What Works Best In Education

The Politics of Collaborative Expertise

Hattie, 2015
What we need instead [of distractors] is a defensible and compelling narrative that leads to long-term, coherent and focused system–wide attention to student learning.

I call this territory ‘the politics of collective expertise’.

Hattie, 2015
There is every reason to assume that by attending to the problem of variability within a school and increasing the effectiveness of all teachers there will be marked overall increase in achievement. So the aim is to bring the effect of all teachers on student learning up to a very high standard.

The ‘No Child Left Behind’ policy should have been named ‘No Teacher Left Behind’.

Hattie, 2015
So, my claim is that the greatest influence on student progression in learning is having highly expert, inspired and passionate teachers and school leaders working together to maximize the effect of their teaching on all students in their care.

Hattie, 2015
A Major Role

- **For School Leaders**: to harness the expertise in their schools and to lead successful transformations.

- **For the System**: to provide the support, time and resources for this to happen

Hattie, 2015
Task #1: Shift the Narrative

To collaborative expertise and student progression

• From ‘fixing the teacher’ to collaborative expertise

• From standards and achievement to progression

Hattie, 2015
Task #2: Agree on What a Year’s Progress Looks Like

Across all subjects, schools, and system levels

- This development of a common conception [among teachers] of progress is the key to accelerating progress

Hattie, 2015
Task #3: Expect a Year’s Worth of Progress

By raising expectations that all students can achieve

Hattie, 2015
Task #4: Develop New Assessment and Evaluation Tools

To provide feedback to teachers

We need more research on how to create reports drawn from test results which teachers and students can interpret accurately, and which teachers can use to work out what their next teaching interventions should be.

Hattie, 2015
We have many achievement measures; we would do well to augment this arsenal with more measures for learning—

the ‘how-to’ aspects of learning.

Hattie, 2015
Task #5: Know Thy Impact!

By taking responsibility for the impact of everyone in the school on the progress of students

The school leader is responsible for asking on a continual basis about the impact of all the adults on the learning of all students.

In short, we need to develop an evaluation climate in our educational system.

Hattie, 2015
Developing a Culture of Evidence

- To think evaluatively
- To have discussions and debates in light of the impact of what they do
- To use tools of evaluation in schools (such as classroom observations of the impact of teachers on students, interpreting test scores to inform their impact and future actions, and standard setting methods to clarify what challenge and progression should look like in this school.)
- To build a culture of evidence, improvement and evaluation capacity-building
- To develop a mind frame based on excellence, defined in multiple ways, and for all
- To take pride in our collective impact

Hattie, 2015
There is also a need to include the student voice about teacher impact in the learning/teaching debates.

Hattie, 2015
Task #6: Ensure Teachers Have Expertise in Diagnosis, Interventions and Evaluation

Through teachers working together as evaluators of their impact on their students

Hattie, 2015
The average size of a year’s progress is $d = 0.40$. 

Hattie, 2015
When the various education interventions we have reviewed in our Visible Learning work are considered, the most significant comes from teachers:

- Working together to evaluate their impact (0.93)
- Moving from what students know now towards explicit success criteria (0.77)
- Building trust and welcoming errors as opportunities to learn (0.72)
- Getting maximum feedback from others about their effect (0.72)
- Getting the proportions of surface to deep learning correct (0.71)
- Using the Goldilocks principles of challenge (the challenge must not be too big or too small but just right)
- Using deliberate practice to attain these challenges (0.60)

Hattie, 2015
The underlying philosophy for such teachers can be summed up by the phrase—

‘Teachers are to **DIE** for!’

—that is, teachers need to be expert at:

**Diagnosis**  **Intervention**  **Evaluation**

Hattie, 2015
If students are not learning, then it is because we are not using the right teaching strategies; and we have to make the changes to these strategies.

Hattie, 2015
Task #7: Stop Ignoring What We Know and Scale Up Success

By using the wealth of knowledge that exists in teacher communities

One of our major limitations in education is that we have little interest in scaling up successful ideas; preferring to argue that ‘my class is unique’.

But we do, in fact, know a lot.

Hattie, 2015
Task #8: Link Autonomy to a Year’s Progress

By studying teachers who are achieving a year of student progress and supporting teachers who aren’t

It is a myth that all teachers are equal in their impact on student learning.

Where teachers are enabling all students to gain at least a year’s worth of growth for a year’s input, they should be given some autonomy, which they have earned.

Hattie, 2015
The essence of many teachers’ sense of professionalism is their autonomy to teach as they wish. But they do not have a right to such autonomy if they are not systematically teaching in a manner where the majority of their students gain at least a year’s progress for a year’s input.

Hattie, 2015
The Intention

- To create a system where leaders know their high-impact teachers so that they may create a coalition of the successful who can work together on reducing within-school variability

Hattie, 2015
What This Means For Teachers

We must stop allowing teachers to work alone, behind closed doors and in isolation in the staffrooms and instead shift to a professional ethic that emphasizes collaboration.

Hattie, 2015
The focus of collaboration needs to be on the evidence of impact, common understandings of what impact means, the evidence and ways to know about the magnitude of this impact and how the impact is shared across many groups of students.

And once this is established, the focus should shift to the nuances, the mediators and the incremental changes needed to adopt and implement these methods that maximize impact in each context.

Hattie, 2015
What This Means for School Leaders

The leader’s role is to seek the answers to two major questions:

1. What is the evidence that each student is gaining at least a year’s progress for a year’s input in every subject?

2. What is the school doing in light of this evidence?

Hattie, 2015
The need for a climate of trust in the staffroom is obvious if the profession is to be based on collaboration.
It is crucially important for school leaders to understand the reasons for success or failure of an intervention, as these reasons are the basis for adapting, changing or continuing the intervention – but such reasons must never become excuses for not achieving the agreed effects on student learning.

Hattie, 2015
What this Means For System Leaders

For an educational system to be successful, it must:

• Recognize and develop expertise within the schools

• Determine ways for the schools to diagnose, intervene and evaluate

• Esteem success

• Use the powers of collective wisdom to ensure all teachers are achieving agreed magnitudes of effect on student learning

Hattie, 2015
All this is tempered with including ‘outsiders’ and external input to ensure that the evidence is credible, that high impact on all students is truly evident and that those in the school are adept at determining the all-critical consequences and next actions in light of their evaluation.

Hattie, 2015
These professional discussions must be conducted in an atmosphere of trust more than in an atmosphere of accountability.

The school not the individual teacher, should be the unit of analysis, and the two questions...

1. What is the evidence that each student is gaining at least a year’s progress for a year’s input?

2. What is the school doing in the light of this evidence?

...should be the basis for outside accountability.

Hattie, 2015
One major feature that distinguishes most of the top countries educationally from those in the middle is that they focus their efforts within the school and within the classroom (especially by privileging teacher and school leader expertise) rather than spend their resources outside it. Further, they aim for all to gain at least a year’s growth for a year’s input and provide support for making these judgments.

Hattie, 2015
Equity

The possibility of attaining excellence is available to any student regardless of their background, prior achievement or financial acumen of their parents.

Hattie, 2015
In the top education systems, however measured, it is the excellence of teachers, the support of such excellence and an open debate about the nature of growth towards excellence that matters.

Hattie, 2015
The key question is how to define a focus on learning and teaching in a way that makes them sufficiently central and capable of being improved systematically.
This is Where Collaboration Comes In

Collaboration based on success, on convincing evidence of this success, on privileging this evidence, on learning from it, scaling it up and ensuring that others also move to expertise.

Hattie, 2015
Collaboration is based on cooperativeness, learning from errors, seeking feedback about progress and enjoying venturing into the ‘pit of not knowing’ together with expert help that provides safety nets and, ultimately, ways out of the pit.

Hattie, 2015
A Major Function of Systems

To provide the resources, the forums and the emphasis on success in our schools

Hattie, 2015
The process of aligning tasks, support and assessment is essential, but too often in ‘reforms’ the process of restructuring other parts of the system dominates, ignores or interrupts teaching and learning in negative ways.

Hattie, 2015
The aim is not aspiring to utopia but scaling up the success already about us. It is expertise, it is reliable judgment, it is passion for making the difference, and it is collaborative sharing of this knowing and doing ad caring. This requires the greatest investment, and the benefits for students will be manifest, powerful and exciting.

Hattie, 2015