



See learning through the eyes of students

While Learning Forward's 2014 Annual Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, offers an impressive lineup of keynoters, thought leaders, and expert presenters, my friends and colleagues in Missouri are especially looking forward to hearing John Hattie, author of *Visible Learning and the Science of How We Learn* (Hattie & Yates, 2014). Professional learning in Missouri is steeped in his research.

In 2012, Missouri's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education embarked on an initiative to improve the educational achievement of all students — especially students with disabilities. Because conventional forms of professional learning (i.e. one-shot workshops and conferences) don't provide the support needed to modify teaching practices, the initiative works to provide professional learning that is authentic, ongoing, and on-site for more than 350 buildings statewide.

The big idea of Hattie's book is, "Know thy impact!" In practical terms,

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this translates our work into helping teachers develop the expertise to focus regularly on evaluating the effects they have on students. It also translates into assisting them in learning to adjust their practices using researched-based teaching methods.

I'd like to demonstrate how this type of professional learning might look if you were to shadow our regional center consultants for a day in Sedalia 200 School District in Sedalia, Missouri. Here's what you'd likely see.

It is the first week of the month, nearing the deadline to submit student data on common formative assessments. Consultants sit side-by-side with elementary and secondary school staff as they meet throughout the day in data teams.

Collaboration time begins with discussions about how students demonstrated their proficiency levels on the targeted learning objectives. We hear teachers explain how they used the reciprocal teaching strategies designed inside their units.

Each participant openly shares student work samples of a collaborative assignment. The group looks for what students did well. Then the group inspects the assignment for error analysis. Were the errors factual errors? Procedural errors? Transformational

errors or misconceptions?

As each data team meeting comes to an end, we notice teachers recording an instructional feedback strategy for processing the evaluations of the assignments with students. Teachers will use these strategies tomorrow to help students discern the answers to metacognitive questions like, "Where am I going? Where am I now? How will I get there? What are my next steps?"

Some teachers speak about putting students in small groups for feedback, while others plan to use cooperative learning structures. Data team facilitators linger to converse with center consultants. They are curious about what feedback the consultants might provide on their data team processes.

It is easy to detect in these schools that teachers believe their fundamental task is to "know thy impact." Teachers in Sedalia are beginning to see learning through the eyes of their students. They also know they need to ensure that their students see themselves as their own teachers. I think Hattie would agree that this rural Missouri district seeks to embody the tenets of visible learning through high-quality professional learning.

REFERENCE

Hattie, J. & Yates, G.C.R. (2014). *Visible learning and the science of how we learn.* New York, NY: Routledge. ■