

## BOOK AND FILM REVIEWS

### *COHERENCE – The Right Drivers in Action for Schools, Districts and Systems*

Fullan, M., & Joanne, Q. (2016). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin. 168 pp. ISBN 9781483364957

**Peter Kilgour**

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**There are certain sets of conditions that create a climate for healthy change and development just as there are conditions that educational leaders can create that are counterproductive to their team. In this book Fullan and Quinn put forward both sets of conditions as they see them.**

The ‘right drivers’ are identified as getting the team focused in the one direction, creating a culture of collaboration where the group is more important than the individual, using all the avenues available to make sure learning is occurring, and then holding the team accountable for the agreed upon direction.

The ‘wrong drivers’ on the other hand are characterised by individualism – efforts at keeping individuals accountable using extrinsic measures, applying technology as an answer to all issues without it being part of the overall plan, and applying random policies without a team focus.

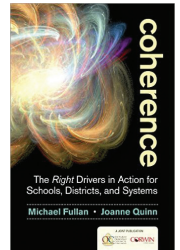
Coherence then is delivered as the outcome of having a team move together with common goals rather than an external set of drivers that work towards coherence by compliance. The Coherence Framework is put forward as a recipe for fostering change, improvement, innovation and accountability. This framework however is built on intrinsic motivators for the team rather than on external pressures.

The authors then go on to describe a pathway that will re-invent a school or an educational system within the ‘Coherence Framework’ and using the correct drivers. According to John Hattie who is a household name in education circles in Australia, “The book sparkles with examples

of coherence in action; it makes no excuses for employing the wrong levers of change. This is the blueprint for a new vocabulary of education action.”

What is achieved in this book is not only research based and highly academic, but is also totally readable. This is made so by the many examples that have been drawn on from workplace practice but also by the multiple diagrams that appeal to the analytical and visual reader.

I picked this book up to read in order to write a routine book review, but found that its logical presentation, interesting writing style, and practical pathways had me totally involved. [TEACH](#)



### *Visible learning for literacy, grades K-12: Implementing the practices that work best to accelerate student learning*

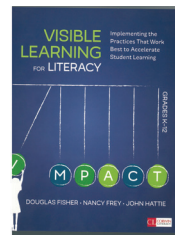
Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Hattie, J. (2016). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 216 pp. ISBN: 9781506332352

**Sherry Hattingh**

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**Most of us claim to be trying to do things all the time. This book is about the significance of coordinating specific teaching strategies, procedures, or routines with the appropriate stage of students’ learning. Teaching strategies have been grouped to distinguish which work with surface level learning, which are needed prior to progressing to deep level learning, and which facilitates transfer. Throughout the book the authors present the effect sizes from Visible learning (Hattie, 2009)—exploring the ways in which these mobilize the three levels (surface, deep and transfer) of learning for literacy.**

The effect sizes are significant in relation to the associated advancement in children’s achievement. The authors assert that effect sizes of  $d = 1.0$  are to be regarded as notable



“Coherence then is ... having a team move together with common goals rather than an external set of drivers that work towards coherence by compliance”

# Reflections, Impressions & Experiences

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*Teachers lead and plan for their classes and need to respond and change when there is insufficient impact*”

while those that are larger are of increased relevance. In each chapter the authors have provided notes in the margin indicating the effect size for the relevant teaching strategy that is being advocated. This supports why the teaching strategy is being highlighted for learning enhancement.

The authors have also provided video and web content in the page margins. These are made easily accessible through QR codes for use on phones or tablets. The videos are short clips involving teachers who are implementing the teaching routines and procedures in their classrooms.

In the first chapter the effect sizes that are imperative, but not restricted to a specific literacy, are outlined. These effect sizes include those for: teacher credibility, teacher-student relationships, teacher expectations, challenge, self-efficacy and learning intentions with success criteria. The following three chapters each outline one of the stages of student learning—surface, deep and transfer literacy learning respectively. Within each of these literacy learning stages the literacy elements needed and developed in this level are explained, with the relevant effect size provided. I have found the book useful in understanding that the development of surface literacy learning is important as the basis for building deep literacy learning and teaching literacy for transfer. The authors reiterate that none of these stages of learning can be excluded and that they build on each other. Remaining at a surface literacy learning level only is not enough and that progression across all levels is essential for exemplary life development and overall learning.

The final chapter highlights the teaching

and learning experience of students and the specific role of the teacher. The act of “determining impact, responding when the impact is insufficient, and knowing what does not work”, are constant aspects that each and every literacy teacher should be gauging within their classes. Research shows what works and does not work within the classroom, and continuing with current practices that do not work is not good enough, clearly unacceptable for teachers as professionals. Teachers need to clearly state the learning intentions for their students, provide clear success criteria, indicate what quality looks like to their students and lead their students to understand where the student stands in relation to the criteria for success. Teachers lead and plan for their classes and need to respond and change when there is insufficient impact. Responding with relevant interventions is paramount to student learning and builds teacher-student relationships and contributes to quality core instruction. Further to this, it is the teacher’s responsibility to monitor student progress and make the necessary adjustments to reach each student where they are with their learning.

This book is about being an effective literacy teacher, ‘seeing’ your influence and taking appropriate action to improve your teaching for optimum student learning. For an educator this book is a practical guide to literacy strategies that can be implemented in any classroom for optimal student engagement, learning and academic success. I recommend this work to other educators having gained valuable knowledge and potential applications from this book that I am now implementing across my classes. [TEACH](#)