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visible
learning^{plus}_{TM}

Developing a Culture of Teacher Sharing and Collaboration

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



**The Story of
Oxley College, NSW**

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 Oxley College in New South Wales 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 Do Their Work Better" 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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Oxley College, NSW

An Interview with Kate Cunich, Deputy Head—Academic
Oxley College, NSW

Context

Oxley College is an independent, co-educational school located in the Southern Highlands of NSW, Australia. For years, we were a secondary school serving students in Grades 7-12. In 2012, we expanded to include K-6 with the intention to provide a seamless learning experience for Grades K-12 on one campus.

We began our professional learning journey in 2012 with the research of John Hattie, in particular, with **Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement** (2013). In September 2012, I attended Deb Masters's presentation on Visible Learning^{plus} at the ACEL (Australian Council for Educational Leadership) Conference in Brisbane. Instantly, I knew that this was what Oxley needed as its framework for the future. I returned inspired and embraced the Visible Learning^{plus} framework in its entirety, amazed with its alignment with our strategic direction. I proposed that Visible Learning^{plus} may start a ripple at Oxley, and Deb assured me that it would start a tsunami. She was correct!

Prior to 2012, our staff professional learning program had been somewhat ad hoc, and we had little to show for our investment of time and resources. We were passionate and experienced, yet we did not collect data and our external results showed elements of underperformance. We saw Visible Learning^{plus} as a way to maximise our impact and improve learning for all of Oxley's students.

In 2013, we used the following Visible Learning^{plus} tools and professional learning days:

- The Visible Learning^{plus} Toolkit
- Foundation Day Workshop
- Evidence Into Action Workshop, Day 1
- Evidence Into Action Workshop, Day 2

How Useful Did You Find the Tools?

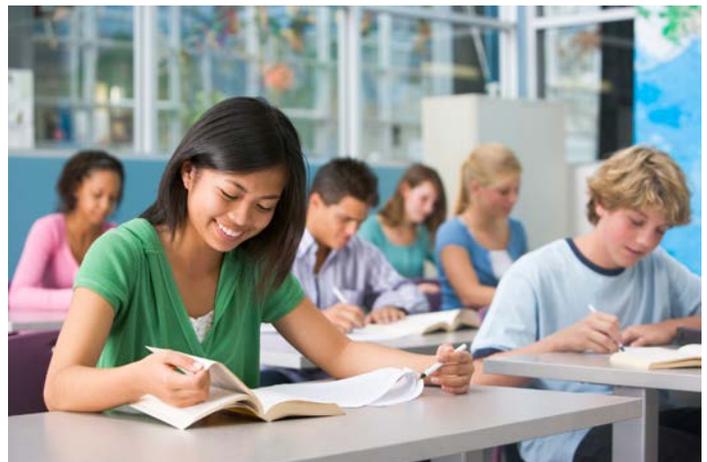
We found the tools to be extremely useful. At each step of the way, we had the right amount of support and direction that was required to move us forward.

The opportunity to attend the workshop series

(The Visible Learning^{plus} Foundation Series) was vital and the professionalism of delivery was world class.

We found the presentations and resources outstanding and the continued connection with the presenters meant continued support. The emphasis on action and evidence has made the biggest difference. The Visible Learning^{plus} series means that you walk away with actionable tasks, accountability, and contacts to support you on your journey.

Every Oxley staff member who has attended a workshop has left brimming with enthusiasm and inspiration. Rather than starting from scratch, we were provided with a clear and sequential path to implementation. The information provided us with confidence and focus as we set out to achieve our vision. The case studies of other Visible Learning^{plus} schools were also helpful. Our Business Manager recently attended the **Visible Learning^{plus} Foundation Day** and was so inspired that she wants to become a teacher! She found the workshop user-friendly, logical, and "do-able" even without a teaching background. She is more committed than ever to our Visible Learning^{plus} vision as a result of her attendance.





Modeling learning intentions and success criteria has also been particularly useful and has left us with a sense of achievement. We use these tools in our staff and team meetings. We often refer to our handbooks and share them with others. Our handbooks have become our action plan and when times get tough, it is comforting to see how far we have come. The 3 feedback questions are right there in front of us: "Where am I going?", "How am I going?" and "Where to next?"

How Did You Introduce Visible Learning^{plus} to Your Staff?

In 2013, we went through the entire **Visible Learning^{plus} Toolkit** during a staff professional learning day. We watched the DVD and worked through each of the activities. We ended the day by providing each staff member with a copy of **Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning** (2013), which became the basis for readings at Academic Committee level and department meetings.

As we progressed in our journey, we saw an opportunity to expand our leadership positions to align with Visible Learning^{plus}. We took applications for Visible Learning^{plus} team leaders from staff members. The role involved the leadership of a cross-curricular team of K-12 teachers. One of the criteria for appointment was evidence of Visible Learning^{plus} changing classroom practice and improving student achievement within the applicant's classroom.

The team of six newly appointed leaders attended the **Evidence Into Action, Day 1 Workshop**. The opportunity to spend a day together, working with Helen Butler (Visible Learning^{plus} consultant) on the very specific actions we needed to put in place to turn our aspirations into action has been the springboard to success. The workshop handbook took us very logically through the five strands of Visible Learning^{plus} and we left armed with Excel spreadsheets, matrices, and worksheets to put into immediate use. We were so inspired that despite a 4:00 AM start, we were all still discussing, planning, and working together at 7:00 PM on the bus ride home!

When we returned, we presented to the whole staff on what evidence is required and how it would be collected. We used a Monday afternoon staff meeting for all staff to complete the School Matrix as a measure of Oxley as a Visible Learning^{plus} school. We also ran student focus groups on The Visible Learner, Inspired and Passionate Teaching, online surveys about feedback, analyzed NAPLAN (national test) data, etc.

Later in the year, we returned to the **Evidence Into Action, Day 2 Workshop**. We worked closely with the Visible Learning^{plus} team to determine what our evidence meant for Oxley. We also had the opportunity to network with other schools. We left inspired and ready for action!

Again, we shared our learning from Evidence Into Action, Day 2 with the staff at our mid-year professional learning days, reporting on the process, sharing the case studies of other schools, and confirming our targets. We also got very hands-on by planning lessons using the Visible Learning^{plus} framework in both cross-curricular and department teams.

What Changes Have You Made?

We have introduced Visible Learning^{plus} at every level of our school community to maximise student learning at Oxley. We have spoken about it at assemblies, parent meetings, and Board meetings and are working toward a common shared language of learning that all members of our community understand.

Our Visible Learning^{plus} team leaders meet weekly to work on achieving our targets. This new model of task-based teams and leadership has worked extremely well and has been the impetus for us to review our other teams.

Visible Learning^{plus} team leaders conduct “learning visits” to their team’s classrooms biweekly. These visits focus on observations of student learning and are the basis for teachers collaborating on lesson planning and reflection. While staff is at different stages, we already have significant evidence of implementation, progression, and success using this model.

As a staff, we have collaborated on the design of a lesson plan template that includes the elements in Chapter 4 of *Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning* (2013).

What Impact Has Visible Learning^{plus} Professional Learning Made?

While we still have much to do, we have already seen significant results in both teaching and learning. A quick snapshot:

In the last week of Term 2 (six months after Evidence Into Action, Day 1), we repeated the student focus groups on “what does a good learner look like at Oxley.” The clear evidence is that students have moved from “someone who is organised” or “someone who wears their uniform well” to the articulation of learner dispositions, discussion of learning intentions, success criteria, and progression. Students were more aware of the focus on “learning” rather than being “taught.” There has been a significant shift to active learning, group work, and discussion.

Our teachers now work in cross-curricular teams with a mentor/coach to assist them as they implement Visible Learning^{plus} in their classrooms. They have opened up their classrooms and are showing an eagerness to learn more about learning and teaching—a huge step forward for some who previously wore as a badge of honor simply because they had been teaching the same way for 27 years. Prior to this, there had not been a culture of sharing and collaboration at Oxley.

As a result of classroom observations, we found that 80% of our K-12 students knew the learning intentions and success criteria of the lesson being taught. Prior to Visible Learning^{plus}, I am not sure that we would have made 20%!

We wait eagerly on the new NAPLAN data to be released so that we can start our data analysis and set next year’s targets for literacy and numeracy.

Where to Next?

We still have much work to do. Our teachers are hungry for more Visible Learning^{plus}, particularly assessment and data collection. We plan to attend the **Visible Learning^{plus} Inside Series** in order to build staff capacity in the next school year. Most of all, we are committed to being an exemplar of how Visible Learning^{plus} can make a difference in student learning.





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:

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