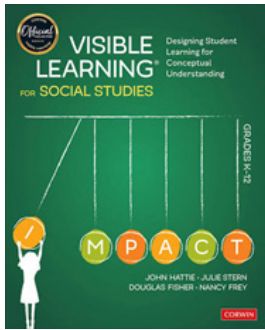


Visible Learning for Social Studies: Corwin's Latest Contribution to Teaching and Learning



A Book Review by Virnilisa Printup, Ed. S vprintup@rockdale.k12.ga.us



During your career as an educator, you have likely discussed the research of Professor John Hattie. The *Visible Learning* series, led by Hattie's work,

compels educators to “know thy impact” (www.visiblelearning.com) by purposefully designing learning experiences that grow students' capacity to lead their own learning. For years, the research and information that supports the power of visible learning has been seen through the lenses of literacy, mathematics, and science. In June 2020, Corwin changed the narrative about social studies instruction with the book *Visible Learning for Social Studies: Designing Student Learning for Conceptual Understanding* (Hattie et al. 2020). It is very rare to find a book that is dedicated to current pedagogical practices in our field. In this book, John Hattie, Julie Stern, Douglas Fisher, and Nancy Frey use Visible Learning® research and real classroom examples to show the reader how to provide students with authentic social studies learning experiences.

How do we make social studies visible for all learners? In *Visible Learning for the Social Studies*, the authors help readers find the answer to this essential question in five chapters. The information provided in each chapter builds upon John Hattie's books *Visible Learning* (2009) and *Visible Learning for Teachers* (2012). Each turn of the page will make you reflect on teaching and learning practices while considering ways to add more visible teaching tools to your toolkit.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR VISIBLE LEARNING FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

In this chapter, the authors identify and define three phases of learning: surface level learning, deep learning, and transfer of learning. The authors explain that to master learning at each phase, some instructional

strategies will be more effective than others. As students unlock each phase, their level of independence increases.

Along with identifying the three phases of learning, the authors also discuss the impact of teacher credibility, teacher clarity, and “Mind Frames for Teachers” (p. 17). These influences should be considered by the reader as each phase of learning is explained throughout the text.

SURFACE LEARNING IN SOCIAL STUDIES

Surface learning gives students their first opportunity to understand “the concepts, terms, skills, facts, and vocabulary of a topic” (p. 3). Surface learning is important; however, current social studies pedagogy requires that students go beyond the memorization of facts to show what they know and understand about a particular topic or concept. During the surface-level phase of learning, instructional strategies such as teacher modeling, spaced practice, and activating prior knowledge are most effective. This phase gives students the base required to meet the cognitive demand of state social studies standards and/or the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework. Students' preparation for the other phases of learning begins here.

DEEP LEARNING IN SOCIAL STUDIES

Deep learning in social studies reflects the shifts that have occurred in our curriculum during the last decade. Deep learning “occurs as we begin to uncover the relationships between two or more concepts and monitor how those relationships strengthen and change as we encounter new situations or information” (p. 70). To effectively move from surface learning to deep learning, it is important to activate prior knowledge while giving students multiple opportunities to engage in three-way thinking. Graphic organizers, concept maps, and self-questioning are a few strategies that allow students to deepen their knowledge.

TEACHING TRANSFER IN SOCIAL STUDIES

This might be the most valuable chapter in *Visible Learning for Social Studies*. Shifting from teaching the facts to teaching through inquiry is difficult because it can be challenging for students to transfer their learning to new content. In this chapter, we learn how to help students transfer learning near and far. The authors provide splendid examples for the transfer of learning, such as classroom debates and document-based questions.

DETERMINING IMPACT, RESPONDING, AND KNOWING WHAT DOES NOT WORK

The authors end the text by challenging the reader to “know thy impact” (www.visiblelearning.com). The closing chapter explores effect size, teacher clarity, and methods for responding when instruction does not work.

Every social studies educator needs to read *Visible Learning for Social Studies: Designing Student Learning for Conceptual Understanding*. We have all had coaching conversations with teachers and other leaders about making learning stick. We have all had additional conversations about teaching numerous standards well. In this short yet powerful read, the authors remind us about the importance of intentionality. By identifying strategies and activities that are designed for each phase of learning, the authors successfully answer the question, how do we make social studies visible for all learners? If you are looking for a great summer read or your next area of focus, consider *Visible Learning for Social Studies: Designing Student Learning for Conceptual Understanding*.

BOOK INFORMATION:

Hattie, John, Julie Stern, Douglas Fisher, and Nancy Frey. *Visible Learning® for Social Studies, Grades K-12: Designing Student Learning for Conceptual Understanding*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2020.