

Classroom Walk-Throughs

The role of the instructional leader—serving as a coach, supporter, and resource to teachers in their professional development and in the improvement of their classroom, teaching skills—is frequently one of the most difficult challenges facing principals. This session will introduce school leaders to the "classroom walk-through" as one tool in improving student achievement in their schools.

Why Classroom Walk-Throughs? Challenges We Are Facing in Education Today

1. Increasing the bar for student achievement.
2. Looking at data – being "data driven" and in making data-driven decisions.
3. Accountability: Looking at what teachers are teaching and at what students are learning.
4. Emphasis on "What Works."
5. Learning-Focused Supervision and Feedback (as opposed to Teacher-Focused Supervision).
6. Emphasis on students becoming highly engaged in the learning process.
7. School-Wide Focus/Clarity of Purpose (School Improvement Plans)
8. Attitude vs. Aptitude (American vs. Japanese mindset about learning)
9. Giving feedback to students

Benefits from Classroom Observations

For Teachers:

1. Learn more about their teaching through the principal's support and presence and to extend talk about teaching and reduce feelings of isolation.
2. Examine what works well and which areas of instruction or classroom management could be enhanced by modifying practice.
3. Be affirmed for their instructional efforts.
4. Gauge short- and long-term efforts by examining objective data collected over a sustained period of time.

For Principals:

1. Reinforce attention to an instructional and learning focus in the school's improvement plan;
2. Gather data about instructional practice and student learning to supplement other data about school and student performance;
3. Stimulate collegial conversation about teaching and learning through asking questions about what evidence is and is not observed;
4. Learn from other participants through observations, questions, experiences and perspectives; and
5. Deepen understandings and improve practices through continuous feedback.

From Data Walks to Quick Visits: Five Models

Name	Purpose	Participants	Process	Frequency
Data Walks	Gathering quantitative school and/or district data	Teachers, teacher leaders, site administrators, central office, community, cross-site teams	Observers gather quantitative data to assess needs and program implementation at site and district levels. Data are aggregated to focus upon grade levels, departments, sites and programs, not individual teachers.	One to four times per year, announced
Learning Walks	Informing school level professional learning communities	Teachers, teacher leaders, site administrators	Observers gather quantitative and qualitative data to inform conversations and action planning in site-level professional learning communities.	Quarterly to monthly, typically announced
Peer Coaching	Informing individual teacher professional development	Teacher colleagues, teacher leaders	Teachers observe one another with the goal of providing mutual feedback and opportunities for reflection upon individual practice.	Quarterly to monthly, with sanctioned time for debriefing, announced
Principal Professional Learning Walks	Informing administrator professional development	Site administrators, central office, cross-site administrator teams	Administrators engage in shared observations in order to improve and calibrate their observation and teacher coaching skills and better understand best practices and needs across sites and among schools.	One to four times per year, announced or unannounced
Quick Visits	Informing the teacher supervision and support process	Site administrators and other support providers, often solo	Data informs coaching support directed to individual teachers by supervisors and other support providers, and informs the formal supervision/evaluation process.	Unannounced

Tracking Informal Observations

Teacher	Observer	Informal Observations	Date of Follow-Up	Formal Observations	Period(s)/ Times (s)	Follow-Up Topics
Jones	Kelly	10/01/2007 11/07/2007	10/02/2007 11/09/07	12/03/2007	2 (8:30 – 9:15 a.m.)	Differentiated Instruction Classroom Management

Downey Three-Minute Classroom Walk Through

Quick Overview of the Five-Step Walk-Through Observation Structure

Step 1	Student Orientation to the Work - Do students appear to be attending when you first walk into the room?
Step 2	Curricular Decision Points - What objective(s) has the teacher chosen to teach at this time and how aligned are they to the prescribed (district or state) written curriculum?
Step 3	Instructional Decision Points - What instructional practices is the teacher choosing to use at this time to help students achieve the learning <u>of the curriculum</u> objectives?
Step 4	"Walk-the-Walls": Curricular and Instructional Decisions - What evidence is there of past objectives taught and/or instructional decisions used to teach the objectives that are present in the classroom - walk-the-walls, portfolios, projects in the room?
Step 5	Safety and Health Issues – Are there any noticeable safety or health issues that need to be addressed?

Comparison of Walk-Through Approaches

Downey Approach	Other Approaches	Downey Approach	Other Approaches
Informal	Formal	Brief - 2-3 minutes	Longer - 5-15 minutes
Brief gathering of data to look for teacher decisions	Gather data about teacher effectiveness	Walk-through time is throughout the day and unannounced	Walk-through is typically known and scheduled - to watch a teacher "use shared reading strategies" for example.
No checklist of teaching practices to look for; focus on curricular and instructional points of the teacher	Specific checklist (rubric) type of form to gather data about specific practices.	Nothing placed into personnel file.	May be placed into personnel file.
Focus on professional growth.	Focus on evaluation, assessment.	Ultimately leads to reflective conversation.	Usually leads to direct feedback from the supervisor to the teacher.
Coaching focus	Judging focus-often inspectional.		

Class Walk Throughs

Elementary

1. Snapshot of Learning and Instruction (3-5 minutes)
 2. Elicit input from teachers in the development of the process (as a growth opportunity) and include in development of the record sheet!
 3. Overview of Walk Through
 - a) Curricular decision-making
 - b) Instructional decisions
 - c) Student engagement
 - d) Health and Safety
 - e) Walk the Walls (prior learning)
 4. Include teachers as part of the "walk through" as much as possible.
 5. Quick feedback.
-

K-5

Purpose:	Align to district initiative – implementation of balanced literacy
Participants:	Initially administration
Frequency:	5 minutes/every other week
Data Gathering:	Develop a focus with the team and create a checklist of reasonable evidence that is being met. <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Instructional Classrooms➤ Looking for evidence of what was decided on the teams of Balanced Literacy.➤ Record by "walk-through" clip board and checklist
Feedback:	Brief discussion, e-mail, note, and then followed up with a grade level/team meeting.

Middle School

"Starting Small"

Purpose:	Instructional Strategy Development
Involvement:	Collaborate on Protocol (Team = 1 administrator; 1 teacher)
Look for:	Student Engagement Differentiated instruction
How:	5 x 5 x 5 (visit five classrooms; for five minutes each; five comments)
Record:	Student Engagement Instructional Strategies, Grade Level Key Elements
How to Record:	Labeled clipboard Anecdotal notes
Sharing:	Notes, e-mails, note clipped to classroom door – observation end.
Question:	Talk to me about... Why that approach, instructional tool?

Grades 6-12

Purpose:	To improve instruction
Who:	Leadership Team – Administrator, SIP Team, Lead Teachers
Frequency:	Once a month
Length of Visit:	3-5 minutes
Data Gathering:	Check list (all teachers)
Focus:	Learning environment Curriculum Time on task Safety/health concerns Engaged learning
Feedback:	Personal notes, e-mail, team meetings.

High School

Purpose: Resource room practices and study skills initiative
Participants: High School LD resource teachers
Frequency: 2 visits per month per teacher
Process: 3-5 minutes
Data Gathering: Create data checklist with teachers
Gather data by "brainstormed" list created by teachers/administrators to teacher
Feedback: Face-to-face and give checklist

K-12

Purpose: Data collection for school improvement plan
Participants: Administration (ongoing throughout year); teachers (each complete one cycle)
Frequency: Once a week for 3 minutes per visit at different time intervals
Process: Checklist with a comment bar to observe instructional staff
Focus: Frequency of how often the goal is being addressed; strategies use; products produced.
Data Gathering: Tally data; so see frequency in general on a school-wide data basis and individual classroom.
Feedback: Would give it to individual teachers; also report in staff meetings with feedback.

K-12

Purpose: Professional growth/development of the teacher
Participants: Administrators/teacher combination
Frequency: K-8: one time per week
9-12: one time per marking period
Process: Informal; unobtrusive; learner-focused; 3-5 minutes; observing student engagement and learning
Data: Looking for alignment to state standards
Looking for alignment to SIP goals
Looking for teacher assessment of student learning
Looking for level of student engagement
Data Gathering: Use checklist to gather data
Feedback: Notes in mailboxes, face-to-face upon request
