

## Visible Learning The Sequel

by John Hattie

Routledge

Reviewed by Carmen Alexandra Roșu <sup>a\*</sup>, Daniela Ionescu <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Bucharest, Romania

\*Corresponding author: [carmen-alexandra.rosu@drd.unibuc.ro](mailto:carmen-alexandra.rosu@drd.unibuc.ro)

The work "Visible Learning: The Sequel" by John Hattie adds value and novelty to the work "Visible Learning", representing a resource of great significance for specialists in the field of education.

John Hattie is one of the best-known and most widely read experts in education, currently serving as Professor Laureate Emeritus at the Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, Australia.

Preoccupied with research and practice in the field of education, the author builds his present paper based on areas of interest such as the implementation of the VL model (Visible Learning); the role of students in the educational process, evidenced by the importance of active involvement and individual responsibility for learning; the influence of the home, teachers, schools and society in promoting educational success; the importance of adapting and selecting pedagogical methods; the impact of technology on education.

The book is structured in 16 chapters and represents a synthesis of over 2,100 meta-analyses, extracted from over 130,000 studies addressing a problem as broad as it is well articulated.

Throughout the work, at the end of the chapters, the author offers general conclusions on the approached field and then specifies themes for reflection addressed to readers. It is a book that invites us first to reflection, and then to action!

Chapter 1 entitled "The Challenge" of John Hattie's "Visible Learning: The Sequel" reflects on the significant transformations that have occurred in the world and education since the first edition was published in 2008. Hattie discusses the technological, social, and economic impact on education and staff, his own experiences, and changes in his research career. He highlights the evolution of the "Visible Learning" model, criticisms of it, and improvements made based on feedback from educational

practitioners. The chapter focuses on the importance of carefully implementing research into educational practice and the essential role of teachers in promoting student success, highlighting the need for a critical and informed approach to education.

Chapter 2 addresses the complexity and criticisms of meta-analysis methodology in the context of the book. It highlights that the largest sizes of effect often come from lower-rated journals, suggesting a possible bias in publications. In contrast, high-quality journals show smaller effects, indicating a rigorous selection of studies, but also comfort that most quality papers are in these publications. The weighting of effect sizes according to sample size suggests the greater importance of large studies, thereby improving the reliability of the results. The geographical analysis of the first authors shows a predominance of meta-analyses coming from high-income countries, with a geographical distribution reflecting various impacts by region of origin.

Criticism of meta-analysis focuses on mixing studies based on correlations, pre-post, and experimental-comparative designs, with the recommendation to differentiate these types to clarify interpretations. A classification of influences into five categories, from causal interventions in teaching to non-intervention studies, relevant to understanding the diversity of observed effects is proposed.

An important aspect raised is the need to distinguish between correlations and causality, emphasizing that effect size does not necessarily imply a causal relationship. It is argued that it is essential to investigate plausible alternative hypotheses to strengthen causal claims. The chapter also addresses critiques of curricular domains and age-varying effects, highlighting the broad applicability of "Visible Learning" messages regardless of discipline or age

group. It also discusses the particularities of students with special needs and talent, as well as the overlapping of data between various meta-analyses, highlighting the importance of the uniqueness of studies to avoid biases.

In conclusion, criticism of "Visible Learning" focuses more on research methodology than on data interpretation or prescriptions. It emphasizes the importance of qualitatively interpreting effect sizes and argues that meta-analysis provides probabilities about high-impact interventions, emphasizing the quality of implementation of these interventions and the need for educators to assess their impact.

Chapter 3 addresses the visible learning model, based on five fundamental premises: purpose, way of thinking, "intentional alignment", quality of implementation, and evaluative thinking. These premises emphasize the importance of clarity of educational purpose, the need for appropriate mental frameworks for both educators and students, strategic alignment of educational decisions, and continuous evaluation of learning processes and outcomes.

The model begins with defining the goals of education, which can vary depending on the perspectives of educators, families, and students. The main goal is for students to become their teachers, invest in learning, and develop their skills to learn both individually and in teams. This requires not only a focus on curriculum or test results, but also fostering an educational environment that values progress, learning, and motivation.

"Mind frames" or mental frameworks play a crucial role in the model, highlighting the importance of how educators, families, and students think about goals, priorities, and success in education. These mental frameworks influence educational decisions and are fundamental to the professional ethics of teaching.

Intentional alignment refers to synchronizing educational decisions with the cognitive complexity of lessons, creating a safe and trustworthy learning environment for students, aligning teaching methods and learning strategies with educational goals, and evaluating student progress and success.

The quality of implementation involves five stages: discovery, design, delivery, return, and intensification of efforts. This systematic approach ensures that educational goals are clear, interventions are well designed and aligned with students' needs, and that learning is continuously evaluated and improved.

Evaluative thinking invokes the critical thinking of educators, representing strong reasoning in evaluative decision-making and significantly improving student learning.

Therefore, here it presents a comprehensive framework for understanding and implementing visible learning, emphasizing clarity of purpose, the importance of critical thinking, strategic alignment of educational processes, and continuous assessment of learning effectiveness. The model emphasizes the essential role of educators, students, and families in creating an educational environment that promotes excellence, innovation, and success for all students.

Chapter 4 addresses the implementation of the VL (Visible Learning) model of intentional alignment, looking from the perspective of teachers, students, leaders, and parents. The chapter details the major issues for these groups, focusing on the first three "Ds" of the 5D model, and will provide an overview of important considerations for later stages. It addresses the essential principles for achieving effective education, stressing the importance of intentional alignment of all components of the educational process: learning objectives, assessments, feedback, and teaching strategies. It highlights the need for rigorous planning, starting from what students want to understand and be able to do at the end of lessons and continuing with designing assessments and, teaching methods to facilitate the achievement of these objectives. Hattie stresses the importance of adapting education to the individual needs of students and their engagement in their learning process, through their active involvement in setting success criteria and evaluating progress. The key role of constructive feedback and error-based learning in promoting a positive attitude towards challenges and developing learners' autonomy is also emphasized. The chapter also highlights the need for close collaboration between all actors involved in the educational process- teachers, pupils, parents, and school leadership- to ensure a learning environment that values diversity, promotes trust, and fosters commitment to learning.

Chapter 5 focuses on the role of students in the educational process, highlighting the importance of active involvement and individual responsibility for learning. Hattie emphasizes the need to develop students as teachers of their own educational experiences, promoting self-reflection, self-assessment, and self-regulation as key elements of academic success. This chapter emphasizes the paradigmatic shift from teaching to learning, where

students are seen not only as receivers of information but as active partners in creating knowledge.

Chapter 6 explores the essential role of family and home in children's education. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of understanding and appreciating teachers' expertise among parents, who have had to experience their children's education from a new perspective. In this context, the need for parents to be "first teachers" is emphasized, promoting a family environment based on unconditional love and understanding.

The meta-analytic studies presented in the chapter highlight the small effects of different family structures, such as the presence or absence of fathers and divorce, on children's academic achievements. It is found that active parental involvement, high expectations, and a positive family environment have a significant impact on children's academic success.

In particular, the importance of parental expectations, which strongly correlate with children's academic achievements, is noted, highlighting that parents play a crucial role in shaping attitudes and behaviors that foster learning. It also discusses the integration of immigrant children into education systems and how certain policies and approaches can improve or worsen their educational experience.

In conclusion, the chapter emphasizes that children's educational success is profoundly influenced by the family environment, parents' involvement and expectations, as well as by the capacity of educational systems to support the diverse needs of families and children from different cultural and socio-economic contexts.

Chapter 7 reflects on the roles of school and society. Schools do not operate in isolation but are intrinsically linked to the society that supports them. Society and the educational system are deeply intertwined, and the search for world-class schools is futile when culture prevails over classrooms. There are fundamental questions in every society about what knowledge is privileged, facing class conflicts, profound inequalities, and cultural, gender, and identity influences. Schools are often a haven for students, being a defining space for the development of social norms and values.

School culture strongly influences the development of students' identity and sense of belonging. In some societies, the dominant culture does not always encourage diversity, and students from different backgrounds may face difficulties.

Racism, for example, is a significant burden restricting access to and recognition of opportunities.

The main purpose of education is to empower students to become their teachers, thus maximizing the likelihood that they will be well informed in choosing the content they want to learn, to be curious, and to criticize the information received. But becoming a teacher also involves a moral dimension, and questions about the purposes of education require ongoing debate.

Chapter 8 entitled "Classroom effects" examines the impact of the classroom on learning, emphasizing the importance of the learning environment and classroom dynamics in promoting educational success. The focus is on creating a space that encourages active student engagement and facilitates a deep understanding of the subject. This chapter explores effective strategies that can transform a classroom into an environment conducive to exploring and developing knowledge, laying the foundation for a more intentional and focused approach to learning. There are thus three major categories of effects within the classroom: composition, management, and classroom climate.

Chapter 9 of John Hattie's work explores the significant influence of teachers on student learning, highlighting the essential role of thinking assessment and teaching strategies in promoting educational success. Through methodical analysis of teacher effects, Hattie highlights the importance of adopting mental frameworks geared towards positive impact on students, encouraging a reflective and evidence-based approach to educational practice. The chapter highlights the need for teachers' active and conscious involvement in the learning process, reiterating the power of teachers to shape effective educational pathways and inspire academic excellence through passion, dedication, and pedagogical innovation.

In the context of contemporary educational development, chapter 10 of John Hattie's *Visible Learning: The Sequel* addresses the complexity and dynamics of curriculum in an era of diversity and rapid change. With the launch of the Mparntwe Education Statement in Australia, Hattie underlines the need to transcend traditional paradigms and embrace a curriculum that contributes to the comprehensive well-being of young people, preparing them not only for the labor market but also for being responsible and innovative citizens in society. The chapter reveals the challenges of the curriculum, marking the need for a flexible and critical approach to its design. Hattie

argues against a continuous and superficial reconfiguration, advocating for a curriculum that reflects the diversity of students' needs and aspirations, instead of rigid uniformity. This perspective is reinforced by exposing the diversity of educational systems and curricular approaches, stressing that there is no unanimously accepted "essential knowledge" or "perfect structure" of the curriculum.

In addition, Hattie highlights the importance of aligning teaching methods with curricular goals, arguing that educational success depends on the ability to combine theoretical knowledge ("knowing-that") with practical and conceptual application ("knowing-how" and "knowing-with"). An intentional and explicit approach to teaching curricular competencies is essential, as well as a focus on problem-solving and connection with students' prior learning, to avoid the "Matthew effect" and reduce educational gaps.

John Hattie's chapter "Teaching with Intent" focuses on the need for intentional alignment between various components of lessons, such as success criteria, feedback, learning strategies, teaching methods, activities, and assessments. The importance of teacher clarity is emphasized, even in the case of interesting deviations from the main topic, to avoid confusing students about the intention of the lesson. The chapter details five fundamental processes for choosing teaching strategies, which include: knowledge of learning progressions in the curriculum, cognitive analysis of tasks, understanding students' starting point and learning trajectories, provision of pedagogical interventions and appropriate feedback, and an assessment strategy for monitoring implementation and impact on students.

The "Intent to Teach" model states that student learning is maximized after learning intentions and success criteria have been established. Teachers need to set and communicate goals in a challenging way, with commitment as well as diverse strategies to achieve them, based on students' understanding of "knowing that" and "knowing how".

Intentional teaching emphasizes strategic alignment of lesson building blocks, with an emphasis on teacher clarity and coherence between learning objectives and assessments. The process includes an in-depth understanding of the curriculum, analysis of cognitive tasks, adaptation of pedagogical interventions to students' needs, and implementation of an effective assessment strategy. By focusing on these aspects, teachers can ensure a cohesive and effective learning experience for students,

encouraging them to achieve established success criteria.

Thus, Hattie outlines a call for a deeply humanistic educational vision, which puts at its core the integral development of students, and their ability to think critically and actively contribute to society. Chapter 10 discusses the need for deep reflection on the values and goals that guide curriculum construction in schools, highlighting the essential role of education in shaping the future of society.

Chapter 12 addresses the complex concept of learning strategies, highlighting the importance of adapting, and selecting pedagogical methods according to the specific phases of the students' learning process. At the heart of the discussion is the tripartite model of learning, which includes the acquisition of surface knowledge, its consolidation, and the transfer of knowledge to new contexts. The author emphasizes the crucial role of self-regulation and metacognition in effectively navigating these phases, encouraging an intentional and contextualized approach to teaching. This chapter highlights the need for a differentiated and intentional approach in the selection of learning strategies, focusing on adapting them to the specific needs and context of each student. This pedagogical approach not only supports the acquisition of knowledge but also prepares students for autonomous and adaptive learning, essential in the dynamic contemporary educational context.

Chapter 13 emphasizes that the effectiveness of teaching transcends the simple application of instructional methods. Central is the influence of teaching on students' progress, focusing not only on curricular coverage and the achievement of attractive tasks but especially on maximizing the impact on students' cognitive and emotional evolution. The importance of adapting teaching methods to the specific needs of students is emphasized, with an emphasis on the optimal time to use them in the learning process. The diversity of teaching methods is vast, each teacher having his arsenal of strategies, but their choice must be guided by the desired impact on students, not by rigid adherence to a single methodology. Hattie calls for a flexible and intentional approach to the selection of teaching strategies, balancing students' needs, learning objectives, and educational context.

Chapter 14, "Technology Implementation," explores the evolution and impact of technology in education after 2009, marking a significant shift from computer rooms to ubiquitous integrated devices such

as iPhones and iPads. However, despite enthusiastic promises of technological revolutions such as the one-laptop-per-child initiative, the reality has often been different, with limited adoption and solutions that have not brought about the expected changes. Meta-analyses reveal consistency in the average effect of technology on learning, oscillating between 0.3 and 0.5, highlighting that key questions focus not so much on the impact of technology itself as on how it is integrated into teaching. The chapter argues that technology will not be used in a transformative sense until we change our teaching methods, shifting from consuming knowledge to using technology as an aid to producing improved knowledge.

Chapter 15 deals with whole-school and off-school influences on the educational process. The discussion focuses on how factors within the school and in the external environment can affect student learning and development. The importance of an integrated school environment and collaboration between school and community to support educational success is emphasized. The chapter highlights the need for a holistic approach to education, including not only teaching methods and curriculum, but also the broader context in which students carry out their learning.

In chapter 16, "Conclusions," he gathers the main lessons, comparing them with those from the original work, and offering recommendations for the future. This section emphasizes the author's desire to go beyond simply stating what works in education, focusing on what has the greatest impact. The chapter raises crucial questions about the established structure

of the education system, the plateau of teachers' learning after the early years, and how their mindsets can develop to focus more on learning and listening. In addition, it explores how research-based evidence can be incorporated into school discussions.

This work is not just a new edition, but a sequel that highlights the major story of "Visible Learning", reflecting on its implementation in schools, how it has been understood and sometimes misinterpreted, and the future directions that research should take. The paper focuses on essential questions aimed at improving the educational system and engages in a discussion about the influence of family environment, students, teachers, classes, schools, learning, and curriculum on achievement.

"Visible Learning: The Sequel" by John Hattie is a dense work, which requires special attention to follow and at the same time a power of applied transfiguration of the multitude of information presented. It is a book built around numerous studies and above all, it is built through the author's research. The complex theoretical anchoring, the elaborated statistics, the devotion to "visible learning", as well as the multitude of opportunities for reflection make this work a practical-actional support in the didactic approaches undertaken by practitioners in the field of education.

Reviewed by  
PhD student Carmen Alexandra Roșu  
PhD student Daniela Ionescu