PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE FOR
VISIBLE TEACHING, ASSESSING, LEARNING AND LEADING

How can there be so many published articles, so many reports providing directions, so many professional development sessions advocating this or that method, so many parents and politicians inventing new and better answers, while classrooms are hardly different from 200 years ago (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Why does this bounty of research have such limited impact? (Quoted from Hattie, 2009, p. 3)

Introduction and Overview

We live in a time when information on any given topic is just a few clicks away. Dedicated educators subscribe to and read hundreds of journals searching for ways to improve teaching, assessing, learning and leading. Our quest for improvement provides such confusing and sometimes contradictory results that we are left feeling a sense of “whiplash” from improvement initiatives. This whiplash effect may cause skepticism about new initiatives and result in a, “this too shall pass” attitude that prevails over faithful implementation of even the most “evidence-based” initiatives.

In his book, Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement, John Hattie provides, “an explanatory story about the key influences on student learning” (Hattie, 2009, p. 6). Hattie presents findings around six factors that are associated with student learning (Hattie, 2009, p. 31-36); 1) the child, 2) the home, 3) the school, 4) the curricula, 5) the teacher, and 6) the approaches to teaching. One chapter is devoted to providing research on each topic, with the exception of approaches to learning for which there are two chapters.

Hattie uses “barometers” to present research findings. The barometers reflect a “continuum” of influence (negative, low, medium, or high) based on a standard of a 0.40 effect size; any research with an effect size of .40 or above is considered worth implementing. A rank order listing by influence of the meta-analyses is included in Appendix B of Hattie’s book.

This professional development guide aligns Hattie’s research with a model developed by School University Research Network (SURN) staff from the College of William and Mary. The Visible Teaching, Assessing, Learning and Leading (VTALL) model (Table 1) reflects research based findings that influence achievement and presents methods/tools for engaging staffs in learning about how to transfer the findings to practice. The primary purpose of this guide is to provide a “walk-through” of Hattie’s book, along with professional development materials and ideas for improving teaching, assessing, learning, and leading.

The Professional Development Guide for Visible Teaching, Assessing, Learning and Leading is divided into five sections: 1) Introduction and Overview, 2) Visible Teaching, 3) Visible Assessing, 4) Visible Learning, and 5) Visible Leading. Each section provides a crosswalk between the model’s defining criteria and Hattie’s research findings with effect sizes of 0.40 or more. In some instances negative findings also are presented if related to prevailing practices in schools.
The guide for each of the Visible Teaching, and Assessing, sections of the VTALL model is organized in a similar manner. Each of these sections provides a table with model criteria and related research findings along with corresponding page numbers for delving more deeply into some of the research that Hattie presents in his book. The table is followed by summary of the findings. Four sample professional development experiences are detailed for each of the sections so that there is a total of 12 professional growth facilitation plans included in this guide. All plans include copies of slides and handouts necessary for facilitation.

The final section on Visible Leading also provides a table with model criteria and related research findings along with corresponding page numbers a crosswalk to Hattie’s book. The table is followed by summary of the findings. Four additional resources for facilitating job-embedded professional development are included in this section of the guide. Observation tools and guidelines for the VTALL model are included in the visible leading section of the guide, along with self-reflection tool for developing and implementing professional development goals.

This guide can be used in multiple ways. Portions of the guide can be used to engage in a book study of Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement. Book study meetings can be organized around each of the sections of the guide. Group members can use journals to respond to the reflections on readings and can use the reflections to lead discussions. The professional development facilitator lesson plans also can be used to engage groups in learning about and practicing specific high-yield strategies. Depending on time, portions/all of the facilitator’s lesson plans can be implemented, followed by classroom application. Leaders are encouraged to make adaptations based on staff needs. District or school needs will generate additional ways to promote deep learning and transfer of visible teaching, assessing, learning, and leading!
Visible Teaching

- Shows caring and respect for students’ needs, responses, and diversity.
- Uses small group options: pairs, cooperative learning, guided reading, reciprocal teaching, etc.
- Assigns/uses leveled and varied text: articles, magazines, fiction, non-fiction, internet, etc.
- Uses management strategies to reduce disruptions in learning: clear expectations, rules, and procedures, etc.
- Clarifies and articulates specific learning objectives/learning intentions.
- Provides direct/explicit instruction and models what students should know or do to master objectives.
- Develops vocabulary and connects concepts and ideas.
- Questions for high level thinking and deep learning.
- Maintains instructional clarity across lesson organization, explanation, examples, and guided practice.
- Differentiates through re-teaching, acceleration, and enrichment, etc.

Visible Assessing

- Identifies and communicates challenging success criteria in checklists and rubrics.
- Pre-assesses to determine what students already know and can do.
- Checks for understanding and achievement of learning intentions.
- Provides specific descriptive feedback.
- Engages students in self-assessment of their work, what they learn, and how they learn.
- Uses existing products or samples as models for student products.
- Uses assessments aligned with objectives/learning intentions/standards and instructional processes.
- Provides feedback by using observation protocols to “look for” and discuss visible assessing, teaching, and learning.
- Creates structures that promote collaboration, inquiry, and reflection.
- Designs/provides high quality individual and school-based professional development based on performance data and standards.
- Analyzes policy to determine those that may impede visible assessing, teaching, learning and leading.
- Provides feedback by using observation protocols to “look for” and discuss visible assessing, teaching, and learning.
- Promotes a culture of efficacy and optimism for improving visible assessing, teaching, learning and leadership.

Visible Learning

- Uses manipulatives and technology.
- Engages in making decisions and choices.
- Applies cognition strategies: make connections, question, summarize, infer, synthesize, visualize, big ideas.
- Engages in reading.
- Engages in writing.
- Engages in discussing text.
- Engages in problem solving or creates products.
- Engages in peer tutoring, cooperative learning, reciprocal teaching, and other cooperative structures.
- Creates/uses advanced/graphic organizers, concept mapping, logs, interactive notebooks, and foldables.
- Engages in relevant, real-world learning experiences that advance 21st century skills.

Visible Leading

- Articulates a vision of high expectations for 21st century schools.
- Builds capacity through modeling, supervision and coaching.
- Redesigns structures, roles, and functions to support visible assessing, teaching, learning and leading.
- Provides feedback by using observation protocols to “look for” and discuss visible assessing, teaching, and learning.
- Creates structures that promote collaboration, inquiry, and reflection.
- Designs/provides high quality individual and school-based professional development based on performance data and standards.
- Analyzes policy to determine those that may impede visible assessing, teaching, learning and leading.
- Uses assessments, data and research to improve practice and student learning.
- Provides open, honest, communication to foster improvement.
- Promotes a culture of efficacy and optimism for improving visible assessing, teaching, learning and leadership.

Table 1. Visible Teaching, Assessing, Learning, and Leading Model (VTALL) (Gregory & Rozzelle, 2011)
Reflection for Learning and Transfer: Introduction and Overview

1. Learn more about how Hattie describes the six topics for the research syntheses. Read pages 31-36 in *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement* and complete the following graphic organizer to identify the descriptors and the chapter that describes research pertaining to the topic. Think about your experiences. How would you rank order the influence of the topics on achievement (6 = most influence and 1 = least influence)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>The Child</td>
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<td>The Home</td>
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<td>The Approaches to Teaching</td>
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2. In of *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement* Hattie uses barometers to present the influence that a practice has on student achievement. Examine Figure 2.4 on page 19 of the book. Describe what you notice about how achievement influences are communicated.

3. Examine the *Visible Teaching, Assessing, Learning, and Leading Model (VTALL)* on page 2 of this guide. What questions do you have about the model? Would you add to the model? If so, what? Would you eliminate anything from the model? If so, what? What do you think are your strengths in applying the model? What might be your weaknesses?