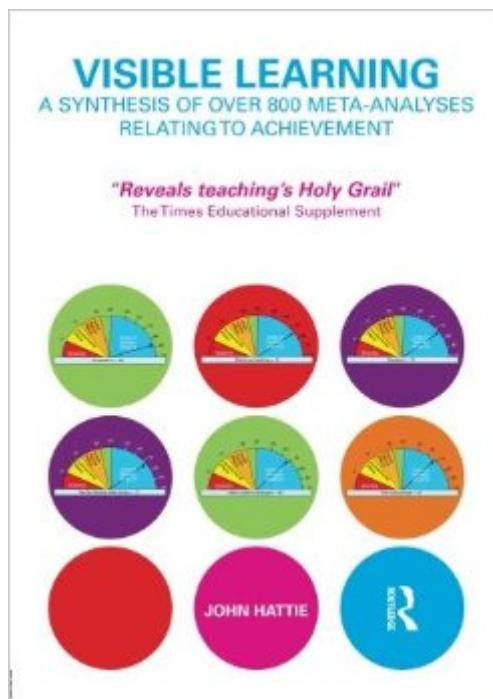


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Visible Learning: A Synthesis Of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating To Achievement



Synopsis

This unique and ground-breaking book is the result of 15 years research and synthesises over 800 meta-analyses on the influences on achievement in school-aged students. It builds a story about the power of teachers, feedback, and a model of learning and understanding. The research involves many millions of students and represents the largest ever evidence based research into what actually works in schools to improve learning. Areas covered include the influence of the student, home, school, curricula, teacher, and teaching strategies. A model of teaching and learning is developed based on the notion of visible teaching and visible learning. A major message is that what works best for students is similar to what works best for teachers – an attention to setting challenging learning intentions, being clear about what success means, and an attention to learning strategies for developing conceptual understanding about what teachers and students know and understand. Although the current evidence based fad has turned into a debate about test scores, this book is about using evidence to build and defend a model of teaching and learning. A major contribution is a fascinating benchmark/dashboard for comparing many innovations in teaching and schools.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Few books on education persuade us to see more truthfully and anew, or show us the way to do better for our students. This one does both. Hattie has spent decades collecting data and

conclusions from over 800 authoritative summaries of research, to compute average 'effect sizes' which measure the impact of a host of influences on student/pupil attainment. Class size, discovery learning, gender - almost every conceivable influence, strategy, or factor is here, including I'm afraid, your personal bandwagons and bâfâtes noires. Hattie then compares these factors by putting them on the same scale to find those that have the greatest impact on student achievement. Having climbed to the top of this mountain of educational research he can see a very long way, and there are many surprises, each verified by repeated research. Did you know that students learn almost twice as well if they share a computer than if they have one each? Do you know why? Do you know that certain types of structured active learning with strong teacher control work miles better than discovery learning or problem-based learning? He looks at factors and strategies associated with students, home, curricula, and schools, but finds that if we want to improve learning, we must concentrate on what teachers do - and how they conceptualise the teaching process. What emerges from this book is far more than a monumental data-set showing what works best and why, vital though that is. He develops a model urging us to change our perceptions so that students see themselves as their own teachers - and teachers see learning through the eyes of their students. You won't find the detail in this massive overview, but Hattie does indicate where to go to get it.

I really want to be able to recommend this book. I would love to have one location to point to when someone brings up a myth on education to point to and say "go read this and see what the evidence says". This book is so close to being that book - but how can I recommend a book of statistical analyses of meta analyses when the author clearly does not understand meta analyses or statistics? Hattie creates a single scale upon which to evaluate education impacts. An effect size of $d = 0.0 - 0.15$ is considered "developmental effects" - what would have occurred anyway due to children aging. An effect size of $d = 0.15 - 0.4$ is considered "teacher effects" - presumably the effect of having an average quality teacher working with the students. An effect size of $d > .4$ is what Hattie considers "desirable effects". Is this summary of effect size accurate? Well that depends. If the underlying studies effect was calculated by comparing student outcomes at the end compared to the beginning of the study then it makes sense to dismiss some effect as developmental effects or average teacher effects. But if the underlying study calculated the effect by comparing the difference in growth compared to a control group, that also aged and also had average teachers then to dismiss small effects as developmental or "teacher effects" is completely wrong. Even for cases where the effect size is calculated by comparing outcomes at end of the study to the starting

position the size of the effect that can be dismissed as developmental effects depends on items such as length of study (was it a one afternoon or multi year intervention?) and the outcome variable studies (was outcome measured knowing names of letters or was it likelihood of graduating college?).

A book whose time has come. This is a detailed contribution to the educators library, on the important theme- what affects educational outcomes for our students. Given the size and detail, it is best suited to the educated professional, but is also accessible enough for the educated reader - though having little opportunity to affect any change may prove frustrating. The book is broken down into sections looking at the different influences on outcomes such as the influence from home, school reforms, principal, and teacher and teaching practices etc. Within these sections all the influences are assessed using a statistical comparison called 'effect size'. This aims to be a common scale on which to measure effectiveness- a nice speedometer type graphic is used to indicate the rating for each item. Think sending a child to an 'elite' child will turn them into a Rhodes scholar? Think keeping a child down a grade if they are not progressing is a good idea? Think the lauded 'direct instruction' technique is chalk, talk and worksheets? Read on and see what the current evidence indicates- and it is not always what we want to hear. Noteably most influences are positive- but the aim of the work is to find out what has a significant influence so that efforts can be made on practices that are more effective. In contrast to one of the other reviewers - there are some questions that are not answered in this book - namely which interventions work best with which types of students? It is great to know what 'on average' is more effective, but this is qualified by the fact that each intervention varies in effectiveness in different studies.

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