

Units of Study for Teaching Reading
A Workshop Curriculum, Middle School Grades

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Question: *How can we use feedback to accelerate achievement?*

Mary Ehrenworth:

And then there's one last bit of research which I think will be really helpful for you, that you could go to read, but I have to say, this is like very difficult non-fiction, and that's John Hattie's research. So John Hattie's first book, which was called *Visible Learning*, there were two things which was a mega-study of what helps learners. And he was not looking at just kids, he's looking at Julliard pianists, and Olympic divers. And in there, John Hattie said there were two conditions which accelerate achievement. So don't just affect achievement, but accelerate achievement. And two of those conditions were having a crystal clear vision of what it is you want to achieve, and getting feedback in the midst of your work. So, workshop, both reading and writing workshop, are set up to get those condition into play. And in fact it was so beautiful. Don Graves who does a lot of work that sort of looks at Hattie's research and how it plays out in school, he went to school, especially his Boston schools, and studied where were those conditions most in play. And do you know where they were? There were in play in the playing fields, and in the music rooms. That's where kids were getting the best feedback. Do you know where the least effective feedback was, which was so painful to hear? English classrooms. Because the time that passed between kids doing the work, and getting the feedback meant that the feedback that they got was having no effect on student achievement. So that means that we're not looking for kids to do work, us to take it home, us to spend hours writing on it, bring it back to the kids, the kids are like, "What was that work? I don't even remember it anymore." Instead, it's like the kids work right in front of us, we're watching and researching them, we've come with a bunch of feedback already ready, just like a soccer coach would. He already knows he's going to be working on a few things with the kids this week. We come with that ready. We're looking with how kids fit those profiles, and we're getting ready to give them calibrated feedback. So that comes from Hattie's research. And his first book was *Visible Learning*, which is a pretty difficult mega-study, even though it's been really really influential. It's actually pretty hard to read. His second book was *Visible Learning for Teachers*. And then his third book, which, for us at least is really helpful, I think is his book *Visible Learning for Literacy*. And that one you might want to dive into, 'cause I think it has a lot of research which is really, really helpful if you're going to teach with workshop.