

Classroom Walkthroughs

A Tool for Continuous
Improvement



Objectives

- Introduce walkthroughs as a tool for improving teaching and learning
- Identify components found in various models of walkthroughs
- Present factors to consider in developing and implementing walkthroughs



Many Labels for Walkthroughs

- Learning Walks
- Data walks
- Mini-observations
- Data-in-a-day
- Instructional walkthroughs
- Reflective walkthroughs
- Professional learning visits
- Rounds



No Magic in Name of a Model

“There is no magic in the name of a model – only in the fidelity to the essentials of quality teaching.”

Charlotte Danielson



Classroom Walkthroughs are...

- Informal and brief in duration
- Conducted by instructional leaders, students, parents, others
- Quick snapshot of classroom activities or “look-fors”
- NOT intended for formal teacher evaluation
- An opportunity to engage in reflective feedback
- Aimed as improvement of student achievement



Why increasing interest?

- Instructional Leadership
- Professional Learning Communities
- NCLB and school improvement plans (i.e. DTSDE, NYC Quality Review)
- Standards-based Curriculum (i.e. CCLS)
- Curriculum and Instruction initiatives
- Shift from teacher-focus to student-focus
- Increase in coaching and mentoring



Questions that must be Answered

- How often and long do you visit classrooms?
- To whom are you giving attention?
- Do you use a checklist or take written notes during your walks?
- To whom do you give feedback about the walkthrough observations?



School Benefits from Walks

- Acquire additional data about teaching and student learning
- Determine incorporation of new curriculum & instructional initiatives
- Promote collegial and collaborative conversations



Observer Benefits from Walks

- Establish role as instructional leader
- Maintain visibility and accessibility
- Become aware of teaching and learning across multiple disciplines



Teacher Benefits from Walks

- Reflect on own instructional and curricular practices
- Engage in collegial and reflective conversations
- Identify own professional development needs



Students Benefits from Walks

- Sharing with observers what they are learning
- Participating in school improvement
- Teaching targeted to meet needs



Components of Walkthroughs

- Purpose(s)
- Teacher Involvement
- Focus of walks ('look-fors')
- Who participates?
- Protocols (e.g., frequency, amt. of time, ground rules)
- How data is gathered/recorded?
- How observation feedback is given?



Video on Walkthroughs

- How to Conduct Effective Classroom Walkthroughs DVD



Factors to Consider

- Announced visits
- Indicators of a walkthrough
- Frequency of walks
- Length of time in room
- Note-taking in room/outside of room
- Talk to students/not talk to students
- Checklists versus narrative



Factors to Consider

- Keeping record of your visits
- Nature/type of follow-up
- Teacher union issues
- Building trust
- Managing time to do walkthroughs
- Walkthrough training
- Evaluating the walkthrough



Questions

- What is on your mind?
- What seems to align with your thinking about walkthroughs?
- What questions are unanswered?



Getting Started – Ten Steps

1. Thoroughly research the topic of walkthroughs.
2. Determine staff experiences with any previous walkthrough efforts.
3. Visit schools using walkthroughs.
4. Work with the faculty on purpose and format of walkthrough feedback.
5. Align walkthroughs with other school improvement efforts.
6. Provide walkthrough training for all participants.
7. Establish clear and consistent guidelines for walkthroughs.
8. Implement walkthroughs in the beginning on a voluntary basis.
9. Consider expanding opportunities for others to accompany you on the walks.
10. Conduct a formative evaluation of the walkthrough process.

Forthcoming Book

Classroom Walkthroughs to Improve Teaching and Learning

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