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## **Visible Learning: Private institution lecturers' perspectives on enhancing the quality of teaching life**

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### **Abstract**

Enhancing the quality of teaching promotes a sustainable educational ecosystem, hence recognising the importance of Visible Learning. This study aimed to explore lecturers' perspectives of Visible Learning and the predictor mindframes of Visible Learning, which significantly contributed to the student's academic achievement. This study adopted a mixed-methods approach involving 93 lecturers in a private university. The findings revealed that lecturers positively viewed Visible Learning and believed that providing feedback, knowing the impact of their teaching, and engaging students impacted students' academic achievement. The results suggest that comprehensive training and support must be provided to ensure continuous quality of teaching life.

**Keywords:** Visible Learning; lecturers' perspectives; quality of teaching

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### **1.0 Introduction**

The pursuit of academic excellence in the quality of teaching is a key to the hegemony of Visible Learning. Visible Learning is an effective framework that enhances teaching pedagogies and teaching efficacy, thus improving student's academic achievement. The 12th Malaysia Plan is an initiative to emphasise the quality development of higher education programmes, including the quality of teaching life among the lecturers, to prepare future graduates to cater to the labour market (Prime Minister's Department, 2021). The quality of teaching life among lecturers is important to ensure that higher education institutions are competent in producing quality graduates to cater to economic development in Malaysia.

One imminent problem Malaysian employers face is the skill gaps of the graduates, as the graduates lack soft skills and workplace skills to fit into the job expectations (Mohamad, 2022). Some young graduates are not competent in coping with the rapid advancements in the workplace, as they lack the necessary technical and soft skills. This issue reflects the gap in the quality of teaching in higher education, which prompts the question of whether the lecturers deliver knowledge, skills, and attitudes based on contemporary industry needs. Hence, exploring Visible Learning comes in place to understand how lecturers perceive Visible Learning and its impact on students' academic achievement.

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Visible Learning explores "what works best" in quality teaching and learning. Based on 800 meta-analyses conducted by John Hattie and his team of researchers, it is found that the top three factors impacting students' academic achievement are teacher, curriculum, and teaching (Hattie, 2023). In this study context, lecturers play crucial roles in students' learning process. Lecturers must understand the impact of their teaching and collaborate with other educators to find ways and strategies to enhance the quality of their teaching. Thus, the main objective of this study was to determine lecturers' perspectives of Visible learning and analyse which of the ten mindframes of Visible Learning makes a statistically significant contribution to students' academic achievement.

## 2.0 Literature Review

Visible Learning is a concept developed by John Hattie to improve teaching and learning. Visible Learning drives positive changes in the classrooms and the whole school system by implementing a shared language of learning for students, lecturers, and educational institutions (Osiris Educational, n.d.). Lecturers must view teaching from the eyes of the students. Emphasising Visible Learning promotes impactful teaching strategies and enhances the quality of teaching life of the lecturers, thus improving students' learning experiences.

According to Hattie (2012), Visible Learning comprises four main constructs: engagement, constructivism, feedback and evaluation, and know thy impact. To this, Hattie & Zierer (2017) add that within these four constructs are the following ten mindframes where lecturers should view their role as an evaluator (Mindframe 1), change agent (Mindframe 2), collaborator with others (Mindframe 3), assessor (Mindframe 4), a dialogic (Mindframe 5), embracer of challenges (Mindframe 6), relationship builder (Mindframe 7), informant of language of learning (Mindframe 8), recipient and action taker of feedback (Mindframe 9), and knowing what successful learning looks like (Mindframe 10).

The crux of Visible Learning is that the lecturers need to be evaluators of their impact, focusing on understanding their perspectives of Visible Learning to self-assess their teaching. Lecturers are the key persons in teaching and learning; hence, their interaction with students, their changing mindframes, seeing the impact of their education, and focusing on feedback and evaluation are crucial to improving students' learning.

### 2.1 Reflection

Schön highlighted "Reflection in action" and "Reflection on action", which emphasised reflection during teaching and reflection after teaching (Ewing et al., 2022). Reflective practices allow lecturers to see learning from students' perspectives, thus making learning visible. Both students and lecturers should engage in parallel self-evaluation to identify areas for improvement and work together to enhance the quality of teaching and learning (Tong & Sidhu, 2022).

Engaging in the process of evaluating one self's teaching requires the mindframe of being a change agent. The lecturers need to be more proactive and engage in self-evaluation by embracing the role of change agents. Hence, lecturers must be willing to adopt and adapt to changes to cater to the different needs of the students.

### 2.2 Interaction

Positive interaction between lecturers and students is essential in creating a nurturing and quality learning environment, improving teaching quality. Lecturers must interact and collaborate with students to accommodate diverse students' learning styles and needs. By integrating Freire's critical pedagogy and allowing students to collaborate with peers and lecturers, they were better at accommodating and assimilating new knowledge with their existing experiences, which resulted in effective learning gains (Zanchetta et al., 2022).

When lecturers engage students in meaningful dialogues, they can discuss problems and solve their learning issues, promoting collaborative learning. Lecturers must engage students in dialogues and conversations, as many students often prefer to be involved in active learning, allowing them to ask questions, explore, and share ideas (Banihashem et al., 2022).

A learning environment that supports two-way communication enables lecturers and students to enhance bonding and relationships. Looking at the mindframe of the students, students felt that developing positive relationships with lecturers is crucial in their learning process. Hence, lecturers should find different strategies to motivate students in a positive learning environment. Studies have shown that academic motivation is highly linked to success in learning (Buari & Alim, 2020).

### 2.3 Feedback and evaluation

Feedback and evaluation are part and parcel of the teaching and learning process. Lecturers believe formative and summative assessments provide feedback to improve their teaching performance. In seeing assessment as feedback, lecturers need to understand what is next after obtaining feedback from students.

After evaluating students' learning and getting feedback, the lecturers should take the next course of action to analyse their teaching strategies and improve further in the next teaching sessions. ADDIE model is a key framework in which lecturers can engage in the cycle to ensure continuous improvement (Abuhassna & Alnawajha, 2023). It is crucial to utilise the information gathered from students' evaluations to find improvement areas to ensure continuous academic productivity regarding quality teaching.

### 2.4 Successful teaching

Successful teaching requires the lecturers to be clear on the learning outcomes and to make learning visible to the students. In understanding teaching, the lecturers need first to see what successful learning looks like from the eyes of the students. Thus, lecturers must consistently communicate with students to understand their definition of successful learning and, hence, define their successful

teaching.

Lecturers must inform students about the language of learning and the lesson's learning outcomes. It was found that students learn better in a specific content of pedagogies using illustrated methods that clearly explain the ideas and learning outcomes (Anuar et al., 2020). To ensure quality teaching, lecturers must delve into the learning process and segregate learning into smaller parts, then guide students on learning skills and ways to reinforce learning.

### 3.0 Methodology

This study adopted an explanatory sequential research design to triangulate the collected data and enhance the validity and reliability of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). A questionnaire and interview protocol were used to collect data for this study to understand the lecturers' perspectives on Visible Learning. This study was conducted through convenience sampling in a private university in Selangor, Malaysia. Convenience sampling was adopted in identifying the research setting due to practical factors such as the willingness of the institution to participate and the location's proximity to the researcher (Stratton, 2021).

This study involved 93 lecturers who teach undergraduate programmes using random sampling, with eight lecturers volunteering in the focus group interviews. The samples only involved lecturers teaching undergraduate programmes, as the study investigated the visibility of learning through lecturers' perceptions. They were chosen randomly from the list through even numbers. The questionnaire was distributed to all undergraduate lecturers with a return rate of 90%. The questionnaire and interview protocol were validated by three experts who are qualified and experienced researchers in the field. Their comments and feedback were considered in improving and finalising the adapted questionnaire before the data collection process. The Cronbach's alpha reliability for the questionnaire was 0.872, which indicated high reliability as the value fell between 0.8 and 1.0 (Hair et al., 2020).

The reliability and credibility of interviews were highly emphasised in this study. Thus, peer debriefing and intercoder were adopted to review the interview analysed codes to check on the level of agreement. This study recorded an agreement of 0.84, which indicated a strong agreement. Benchmarking with Cohen's Kappa, an agreement above 0.80 represents a strong agreement (Dettori & Norvell, 2020). Data cleaning was conducted in this study to ensure quality data for analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The data cleaning includes checking missing values and outliers and conducting normality tests.

In analysing the quantitative data, descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used, whereas in analysing thematic analysis used the qualitative data, multiple regression was also adopted in the analysis using SmartPLS software version 3.3.3. The effect sizes were analysed to determine the best lecturer predictor mindframe of Visible Learning, significantly contributing to students' academic achievement.

Ethical considerations were considered to guide this study, which included the standard procedures, obtaining permission from the institution's authorities and providing pseudonyms to all respondents.

### 4.0 Findings

The main findings of this study were presented in this section, based on the two research questions.

#### 4.1 Research Question 1: What are the lecturers' perspectives on the ten mindframes of Visible Learning?

The lecturers' perspectives on the ten Visible Learning mindframes were examined, and the results are presented in Table 1. In this study, the mean score of 3.50 and above was considered as strong agreement with the item, whereas 3.00 to 3.49 represented moderate agreement. The findings revealed that Mindframe 7: I develop positive relationships (M=3.530, SD=.529) recorded the highest mean score, indicating that the lecturers strongly valued the importance of developing positive relationships with the students and colleagues. The second highest mean score is Mindframe 2: I am a change agent (M=3.512, SD=.528), reflecting that the lecturers strongly believed they were change agents. On the other hand, Mindframe 4: I see assessment as feedback to me (M=3.144, SD=.571) and Mindframe 6: I enjoy the challenge (M=3.196, SD=.584) recorded the lowest perspectives. Lecturers perhaps view assessment as not highly effective as a form of feedback and probably are less reluctant to embrace challenges in teaching.

Table 1. Lecturers' perspectives of the ten mindframes of Visible Learning (n=93)

Ten mindframes of Visible Learning	Mean	SD
Mindframe 1: I am an evaluator.	3.351	0.533
Mindframe 2: I am a change agent.	3.512	0.528
Mindframe 3: I collaborate with me.	3.456	0.606
Mindframe 4: I see assessment as feedback to me.	3.144	0.571
Mindframe 5: I engage in dialogue, not monologue.	3.441	0.576
Mindframe 6: I enjoy the challenge.	3.196	0.584
Mindframe 7: I develop positive relationships.	3.530	0.529
Mindframe 8: I inform all about the language of learning.	3.358	0.541
Mindframe 9: I receive and act on feedback.	3.301	0.548
Mindframe 10: I know what successful learning looks like.	3.306	0.558

Scale: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly agree

This quantitative data was further triangulated with qualitative data from individual interviews. The qualitative data for the mindframe

of developing positive relationships presented positive relationships with students, which corroborated with the quantitative findings. A majority viewed positive interactions and relationships with their students as important in the success of the learning process, and this was also articulated well by lecturer 4, who said, "I got students to do some videos with me on some fun things, because I just want to make the students feel less bored to build some positive bonding with the students first." (L4\_070421)

Regarding the perspectives on the mindframe of a change agent, the lecturers mentioned the importance of continuous improvement in teaching. Lecturer 5 felt he constantly improved his teaching according to the technological updates and advancements. He said, "I am changing because of technology. Previously, we used only chalk and the board. Now, we have slides and everything with all the high technology in the class." (L5\_150421)

Under Mindframe 4: I see assessment as feedback to me, two themes emerged: (1) assessment strategies and (2) time constraints in assessment. The lecturer (L6) viewed assessment as a strategy to evaluate the student's learning. This is evident in the excerpt below:

"I think it is easier to see from the test because, from the marks, you would roughly know whether this student is able to answer the questions or not. Whether they study or not, sometimes it is about the effort the students really put in, the time to study." (L6\_260421)

One of the lecturers (L2) also complained about the time constraints in students' assessment; therefore, he felt that it was less effective to use assessment as feedback for him. The supporting excerpt is as follows:

"My students complain that they have too many assignments. They have 12 assignments in a semester (6 subjects X 2 assignments each). So, I have to make my assessment easier to ease their burden." (L2\_310321)

The qualitative data for Mindframe 6: I enjoyed the challenge and reported the theme of a fixed mindset. L1 mentioned that she did not try anything more to monitor students' learning, as she only followed the guidelines and contents given. L6 also attested that she did not help students to monitor learning. The supporting excerpts are as follows:

"I have not tried anything for students to monitor. So, I basically follow the way, just the assignments and exams." (L1\_290321)  
 "I do not really help students to monitor their learning." (L6\_260421)

Based on the findings from the lecturers' perspectives, the lecturers believed that they had developed positive relationships with students. However, they showed a fixed mindset as they did not enjoy challenges.

#### 4.2 Research Question 2: Which mindframe according to lecturers' perspectives of the ten mindframes of Visible Learning makes a statistically significant contribution to students' academic achievement?

The lecturers' perspectives on the ten mindframes of Visible Learning were analysed. Based on their perspectives, the structural model was used to analyse the best predictor mind frame of Visible Learning, which makes a statistically significant contribution to students' academic achievement. The path coefficient and effect sizes for the structural model using a 5,000-sample re-sample bootstrapping procedure were reported. The R<sup>2</sup> was 0.192 (Figure 1), which signified that the ten mindframes can explain 19.2% of the variance in students' academic achievement.

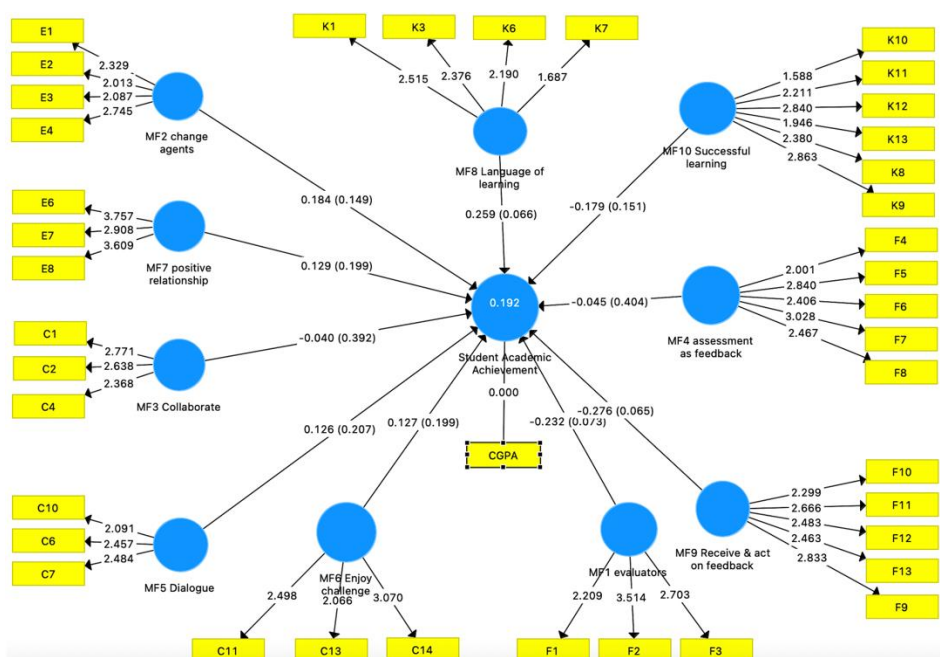


Fig. 1: Path coefficient of the structural model for the ten mindframes (lecturers' perspectives)

The regression analysis on the ten mindframes was conducted. The effect size determined the relationship between the predictor mindframes and students' academic achievement, as presented in Table 2. Mindframe 1: I am an evaluator; Mindframe 2: I am a change agent; Mindframe 8: I inform all about the language of learning; and Mindframe 9: I receive and act on feedback have small effect sizes ( $f^2=0.032, 0.022, 0.044, 0.035$ ), which were the predictor mindframes in this study. Cohen's (1988) guideline on effect size mentioned that  $f^2$  between 0.02 and 0.14 represents a small effect size. Therefore, the findings reflected that these four mindframes affect students' academic achievement.

Table 2. The summary of regression analysis on the ten mindframes of Visible Learning (lecturers' perspectives)

Relationship	$f^2$	Effect size	Predictor mindframe
Mindframe 1: I am an evaluator. → Student Academic Achievement	.032	Small effect	Yes
Mindframe 2: I am a change agent. → Student Academic Achievement	.022	Small effect	Yes
Mindframe 3: I collaborate with me. → Student Academic Achievement	.001	No effect	No
Mindframe 4: I see assessment as feedback. → Student Academic Achievement	.001	No effect	No
Mindframe 5: I engage in dialogue not monologue. → Student Academic Achievement	.007	No effect	No
Mindframe 6: I enjoy the challenge. → Student Academic Achievement	.013	No effect	No
Mindframe 7: I develop positive relationships. → Student Academic Achievement	.009	No effect	No
Mindframe 8: I inform me all about the language of learning. → Student Academic Achievement	.044	Small effect	Yes
Mindframe 9: I receive and act on feedback. → Student Academic Achievement	.035	Small effect	Yes
Mindframe 10: I know what successful learning looks like. → Student Academic Achievement	.013	No effect	No

To summarise the main finding based on lecturers' perspectives, lecturers' mindframes as evaluators, change agents, informing students of the language of learning, and receiving and acting on feedback make a statistically significant contribution to students' academic achievement.

## 5.0 Discussion

### 5.1 Being a Change Agent in Developing Positive Relationship with Students

Quality teaching requires lecturers to acquire the mindframe as change agents. Lecturers felt they allowed students to voice their opinions during the teaching and learning process. They used different teaching strategies to suit the needs of all learners. Hence, embracing the mindframe of change agents, the lecturers often engage themselves in reflecting on the action and the quality of their teaching (Ewing et al., 2022).

On the other hand, lecturers believed they developed positive relationships with students during the teaching and learning process. In a quality teaching life, a positive relationship with students promotes a positive learning environment, which nurtures students' learning desires (Kadir et al., 2020). This helps improve students' academic achievement. This was in line with the findings from the study conducted by Tong et al. (2023), in which, from the students' perspectives, developing positive relationships impacted their learning achievement.

### 5.2 Seeing Assessment as Feedback and Setting Challenging Learning for Students

Assessment plays a crucial role in the quality of teaching life. However, in seeing assessment as feedback, lecturers mentioned that they did not examine students' learning with the learning goals. They might not see the importance of assessing students and providing feedback to them in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the students. Lecturers' negative behaviour on assessment will deaden students' motivation to learn (Leoanak & Amalo, 2018).

Lecturers also did not enjoy the challenges faced in teaching; they did not constantly prepare challenging tasks for their students. At the same time, they admitted that they seldom engage students in the challenge of learning. Similar findings were found in the qualitative as lecturers commented that they did not try anything new to challenge students.

### 5.3 Mindframes Contributing to Students' Academic Achievement

Quality teaching requires lecturers to know the impact of their teaching on students. Lecturers must guide students in acquiring effective skills to make learning visible, impacting achievement. Informing students about the language of learning helps students acquire metacognition to assist them in learning independently and effectively (Marantika, 2021). Hence, the mindframe informing students about the language of learning showed a higher impact among the four significant mindframes in contributing to students' academic achievement.

Lecturers must be evaluators to evaluate the impact of their teaching on students. First and foremost, the lecturers need to understand the outcomes students need to achieve for every lesson to effectively guide students and evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching strategies by investigating whether their students can achieve the learning outcomes.

In providing feedback to students, lecturers must constantly comment on their learning tasks, how well they have done, and how to do it better. Lecturers also need to explain the feedback to students as lecturers need to see learning from the students' perspectives in order for students to know where and how to improve constructively. Feedback significantly impacts students' academic learning, as it helps them improve their knowledge and skills after receiving feedback from lecturers (Selvaraj et al., 2021).

Moreover, if students can express their ideas and opinions during the learning process, it benefits them as they learn to exchange opinions and learn from one another. Hence, lecturers need to recognise their roles as change agents and provide more opportunities for students to discuss learning. Lecturers must use different teaching ways to teach students of different learning styles. Different teaching approaches allow students to actively participate during lessons and enhance their understanding of the contents (Munna & Kalam, 2021).

The findings of this study based on lecturers' perspectives are crucial as not many studies are looking into mindframes in higher learning. Mindframes are more important than structures in teaching and learning, as there is no causal relationship between structural measures and students' learning success (Zierer, 2017). In other words, changes to the physical, organisational, and administrative aspects of teaching and learning do not impact students' learning achievement. Hence, the findings of this study have contributed to the importance of looking into the mindframes of lecturers in influencing students' academic achievement.

## 6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the teaching and learning process from the lecturers' perspectives based on the ten mindframes of Visible Learning. The study highlighted the importance of mindframes 1,2,8,9 in influencing students' academic achievement. However, it is also important to acknowledge the limitations of this study, which was the constraint of the sample size as it involved only one university and 93 respondents. Hence, it is recommended that future studies involve a larger sample of higher learning institutions that could produce more comprehensive results. It is hoped that this research encourages more institutions of higher learning to explore the ten mindframes of Visible Learning in heightening the mindframes of their lecturers, thus enhancing the quality of teaching life. Future studies could also examine the mindframes of Visible Learning of the lecturers through classroom observations to explore whether lecturers adopt the Visible Learning concept in their teaching, which provides valuable insights into the relationships between Visible Learning and classroom practices.

This study has shed light on the quality of teaching life through Visible Learning mindframes from lecturers' perspectives. Informing students about the language of learning, receiving and acting on feedback, being evaluators, and being change agents are the best predictor mindframes in impacting students' academic achievement. Therefore, it is recommended that more professional development initiatives for lecturers focusing on Visible Learning mindframes should be put in place by offering training and support to empower the lecturers in acquiring the ten mindframes, which leads to continuous improvements in teaching approaches and mindframes, hence quality teaching life.

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## Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

This paper has both theoretical and practical contributions to the quality of teaching life in the context of Visible Learning in the higher education in Malaysia.

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