

Clarity for Learning

BOOK STUDY GUIDE

PART 1:

Foreword, Introduction, Chapter 1: Why Clarity and The Clarity Problem

1. If you had to rephrase what Professor John Hattie said about the research on clarity, what would you say in two sentences or less?
2. What was your first reaction to the stories of the two classrooms? Consider sharing a personal connection with your group or a friend who is also reading the book. What hit home for you?
3. Take the Clarity Self-Assessment and determine your school's, or your district's areas of greatest strength.
 - a. Take some time to share and celebrate what is going well.
 - b. Think about the items you marked as "Sometimes" and consider which of these connects to one of your strengths and might provide a reachable but exciting goal for those who are most ready to take the next steps, jump in head-first, or take a risk. Give those that aren't ready just yet time to think, learn, observe, and consider.
 - c. Finally, notice the items you marked "Not Yet;" instead of feeling disappointed about them, consider each of these signposts for the future. Work of the nature addressed in this book takes time. Allow time for learning. Today, take a few minutes to make connections to your strengths and consider ways to encourage, rather than dictate, growth in these areas.
4. Finally, consider the deliberate choices you have made that led to your current state. Consider completing and sharing one or more of the following statements:
 - a. I made _____ decision, and I can see it led to _____.
 - b. Based on past experience, if I am deliberate about _____, _____ will be strengthened.
 - c. I feel most proud of _____ deliberate choice.
5. Did you end up at the frozen yogurt bar by following the directions in Chapter 1? No? Imagine that! Consider what other wild goose chases you have been sent on related to learning, and without digressing into the drain of all that is wrong in education, try to find a few missing elements where having clarity might have supported you and others, avoiding wasted time and effort. What could the outcome have been with greater clarity?
6. Consider surveying 10 to 20 students in your school, asking the following questions:
 - a. What are you learning? Why are you learning it?
 - b. How do you know if you've learned it?

*If you have already asked these types of questions, think about taking a new round of evidence.

What did the student interviews tell you?
7. Take a few moments to review the Litmus Test at the end of Chapter One. What clarity issues stand out to you? Why do they stand out?

Chapters 2 and 3: Gaining Clarity

1. What other terms do you use for Learning Intentions? Success Criteria? What are they also known as?
2. Professor John Hattie (2012) has often stated in keynotes and his publications that Learning Intentions without Success Criteria are hopeless. Do you agree or disagree with his statement? Why or why not?
3. Explain the relationship between Learning Intentions and Success Criteria. How would you connect the two? How do tasks and assignments relate to them?
4. When and how do good Learning Intentions and Success Criteria go bad? What have you seen in your own experience?
5. Which of the Commonly Asked Questions and Answers connected most with your own questions? What clarified your questions and what still remains in question?
6. Consider writing a Learning Intention and Success Criteria for a unit of study or chunk of learning. What did you learn about the process? Did working through the process, using the quality criteria, standards, etc. help you gain clarity? Why or why not?
7. The Planning Next Steps and Litmus Test on pages 46 and 47 offer several ways to put your learning into action. What will your next two action steps be? Why? How?
8. The examples shared by teachers and leaders in Chapter Three offer practical and real examples of how teachers have gained clarity. Which examples provided you with the greatest insights? How can their examples impact you?
9. If you had to explain what gaining clarity is all about in one minute or less, what you say?

Chapters 4 and 5: Sharing Clarity

1. How are sharing clarity and co-constructing success criteria related?
2. If student motivation is low, how can co-constructing success criteria with students have an impact?
3. Think of a time when a teacher co-constructed what success criteria looked like with you and other students. What was the impact?
4. In the book, the authors shared a few examples of co-constructing what success looks like from the world outside of education, including an example about Van Gogh and the Food Network. What examples can you think of that include examples, models of success or exemplars, works along the way, and/or non-examples?
5. Chapter Four offers steps to co-constructing success criteria, starting on page 81. We recommend challenging yourself to give it a go.
 - a. If you are in the classroom, determine a unit, chunk of learning, concept, etc. to co-construct around and follow the steps.
 - b. If you are not currently in the classroom, think how you might use and model this process for others. What is an area where you wish others to know what success looks like? Make a plan to share the clarity by co-constructing success criteria.
 - c. Use the examples from Chapter Five to think your own process through. Which do you most connect with and what ideas do the examples generate for you?

PART 2:

Chapters 6 and 7: Assessing with Clarity

1. When you think about the idea of making thinking and learning visible through Opportunities to Respond, how does the concept change or affirm your thinking about assessment? Consider the following sets of questions.
 - a. Guiding Questions on page 107
 - b. Questions 1 and 2 on page 108
 - c. Guiding Questions on page 112
2. Describe a scenario when you found that the assessment being used didn't make thinking or learning visible. How could it be changed or modified so that it did make learning visible (i.e. changing a question from closed to open, asking students to take a different perspective, etc.)?
3. Partner Task: Write down one exercise you use or know is used in the classroom. Exchange it with a partner. Work to make the exercise into an engaging task. There is nothing wrong with deliberate practice, but we also need tasks that stretch students' thinking and require them to go deeper in their learning. How can you make the exercise you have been given deeper? How can you stretch student thinking? For ideas, use pages 118-121 and 126-130 to transform the exercise you have been given. Once you have completed the transformation, talk it through with your partner. How would learning change as a result of your efforts for students? How would it change learning for teachers?

Chapters 8 and 9: Feedback with Clarity

1. Based on the explanation and examples of effective feedback on pages 133-136, develop three critical concepts about feedback that you feel all educators should know and use. Share them with a partner or develop them collectively in a small group.
2. Feedback should answer the questions: Where am I going? How am I going? Where do I go next? Using the scenarios and example prompts on page 143, discuss how often you do or see feedback structured this way. Why do you think that is? Consider developing and/or recording your own scenarios and sharing them to provide examples and exemplars of effective feedback. How could a format like this benefit students, teachers and leaders?
3. Teachers must share the feedback responsibility with students, as students provide much of the feedback other learners receive in a day anyway, and there is typically only one classroom teacher in a room of many students. Consider the Guiding Questions on page 145, and then review one or more of the classroom examples on pages 150-157. How is feedback being balanced in the classrooms that chose to share between teacher, self, and peers? How could it be improved? What ideas can be taken from the examples to improve feedback in your own school or system?

Chapters 10 and 11: Collaborating with Clarity

1. Chapters 10 and 11 are focused on how to navigate the journey of clarity within your own school or system. Begin by using the tools under Charting Your Clarity Journey, pages 161 – 165. How has working through the tools and questions helped to clarify your purpose and next steps in your journey? What else should be discussed or developed in order to move forward?
2. Chapter 11 provides several examples of how individual schools as well as districts moved forward with this work and provides structures for professional learning that may prove helpful in developing your plan and next steps. Take time to review each example, noting how they approached the work, how they provided training and support, and how they provided leadership. Use the organizer below to support your learning. Then, develop two to three next steps for your own journey and launch!

Approach	Training/Support	Leadership
Our Next Steps:		