. The approach: to have everyone focus on one quality of learning and build on it schoolwide until they'd gotten through the whole list.



89% or more of students are well-poised for success in the next grade level in reading, mathematics, science, and writing compared to 69%–86% prior to starting Visible Learning^{plus}.



The Impact

The evidence of the change is readily apparent, says Combs. For example, conversations with students have shifted. Now when she puts them into their cars after school, she asks, "Were you curious today? Give me an example. Did you work hard? What does that look like?"

The impact is being felt even outside of school. One parent told Combs she and her child were at the skating rink, struggling with a particular technique. The response from that student:

"I can't give up. Learning is hard work, and I have to keep on trying because I'm a learner and this is what learners do."

"I love that," says Combs.

That internal mindframe shift has happened with teachers, too. Combs cites feedback as one example, "It's hard when you're sitting in a PLC meeting, looking at your data and getting down about it if it's not what you expect it to be. So we're constantly telling each other, 'You know what? Assessments are just feedback to us. It's pointing us to where we need to go. It's just data. We need to keep collecting that.' It's just a different way of looking at things."

The work hasn't been without its challenges. In particular, "There's no one right or wrong way to do it, there's no one right answer," says Combs. "When we write success criteria, it's going to look different depending on the content and grade level. But teachers want to know, 'Am I doing it right?' There's not a set way that you're going to do it. Do the kids get it? Do they understand it? Are they taking ownership of their learning with this? If the answer is yes, then you're doing it right. It doesn't necessarily have to look like it does for the person across the hall."

And now teachers have bought in. When Combs was a teacher at Metzler, the principal was constantly trying to get them to do pre- and post-tests as assessments, "but nobody was moving on it." Fast forward to today: Every semester, as a teacher starts a new impact cycle, integrating assessment into the work is a normal part of the process.

The same is true for the students, too. Each student from kindergarten on up have "success trackers" to let them know where they are, what they're learning and what goals come next for them. Says Combs, "When I walk into a classroom, I've got these kids running up to me with these yellow folders saying, 'Hey, look at where I am with my learning.' Or 'Can you test me on this because I'm ready to move forward.'"

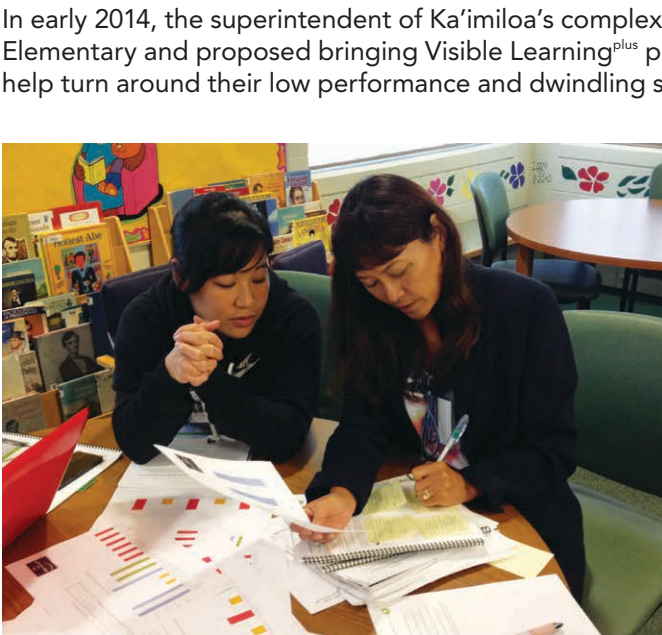
Inspired and Passionate Teaching

The Story of Ka'imiloa Elementary School | Hawaii, USA

Students:	Low Income:	English Language Learners:	Special-Ed:
814	65%	20%	8%

The Context

Ka'imiloa Elementary School, a K–6 school on the island of Oahu in Hawaii, has seen its share of reform efforts. The school has the highest percentage of low-income and English language learners in its complex area. As Principal Debra Hatada explains, in Hawaii's Department of Education parlance, the school's classification shifted from "Planning for Restructuring" to "Focus School." Focus schools—those that fall into the lowest performing 15%—are required to pursue programs designed to turn them around.



In early 2014, the superintendent of Ka'imiloa's complex area approached principal Debra Hatada of Ka'imiloa Elementary and proposed bringing Visible Learning^{plus} professional learning to the school's leadership team to help turn around their low performance and dwindling staff morale. As Hatada recalls, "[The superintendent's] comment was, 'I know that your school knows all about best teaching practices because I've seen it in your school's classrooms. Perhaps what is needed is to know what few best practices teachers can really focus in on.'" Familiar with Hattie's research, principal Hatada jumped at the opportunity.

What appealed to her about Visible Learning^{plus} was how it wasn't simply another initiative. It was a way for teachers to re-examine the mindset they brought to their activities. Hatada believed that bringing Visible Learning^{plus} professional learning to her teachers "would breathe life back into our classrooms and, certainly, bring back the passion to the craft of teaching." Visible Learning^{plus} offered a reminder to people about why they became educators in the first place: "To impact someone's life positively."

The literacy rate for third grade students increased by 25% from one year to the next, coming within 5% of the state's targeted literacy proficiency requirement.

The Approach

Over several years, Ka'imiloa Elementary in Hawaii approached professional development for Visible Learning in phases. The first year focused on true basics, such as building a shared vocabulary with which to have conversations about learning. The second year focused on implementation and giving teachers room to try out their new learning. Then, the adoption of Visible Learning^{plus} shifted into overdrive in a third year to cement and embed learning throughout.

At each stage, the school's Visible Learning^{plus} professional development consultant was there to help Ka'imiloa's educators prepare for the next level.

Throughout the process, the school engaged in continuous impact cycles of feedback, which included evidence gathering, reviewing their learning targets, and realigning or introducing further professional development, to closely address their ongoing needs and to keep Ka'imiloa moving forward.

Learning Made Visible

What was the result of their hard work?

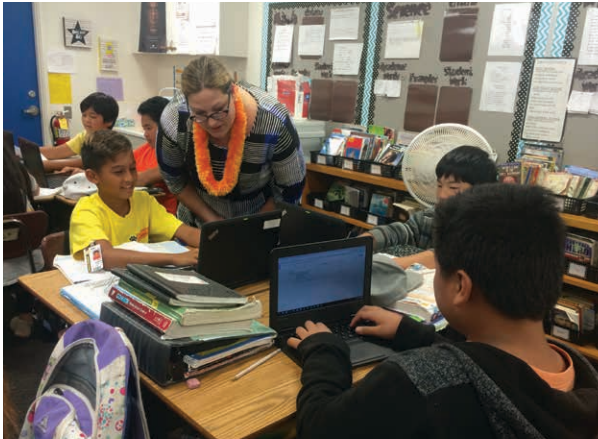
"Ka'imiloa's teachers have embraced the Visible Learning 'movement,'" Hatada said, "supporting each other and celebrating their students' emerging voices." During their journey, the school brought on new teachers and new school leaders, all of whom were quickly swept up in the momentum set in place by a core group of educators who were committed to "supporting every student in becoming that visible learner."

"Kids know what they are supposed to be learning. We see that teachers have more clarity in the lessons they are teaching. The learning intentions or learning targets are there."

Recently, the principal spoke with numerous school leaders who wanted to learn more about her school's experiences with Visible Learning^{plus}. The most common question participants asked was, "How hard will it be to implement with all that is on the school's and teachers' plates?"

She replied,

“It is hard work because teaching and learning is hard work. But it's the best and most rewarding hard work any school can take on, simply because we are focusing on best teaching practices that will make an impact on student learning, and John Hattie has shown us the evidence in research to prove it.”



Empowering Student Learning With Teacher Clarity

The Story of Caldwell School District | Idaho, USA

High-Poverty:
83–86%

Minority:
62%

Special-Ed:
13%

The Context

Caldwell School District in Idaho is not a wealthy district. “We’re absolutely working with a demographic that [requires us] to understand the impact we’re having on students — and it needs to be sustained impact,” explains Jodie Mills, chief academic officer for the district. “We want to make sure the money we spend is on things that directly impact kids. We need to be incredibly strategic.”

The Approach

Hattie’s message on effect sizes and impact resonated for Mills and the other district leaders, so the school began with Corwin education experts leading three one-day sessions. The topics: Visible Learning, learning intentions and success criteria, and coaching. Besides providing a shared vocabulary for teachers and school leaders, laying that foundation has given the district “a clear direction and a clear definition of what that direction is and what success looks like,” Mills adds.

Since beginning Visible Learning^{plus}, the gains have been remarkable:

“There’s more of a professional dialogue. [Teachers] come in, and they truly are talking about what is impacting kids and the impact they’ve had, not necessarily on the teaching but on the kids’ learning.”
—Jodie Mills, Chief Academic Officer

Students also have begun owning their own learning, even at the youngest ages. First-grade teacher teams at Caldwell have been using the terms “learning intentions”, “success criteria”, and “learning progressions” with their students all year and having them track their progress in notebooks. “The kids were not only clear about where they were, but [they] learned how to talk the talk. They learned how to explain the criteria. They learned how to give feedback about the criteria. The kids learned the language of learning along with the teachers” says Kara Vandas, a certified professional development consultant with Corwin.

Recently, the district has been analyzing results for data on student writing. “It’s obvious that in the schools that have picked up on the success criteria and intentions and shared that with the kids, they have stronger performance on this particular assessment than the other schools that haven’t,” Mills asserts.

Students who learned the common language of learning had stronger performance in writing after one year.



Bringing teacher clarity into focus

Educators are buried under an avalanche of content standards, and knowing what to teach and how to teach it is tricky. To achieve what they want in the classroom, teachers need clarity — a deep understanding about what to teach and why, how to teach it and what success looks like.

With an effect size of 0.75, teacher clarity “serves as a catalyst for the other effect sizes to become possible,” says Kara Vandas. Because without teacher clarity, “clear feedback to students is difficult because you’re not even sure what you’re looking for. For feedback to be effective, first, you’ve got to get clear. The same is true with using formative assessment to change your practices. If you’re not sure what you’re teaching or what the students have to know and be able to do, it’s hard to reflect and say, ‘Are they getting there or not?’”

Next Steps

Now Vandas and her colleague Ainsley Rose spend time between professional learning days to visit each school to work directly with principals, instructional coaches, and teachers. Vandas also meets with Mills to plan next steps for the district, “so there’s always a district influence over what’s happening in the building, but still they have the autonomy to take it where they need to go,” says Mills. The result: “We’ve got 10 buildings heading usually in 10 different directions, but it’s always leading toward the ‘Promised Land.’”



Next, we will attend an Institute that will focus on feedback, says Mills. “We’ve got learning intentions and success criteria [implemented] in most classrooms. Teachers understand how to get clarity. Now, how do we get kids to the point where they’re clear and they’re giving us really good feedback? It’s definitely already happening in some classrooms, but we want full-scale, districtwide implementation of that so we have assessment-capable learners from K to 12. It’s a matter of time before we absolutely rock this place.”

Developing a Culture of Teacher Sharing and Collaboration

The Story of Oxley College | New South Wales, Australia

As told by Kate Cunich, Deputy Head-Academic

Students:
531

Teaching Staff:
97

The Context

Oxley College is an independent, co-educational school located in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales, Australia. Prior to Visible Learning^{plus}, our staff professional learning program had been somewhat ad hoc, and we had little to show for our investment of time and resources. We were passionate and experienced, yet we did not collect data and our external results showed elements of underperformance. We saw Visible Learning^{plus} as a way to maximise our impact and improve learning for all of Oxley’s students.

“As a result of classroom observations, we found that 80% of our K–12 students knew the learning intentions and success criteria of the lesson being taught. Prior to Visible Learning^{plus}, I am not sure that we would have made 20%!”

—Kate Cunich, Deputy Head-Academic

The Approach

We began our professional learning journey with the research in John Hattie’s book *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement* (2013). Next, I attended a presentation on Visible Learning^{plus} at a conference in Brisbane. Instantly, I knew that this was what Oxley needed as its framework for the future. I returned inspired and embraced the Visible Learning^{plus} framework in its entirety, amazed with its alignment with our strategic direction.

In our first year, we attended the Foundation Day professional learning session, and conducted an internal staff professional learning day to further our understanding of Visible Learning^{plus}. Every Oxley staff member who attended a workshop left brimming with enthusiasm and inspiration. Rather than starting from scratch, we were provided with a clear and sequential path to implementation. The information provided us with confidence and focus as we set out to achieve our vision.

As we progressed in our journey, we gathered a cross-curricular team to attend the first Evidence Into Action for Leaders professional learning session to learn how to gather evidence. During this workshop, our Visible Learning^{plus} consultant walked us through the very specific actions we needed to put in place to turn our aspirations into action. The workshop handbook took us very logically through the five strands of Visible Learning^{plus}, and we left armed with Excel spreadsheets, matrices, and worksheets to put into immediate use.



When we returned, we presented to the whole staff on what evidence is required and how it would be collected. We used a Monday afternoon staff meeting for all staff to complete the School Matrix as a measure of Oxley as a Visible Learning^{plus} school. We also ran student focus groups on the visible learner, inspired and passionate teaching, performed online surveys about feedback, and analyzed NAPLAN (national test) data.

Later in the year, we attended the second Evidence Into Action for Leaders professional learning session. We worked closely with the Visible Learning^{plus} team to determine what our evidence meant for Oxley. We also had the opportunity to network with other schools. We left inspired and ready for action!

The Impact

While we still have much to do, we have already seen significant results in both teaching and learning. A quick snapshot:

Six months after the first Evidence Into Action for Leaders professional learning session we repeated the student focus groups on “what does a good learner look like at Oxley.” The clear evidence is that students have moved from “someone who is organised” or “someone who wears their uniform well” to the articulation of learner dispositions, discussion of learning intentions, success criteria, and progression.

“Students were more aware of the focus on learning, rather than being taught. There has been a significant shift to active learning, group work, and discussion.”

—Kate Cunich, Deputy Head-Academic

We wait eagerly on the new NAPLAN data to be released so that we can start our data analysis and set next year’s targets for literacy and numeracy.

Where to Next?

Our teachers are hungry for more Visible Learning^{plus}, particularly assessment and data collection. We plan to attend the Visible Learning^{plus} Inside Series professional learning sessions in order to build staff capacity in the next school year. Most of all, we are committed to being an exemplar of how Visible Learning^{plus} can make a difference in student learning.

Be the next
success story.

Contact your PD Advisor at corwin.com/PDAdvisor

CORWIN