

Inclusionary Practices and Systems: **VISIBLE LEARNING**

WHAT IS VISIBLE LEARNING?

Visible learning refers to making student learning visible to teachers so they can know whether they are having an impact. When teaching is visible, the student knows what to do and how to do it, and the teacher knows if learning is occurring. Teachers and students work together to attain learning goals that are challenging, explicit and transparent. Teachers provide feedback and ascertain whether students have attained the goals. In visible learning:

- Teachers consider themselves positive change agents.
- Teachers work together to develop lesson plans, agree on what is worth teaching, and evaluate the impact on student outcomes.
- Instructors start the planning process with an understanding of what each student knows and how instruction can increase progress and levels of achievement.

WHY IS VISIBLE LEARNING IMPORTANT? WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES

Visible learning provides insight into what teachers and school leaders should stop doing and what they should strive to do better. Educators use it to reconsider common practices such as instructional methods. The approach is based on research showing that collective efficacy and teacher collaboration are essential to improve student learning and achievement. The following chart summarizes the research findings:

The Visible Learning Research



IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Visible learning requires an enhanced role for teachers as they become evaluators of their own teaching. It occurs when teachers see learning through the eyes of students.
- Visible teachers display clear learning intentions and goals, use a range of learning strategies, and provide immediate and relevant feedback.

CASE STUDY: McMicken Heights Elementary

McMicken started their visible learning journey as one of a few schools in their district that were in a piloting visible learning 6 years ago. Over the course of the past 6 years, their educators (and their students!) have been engaging in the visible learning journey, with the support of a building based visible learning team that has used a train-the-trainer model to provide more intensive professional learning to all educators at their school. Initially, McMicken leadership identified exemplar visible learning classrooms that were models teachers could visit to see instructional strategies in action and how students were engaging at different phases of the visible learning process. Since its inception, McMicken has integrated standards based instruction, social emotional learning, and inclusive and culturally responsive teaching to create a robust visible learning community.

Visible learning is a really important component to McMicken's equity-driven inclusive mission and vision. The through line embodied in visible learning that includes common planning, common data analysis, and transferring of ownership of that data from teachers over to students. The combination just described has been incredibly impactful in terms of empowering and engaging students. It is easy to find evidence of visible learning structures, practices, and implementation when you enter McMicken's classrooms. For example, visitors observe students giving each other feedback, supporting one and other's learning and students cooperating with one and other in the classroom around what they are learning, building a culture of friendship, belonging and community.

McMicken's data teams are very strong, as are their data analysis protocols (referred to as "DAPS") which continue to shift and change as they strengthen their visible learning structures. Conversations around the data are centered on teacher behavior and include how teachers can change their behavior and shift their instruction to most effectively engage students. This aligns with the ways teachers are teaching, not by engaging in monologues, but by engaging in dialogue with students to get to the heart of what and how they are learning. McMicken has turned over a lot of their staff meetings to PLC time to focus on such important components as educator collaboration, which is important for visible learning, but also contributing to an inclusive learning structure as inclusion is inherently a collaborative endeavor.

McMickern has found incredible potential is visible learning for all their students, including students with IEPs who are really owning their own learning journey, picking up their batons and running with it. This has resulted in a lot of progress and avenues for students to discuss their progress in relevant and meaningful ways. Their visible learning processes directly inform the ways they collaborate and you hear evidence of visible learning across grade level PLCs. When visiting McMicken, teachers are discussing everything from learning intentions, success criteria, learning progression, to what it means to be "good at" a subject. Moreover, they aren't only having these conversations with one another to guide their inclusive and culturally responsive teaching, and also are having discussions about the same things with the students in their classrooms. When you visit a McMicken classroom you hear the evidence of decreased teacher talk and an increase in teacher talk and the language of "success criteria" discussed and made clear to students across classrooms. To learn more about McMicken Elementary, one of our WA State Demonstration Sites, please visit our website at ipdemosites.org.

RESOURCES

1. Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning (2012). Hattie, John.
2. Ten Mindframes for Visible Learning (2017). Hattie, John.
3. visiblelearning.org