During a recent school visit to St Joseph’s in Mildura, I had the opportunity to borrow an article that Greg Kluske had been reading, that summarized John Hattie’s work very succinctly.

As we have looked at Hattie’s work a few time in recent years, I thought that summarizing the article may be useful to prompt our thoughts and memories – especially as Hattie’s work was also mentioned in the VCAA briefings last term.

So, with thanks to Greg…

The article was **‘ Effect size does matter’ by Miro Martin** in Education Today, Term 2, 2011, pgs 13 – 15

**The article reminded me that Hattie’s meta-analysis involved:**

* **50,000 studies**
* **800 meta-analyses**
* **100,000+ schools**
* **6,000,000 teachers**
* **200,000,000 students**

Recommended text – ‘Visible Learning’ by John Hattie

All of the work revolves around the understanding that, in terms of **‘effect size’**-

**0 = the teaching or situation has no effect at all on student outcomes**

**1 = extremely high = high relation between the teaching / situation and student outcomes**

\*Typically (average) teachers operate at about 0.4 – so the article indicated that the aim should be to be above this mark – above 0.5 at least.

After the introduction, there were four areas that succinctly looked at Hattie’s work:

1. **DON’T DO!**

These areas produce very poor learning, so schools should avoid:

* Retention / repeating a grade = 0.16 effect size
* Gender classes = 0.12
* Ability grouping = 0.12
* Multi-age classes = 0.04
* Student control / directed learning = 0.04

\* It was mentioned too at this point, that a couple of particular things to note were that:

- children who moved schools a lot = -0.10, and

- more than 10 hours of TV per week = -0.18; so these factors could actually cause students to go backwards in terms of their learning progress!

**2. WHY BOTHER?**

These areas have such poor effect sizes that they should be left out of teaching repertoire!

* Individualized instruction = 0.23 effect size
* Class size = 0.21
* Homework = 0.29
* Team teaching = 0.19
* Home visits = 0.29
* Testing = 0.34
* Mentoring = 0.15

**3. THIS MAKES A DIFFERENCE.**

No real comment was made in this section, but the strategies listed were:

* Co-operative learning = 0.41 effect size
* Advance (graphic) organisers = 0.41
* Parental involvement = 0.51
* Play programs = 0.5
* Small group learning = 0.49
* Tactile stimulation program (eg manipulatives in maths) = 0.58
* Social skills programs = 0.40
* Peer tutoring = 0.55

**4. ABSOLUTELY DO!**

* Self reported grades = 1.44 effect size
* Piagetian programs (& Vygotskian) = 1.28
* Formative evaluation = 0.9
* Feedback ( specific + metacognition) = 0.73
* Teacher professional learning = 0.62
* Phonics = 0.60
* Spaced practice ( 3 or 4 visits to a topic) = 0.71
* Acceleration = 0.88
* Teacher –student relationship = 0.72
* Vocabulary programs = 0.67

**Anne Doody’s reflections on the article:**

It seemed to me that this article was valuable in that it summarized Hattie’s work so succinctly, and the headings that Miro has chosen made it very clear – don’t’ do, why bother, these make a difference & absolutely do!

All of us are constantly aware of, and pressured by, time. So, at this point, what more are we looking for to convince us? Why not accept the magnitude of the work, and that fact that organisations such as the VCAA are looking to the work of Hattie? What would happen if we started using these four areas as a mini- audit tool? If what we are working on is listed in the first two areas – do what we can to stop doing that, and substitute something from the last two areas in its place? At the very least, we might reduce some of the time pressures, by narrowing the focus in our attempts to improve learning in our schools.