

The Invisible Classroom: Relationships, Neuroscience & Mindfulness in School (The Norton Series on the Social Neuroscience of Education)

By Kirke Olson



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Improving student learning with the tools of neuroscience and mindfulness.

How is expanding students' strengths more effective than improving their weaknesses? Why is creating a school where staff and students feel safe necessary for learning? How can anchoring with simple mindfulness practices prevent classroom behavioral problems?

There is more to a classroom than just a teacher and a group of students. All classroom interactions have "invisible" neurobiological, emotional, and social aspects? the emotional histories of students, the teacher's own background and biography. In this book, Kirke Olson takes lessons from brain science, mindfulness, and positive psychology to help teachers understand the full range of their students' school experiences. Using its classroom-ready resources, teachers, administrators, parents, and policy makers can make the invisible visible, turning human investment in their students into the best possible learning outcomes.



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The Invisible Classroom: Relationships, Neuroscience & Mindfulness in School (The Norton Series on the Social Neuroscience of Education) By Kirke Olson Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

"[E]ducators will find value in the many practical tips and suggestions that this book offers to support their important work and promote positive outcomes among their students." (Mindfulness)

"[Kirke Olson] weaves an intricate pattern that is based on research and practical stories across eight chapters. There is an awareness of the hidden details of students' lives and the web of interpersonal connections that reside in the human brain. Each of the chapters builds on his work in neuroscience, relationships, leadership, memory, nurturance, and mindfulness." (CHOICE)

"In *The Invisible Classroom*, Kirke Olson does an incredible job of using neuroscience to explain student reactivity, and he provides best practices to work with students who exhibit antisocial behavior." (wise minds. big hearts.)

"As a veteran educator, I have emphasized the importance of first building relationships with students before trying to teach them anything. However, I did not have the science behind my advocacy. After reading your book, *The Invisible Classroom: Relationships, Neuroscience and Mindfulness in School*, I now have the knowledge and the evidence based practices to support this position as well as others. It has been some time since I have read such an inspiring book that speaks directly to the students we serve." (Cecilia Griffin Golden, PhD, Executive Director of Education for the Hillside Family of Agencies, Rochester, NY)

"Weaving together the discoveries of interpersonal neurobiology, positive psychology, and mindfulness with practical wisdom, Kirke Olson offers an abundance of strategies that educators at every grade level can implement to support their students' development and make their own work more fulfilling. Drawing on his decades of experience, the author highlights the crucial importance of connection before curriculum as the optimal way to prime the brain for learning, sharing both theory and rich stories of teachers and students working together. What a gift!" (Bonnie Badenoch, PhD, LMFT, author of Being a Brain-Wise Therapist: A Practical Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology)

"It is a delight to find a book for teachers that discusses issues such as love, trust, emotional safety, attachment, and the importance of relationships in the classroom in such a clear, well-researched, and readable style. With characteristic integrity, Kirke Olson gently points out that we, as teachers and school staff, have first to model what we wish our students to learn. The author adds to his many years of practical classroom experience an impressive body of research from other disciplines, combining theory and practice with great gentleness and wisdom. *The Invisible Classroom* joins my short list of classic texts to recommend to both new and experienced teachers on the underlying emotional reality of the classroom. I plan on passing this book along to my daughter, who is currently training to be a teacher." (Jenny Fox Eades, teacher and author of Celebrating Strengths: Building strengths-based schools and Classroom Tales)

"The Invisible Classroom is the approach needed in our education system. In a world where information lies at our fingertips through our tablets and smart phones and stress and anxiety are at high levels, mindfulness has become our best tool to slow down and allow students to process the information tossed at them daily. Awareness and accessibility to learning is as important as the academic curriculum being taught. Dr. Olson pragmatically writes about why and, more importantly, how mindfulness can work in your school. I have used some of the techniques and welcomed positive results in a short period of time. I plan on using the ideas

in *The Invisible Classroom* at the start of the next school year." (Michael Angwin, Director of Student Services, Chabad Jewish Academy, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina)

"The Invisible Classroom is a brilliant, accessible, and practical guide for every educator who wants to learn how to apply the cutting edge of science in the classroom to optimize learning for students of all ages. Kirke Olson has created a wonderful immersion for educators to understand how the social brain is shaped by relationships and the experiences provided within the learning environment. Not only will you be filled with useful information and transformative knowledge about how we learn, but also the practical tools to wisely create an effective and rewarding experience for both student and teacher alike!" (Daniel J. Siegel, MD, author, The Mindful Brain and Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology; Clinical Professor, UCLA School of Medicine)

"This book achieves a remarkable balance between research, theory, experience, and application in schools. Dr. Olson provides insight, relevance, and useful methods for school administrators, teachers, and parents. Busy educators typically do not have the time or experience to research brain development and cognition. This book filters through the extensive research and synthesizes what has been learned in meaningful ways. Any educator picking up this book will find ready-to-use strategies that can be utilized in the classroom the next day." (Brian Balke, Superintendent of Schools, Goffstown, New Boston, and Dunbarton, New Hampshire)

About the Author

Kirke Olson, PsyD, a licensed clinical psychologist and nationally certified school psychologist, has devoted nearly 40 years to helping pre-K through graduate teachers apply research on human relationships, neuroscience, and mindfulness to educate even the most complex students. He writes a regular column for the Global Association for Interpersonal Neurobiology Studies and lives with his wife in rural New Hampshire.

Louis Cozolino, PhD, is a professor of psychology at Pepperdine University and a private practitioner. He is the author of The Healthy Aging Brain, The Neuroscience of Human Relationships, The Neuroscience of Psychotherapy, and The Making of a Therapist. He lives in Los Angeles, California.

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Anita Cannon:

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