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visible
learning^{plus}

How One School Made Learning Visible Through Feedback

Visible Learning^{plus}: A Proven Program for School Improvement



**The Story of Monmia
Primary School**

A Visible Learning^{plus} Case Study

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About Visible Learning^{plus}

The Visible Learning^{plus} school change model of professional learning is based on one simple belief: every student should experience at least one year's growth over the course of one school year.

However, this simple statement can lead to a host of questions: How do we measure growth? What does a year's progress look like? What factors contribute the most to student learning? How do we account for students with different abilities?

The story of Monmia Primary School illustrates how Visible Learning^{plus} harnesses the collaborative energy of educators to maximise the impact on student achievement.

For more information about the Visible Learning^{plus} model of school improvement, please visit www.corwinaustralia.com.au or contact a Corwin representative at (03) 8612 2000.

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Corwin is the exclusive provider of Visible Learning^{plus} seminars, events, training, and consulting in Australia. For 25 years, our mission of "Helping Educators Make the Greatest Impact" has guided us in finding practical, research-based solutions to the challenges that educators face. We are proud to be your partner for all Visible Learning^{plus} professional learning.

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Monmia Primary School, Victoria

The Context

Monmia Primary School is a state school situated in Keilor Downs, Victoria. The school has 348 students, ranging from the preparatory level (five years old) to year 6 (11–12 years old). Aside from the two preparatory classes, students are placed in composite classes, each comprising two-year levels.

The school is characterised by diversity, with students from over 48 countries. Two-thirds of students are from low socio-economic backgrounds. Interestingly, 66% of students come from outside the school zone, a fact that staff ascribe to the large number of students whose primary carers are grandparents who live within the zone.

Monmia is committed to providing innovative programs that stimulate and challenge each student to develop lifelong learning skills and strategies.

The Approach

Monmia has long engaged in enquiry into the impact of changed practice on student outcomes, and this has seen a number of new initiatives. The most recent shift in focus took place in 2012 when the leadership team participated in a study tour to New Zealand. The tour provided an opportunity for school leaders to visit New Zealand schools that had successfully implemented the principles of Visible Learning^{plus}. Inspired by what they saw, Monmia's leadership team returned with a vision that their students should become assessment-capable, visible learners. The school embarked on a visible learning journey that has seen impressive gains in student achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics, as evidenced in NAPLAN results.

Monmia Primary School has always understood the connection between improved outcomes for students and the professional learning outcomes it needs to achieve with staff. In this instance, the team realised that if students were to become articulate visible learners, then a priority for staff would need to be the provision of effective feedback. This was the "missing piece" they were seeking in their drive for improvement.

Along with the twenty-two other schools in their network, Monmia's leadership team took part in the three-day Visible Learning^{plus} Foundation Series. Helen Butler, a Visible Learning^{plus} consultant became the school's critical friend, challenging thinking and supporting the use of data to inform next steps in classrooms and across the school. The Guiding Coalition was established, consisting of the senior leadership team and the leaders of the schools' professional learning communities.

Monmia wanted students talking about their learning using the instructional feedback model, in relationship to the three feedback questions:

- **Where am I going?**
This is articulated in learning intentions, goals, and success criteria.
- **How am I going?**
This is explored through self-assessment and self-evaluation. What progress has been made? Refer back to goals set.
- **Where to next?**
What needs to be done to achieve further success? Reflect on the goal.



Monmia Primary School, Victoria



The leadership team shared its professional learning with the entire staff. They also took staff along with them as they gathered and analysed the evidence in relationship to the Visible Learning^{plus} School Matrix. This created much discussion as staff saw what the students thought about learning, feedback, and their teachers.

Modeling by the school-based coaches provided another opportunity for teachers to see what effective feedback looks and sounds like.

The coaches used the Visible Learning^{plus} tools to collect evidence that could be used as the basis of conversations about the levels of feedback being provided and the usefulness of the information being conveyed.

The Impact

Monmia, in partnership with three other primary schools, has continued to focus on feedback through a combined curriculum day where teaching teams and education support staff collaborated on effective ideas and resources. This resulted in new practices being implemented at each school. Following this day, the schools embarked on cross school visits where teachers observed feedback in the classrooms. Through this observation, they were required to gather samples of the four levels (Task, Process, Self-Regulation, and Self/Praise) that is articulated clearly in the *Feedback That Makes Learning Visible* workshop. For each sample of feedback, teachers observed and recorded what the feedback looked like, sounded like, and felt like for learners.

As a result, the teachers created the demand to have further opportunities to inquire about feedback with their colleagues. The results of an after school meeting in teaching teams provided evidence of teachers as learners of feedback based on research that became highly visible in the classroom environment. This gave all staff across the four schools the shared language of giving and receiving feedback.

A feedback culture has developed at Monmia where teachers regularly provide students with feedback and students provide feedback to each other. Feedback walkthroughs completed in 2015 demonstrated a shift from feedback being only praise (as seen in survey data 2014) to include feedback at the task, process and self-regulation level.

The school leadership team is adamant that the improvements can be ascribed to the school's participation in an initiative that is based on solid research, along with a collaborative enquiry approach where evidence, committed leadership, and a culture of learning drive change and improvement.



3 Ways to Get Started



1. School Self-Assessment Matrix

How does your school measure against the five strands of Visible Learning^{plus}? Certified consultants will conduct a half-day site visit to collect and analyse baseline capability data to determine your school's readiness for Visible Learning^{plus}. A full written report is provided.



2. The Foundation Series

Begin your Visible Learning^{plus} journey by building your team's foundational knowledge of the Visible Learning research. Teachers and school leaders will receive tools for gathering evidence of effective practice and create a plan for making learning visible for all students.



3. Collaborative Impact Program

The Collaborative Impact program is our gold standard for sustainable reform, as it aligns system leaders, school leaders, and teachers with a proven process to build capacity for change over 3-5 years, with measurable results.

Contact a Corwin representative for a tailored professional learning & development pathway:

Email: info@corwinaustralia.com.au

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