

Teachers Taking the Lead in Classroom Walkthroughs
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Three Session Outcomes:

- (1) I Focus on the importance of long-range, on-going professional development of ECE teachers on the knowledge and skills of teaching, particularly when it comes to instruction, curriculum and assessment.
- (2) A form of embedded professional development that has great potential in helping ECE teachers develop new knowledge and skills in teaching and learning. This is the idea of teachers observing their peers.
- (3) Different walkthrough models to consider in planning and implementing ECE peer visitations within a walkthrough framework.

Kachur, D.S., Stout, J. A., & Edwards, C. L. (2013). *Engaging Teachers in Classroom Walkthroughs*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

12 Professional Development Activities

1. Online or face-to-face courses
 2. Conferences
 3. Seminars/Institutes
 4. Workshops
 5. Webinars
 6. Affinity groups/blogs
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7. Coaching/mentoring
 8. Subject/department instructional planning
 9. Study groups (book/lesson)
 10. Classroom-based action research
 11. Analysis of student work samples
 12. Teachers observing teachers

Defining job-embedded professional development – teacher learning grounded in their day-to-day teaching practices.

The closer the professional learning is to the classroom the greater connection it will have to student learning needs and academic standards. Teachers

Teacher classroom walkthroughs

“The most available sources of expertise in the school are the teachers themselves.”

“Privacy of practice produces isolation, and isolation very well serves as the enemy of improvement. “

Components of Teacher Classroom Walkthroughs

Purpose – will drive the other walkthrough components of whatever your walkthrough model will look like in design.

Participants – can include all teachers or selected teacher leaders.

Protocols - address how the walkthroughs are conducted such as the frequency of walks, the amount of time spent in the room observing, whether observers talked with students, where observers located themselves, and so on.

Focus (targets the general areas for collecting observational evidence of teaching and learning like “student engagement,” “formative assessment,” or “building language and literacy.”) and **Look-fors** that are the more explicit teacher or student behaviors that participants will observe and record under a focus area of observations throughout the walkthroughs.

Data-Gathering – variations in the forms for gathering walkthrough observation data.

SAMPLE OBSERVATION DATA-GATHERING FORMS

Walkthrough Observation Form**While I was in your classroom today, I noticed...****Thoughts and ideas I came away with for changes in my own teaching....****What I wondered about...****Observation Date:** _____ **Teacher:** _____**Grade/Subject Level:** _____**Activity/Lesson Observed:** _____**CLASSROOM WALKTHROUGH OBSERVATION FORM^o****Teacher:** _____ **Date:** _____ **Time:** _____**Subject/Grade:** _____ **Lesson:** _____**Curriculum Standard:** _____**Focus of Observation:** _____**What is the TEACHER DOING?****What are the STUDENTS DOING?****Other Observations/ Clarifying Questions**^oOnly record what you observe/hear

Follow-up - reflective discussions among the observers and the observed are the most frequent form of follow-up to teacher walkthroughs. These discussions often center on the description and analysis of walkthrough observation data that indicate trends of instruction and learning. Such questioning and discussion enable teachers to analyze their existing instructional strategies and practices, develop alternative strategies, and identify priorities for future action.

Next Steps - include determining necessary professional development still needed, identifying the focus for future walkthroughs, establishing possible coaching arrangements, and/or just having individual or groups of teachers making commitments to improving their skills and learning practices based on the walkthroughs.

FOUR WALKTHROUGH MODELS/PROCESSES

Instructional Rounds

The primary purpose of instructional rounds is for the observing teachers to compare their instructional practices with those they observe. When the rounds are over, members of the observing group convene to reflect on their experiences.

Marzano, R. J., Frontier, T., & Livingston, D. (2011). *Effective Supervision: Supporting the Art and Science of Teaching*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Marzano, R. J., & Toth, M. D. (2013). *Teacher Evaluation that Makes a Difference*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Marzano, R. J. (February 2011). *Instructional Rounds*. 68(5), pgs. 80-81.

Teaching Squares

A Teaching Square consists of a group of four teachers from the same or different disciplines visiting one another, either reciprocally or in rotation. If you have only three teachers participating, we call them Teaching Triangles. In Teaching Square, participants in the square learn about the best practices of their peers in teaching in order to improve their own teaching. Here teachers will commit approximately 6-8 hours over a 6- to 8-week period. Observing an entire class session is best, but shorter informal visits or walkthroughs are also helpful.

Search [Teaching Square observation](#) on any internet browser for hits on the topic.

UCLA Center X Classroom Walk-Through

In the UCLA Center X Classroom Walk-Through, teachers walk as teams and only record what they see and hear students doing under the specific initiative of the school, which in this case could be teaching language and literacy as a focus of their walks. Many times observers will ask students questions about what they are learning and the connection of their learning to other subjects.

The teacher teams report back to the school as a whole the patterns or trends they observe in the implementation of that new initiative. There is no identification of specific teachers or classrooms in the feedback and no feedback is given to any individual teachers. It is a teacher-driven school-wide look at practices under the focused initiative.

Martinez-Miller, P., & Cervone, L. (2008). *Breaking Through to Effective Teaching: A Walk-Through Protocol Linking Student Learning and Professional Practice*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Walkthroughs Without Students (Ghost Walks)

The ghost walks include an organized tour of the building by teams of teachers without the presence of students or supervisors. Oftentimes ghost walks are conducted after school. Here teams of teachers visit classrooms of peers to review student work, portfolios, wall displays, instructional materials, layout of the classroom, content of displays, and teacher lesson plans that include scope and sequencing of teaching to a particular initiative. Teachers whose rooms are being observed choose the materials to be shared.

Benefits to Teachers Engaged in Peer Observations through Walkthroughs

TABLE DISCUSSION

Getting Started with Teacher Walkthroughs

Concerns of Teachers

Concerns about walkthrough process

Concerns about peers observing

Concerns about actual observations

Concerns about follow-up

Role of the Principal

It is difficult to imagine introducing, implementing and sustaining walkthroughs without the support of the school principal. This is the lead person who can champion the process, who can deal with teacher concerns, who can build trust, who can empower teachers, who can help schedule time for classroom walkthroughs, who can give opportunities to all teachers to participate, who can provide coordination assistance and other resources, and who can oversee the follow-up to walkthroughs.

Trust and Safety

A lack of trust between teachers and school administrators, as well as among teachers, will stymie, if not kill, any new initiative. In walkthroughs, as in other professional development initiatives, teachers must be able to trust the process, their colleagues, and the relationships that ensue.

Community of Learning

Teachers who are part of a community of learning (in other words, working together to become better at their craft) will be more receptive to the idea of observing one another.

Begin with Volunteers

Provide a Forum for Sharing Experiences

Develop Walking Norms

TABLE DISCUSSION

What would be expected norms or behaviors of teachers observing during walkthroughs?

What would be expected norms or behaviors of teachers in follow-up conversations and thereafter?

Arrange Schedule and Time for Observations and Discussion
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have floating substitute teachers to cover classes of observing teachers. 2. Use the principal, assistant principal, instructional coaches, mentors, or aides to cover classes of those teachers participating in walks. 3. Combine classes (with teacher agreement) so teachers can be released for walkthroughs. 4. Seek approval to use department or subject, or grade level common planning time for debriefings. 5. Use individual teacher planning time when no other options are available and if teachers agree. 6. Use school staff meetings and department level meetings to share observations and conduct reflective conversations. 7. Use late start or early release staff development days for post-walkthrough discussions. |
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Kachur, D. S., Stout, J. A., & Edwards, C. L. 2010. *Classroom Walkthrough to Improve Teaching and Learning*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Kachur, D. S., Stout, J. A., & Edwards, C. L. 2013. *Engaging Teachers in Classroom Walkthroughs*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.