Making learning visible: A 'Joy and Data' case study [1]

When staff at Hilltop Road Public School in Western Sydney looked at student learning they found that their students could tell them what they did, but they couldn?t tell them the learning behind it.

The school?s approach to visible learning using Seesaw is one of six case studies [2] included the Australian Learning Lecture?s Joy and Data publication. The school has about 750 students, with about 60% of the school population from culturally and linguistic diverse backgrounds. It is in one of the most diverse parts of Sydney, with a low socio-economic profile and students from over 74 cultural backgrounds.

As Cheryl Romer, Assistant Principal, explains, she could set a task which a student could complete accurately, but she would not have any evidence that the student really understood the topic. As she says, the skill of articulating the process of learning and the capacity to reflect are essential to the development of independent self-regulated learners.

To correct this imbalance, the school began an action research project looking at how students articulated their learning, drawing on John Hattie?s work around *Visible Learning*. At the same time, it began to use Seesaw, a digital portfolio which enables families to see and comment on their children?s work in their own language. Seesaw also enables teachers to track and assess student work, as well as communicate effectively with parents.

Hilltop Road PS initially trialled the use of Seesaw in Kindergarten to Grade 2, but soon found that parents with children in the older grades were requesting that the program be rolled out across the school.

As a result of the changes, 82% of students interviewed were better able to articulate what they are learning and why they are learning it. Other benefits included:

·   Each student setting their own learning goals and becomes a critic of their own work

·   Teachers have a powerful digital portfolio on each student, helping to connect teachers, students and parents

·   Seesaw helping teachers gain insights into each student?s articulation of learning

·   Seesaw showing students and their parents the evidence that they are meeting success criteria

Cheryl Romer reports ?It?s a game-changer, it?s like opening up the walls of the classroom.?

Short Description:

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