

## Using Walk-throughs to Enhance Student and Teacher Learning

<b>What is a walk-through?</b>	<b>Components of Planning, Conducting, and Debriefing Walk-throughs</b>
<p>A walk-through is an organized visit through a school’s learning areas to observe teaching, learning, and the school environment through the eyes of different school stakeholders.</p> <p>A walk-through is . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•a brief visit (i.e., 2-15 minutes) to classrooms or other parts of the school.</li> <li>•conducted on a frequent basis and consistent throughout the year.</li> <li>•informal and non-evaluative.</li> <li>•designed to collect patterns of data that can help members of the learning community continually improve their teaching practices.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Begin with an overview and staff conversation about walk-throughs and their benefits.</li> <li>2. Engage in focused planning.</li> <li>3. Conduct walkthroughs.</li> <li>4. Provide feedback to teachers.</li> <li>5. Debrief with planning team and teachers.</li> <li>6. Determine next steps.</li> </ol>
<b>Benefits of Walk-throughs</b>	<b>The Walk-through Process</b>
<p>Walk-throughs . . .</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. reinforce attention to a school improvement focus.</li> <li>2. provide useful data about school improvement targets and the impact of professional development.</li> <li>3. stimulate collegial conversation and a desire for continuous improvement.</li> <li>4. deepen understanding about what is really going on at the school.</li> <li>5. expand leadership capacity in the school to include teacher leaders.</li> <li>6. help students see that both administrators and teachers value instruction and learning.</li> <li>7. provide administrators with a broader view of the learning environment and increase visibility, trust, and credibility.</li> <li>8. provide opportunities for focused, reflective, and collaborative professional learning.</li> <li>9. help determine needs in the classroom.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. During the <b>preparation meeting</b>, the members of the walk-through teams assemble, confirm their focus and the evidence that each member will collect, and distribute data collection forms.</li> <li>2. Team members go to the observation areas (e.g., classrooms, hallways, resource rooms) to conduct the <b>walk-through</b>.</li> <li>3. Members of the walk-through teams participate in a <b>debriefing</b>. Walk-through participants share their observations, identify trends, and determine strengths and weaknesses related to the school improvement initiative under study. School improvement committee members and other staff can use the data to monitor progress and refine implementation of the school’s improvement initiatives.</li> </ol>

<p><b>1 Getting Started in the School: Overview of Walk-throughs and Benefits</b></p>	<p><b>2 Focused Planning: The Big Picture</b></p>
<p>Meet in a joint meeting where teachers also have the opportunity to have dialogue in small groups.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How can the walk-through process contribute to the school's approach to continuous improvement?</li> <li>2. What are some of the reasons for conducting periodic walkthroughs? Who should visit classrooms? Which rooms? How often?</li> <li>3. What should be the focus for observers during walkthroughs? What questions should observers ask students?</li> <li>4. What other data can the school gather and analyze to complement the data collected from walkthroughs?</li> <li>5. How can a positive and safe experience be created for all participants?</li> </ol>	<p>The planning team must consider the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the purpose of the walk-through?</li> <li>2. Who will participate in the walk-through?</li> <li>3. Where will it take place? What School? Which Classrooms?</li> <li>4. How will you inform and notify all relevant parties?</li> <li>5. Who will train participants?</li> <li>6. What tools (graphic organizers) will the participants need?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Focus Area:</b> <b>“Look fors”</b></p>	<p><b>Focused Planning: Choosing the Focus for Walk-throughs</b></p>
	<p>Meet in a joint meeting where teachers also have the opportunity to have dialogue in small groups.</p> <p><b>Choose the focus for observations.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify school improvement targets where you want to see progress.</li> <li>2. Select characteristics of a “desired school future” where you believe teaching, leading, and learning will flourish.</li> <li>3. Identify key components of effective practice based upon professional research and literature as well as teacher professional knowledge.</li> <li>4. Use documents from state assessments, district benchmarks, and the district staff evaluation criteria.</li> <li>5. Discuss the participants’ vision of effective teaching and learning for the school?</li> </ol>

**Determine “look fors” and describe what that looks and sounds like.**

<p><b>Embedded Literacy (i.e., reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, presenting)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher provides explicit instruction for literacy strategies.</li> <li>• Teacher models literacy strategies.</li> <li>• Teacher provides guided practice for literacy strategies.</li> <li>• Teacher provides independent practice for literacy strategies.</li> <li>• Teacher delivers explicit reading instruction (e.g., oral language, concepts about print, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, word study, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension) into the lesson.</li> <li>• Students read content-relevant material.</li> <li>• Students choose text at their own and higher readability levels.</li> <li>• Students choose culturally relevant text.</li> <li>• Students read fiction and nonfiction text.</li> <li>• Students read independently.</li> <li>• Students write content-relevant material.</li> <li>• Students peer edit written material.</li> <li>• Students actively listen to content-relevant material.</li> <li>• Students deliver oral presentations.</li> <li>• Students engage in group discussions.</li> </ul> <p>Connecticut Walkthrough Protocol Guide, Connecticut State Department of Education, 2008</p>	<p align="center"><b>Classroom Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher provides access to relevant and updated learning materials and equipment.</li> <li>• Teacher provides every student access to a desk/table and chair.</li> <li>• Teacher provides access to content-related fiction and nonfiction texts.</li> <li>• Teacher displays student work.</li> <li>• Teacher displays models of exemplars.</li> <li>• Teacher displays scoring rubrics.</li> <li>• Teacher displays editing and revising guidelines.</li> <li>• Teacher organizes the classroom for a variety of groupings.</li> <li>• Teacher provides behavioral feedback in a nonjudgmental way.</li> </ul>
	<p align="center"><b>Instructional Pacing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher develops and paces lesson to achieve identified student outcomes.</li> <li>• Teacher provides sufficient wait time for students' responses.</li> <li>• Teacher manages routines and transitions to maximize instruction.</li> <li>• Teacher adjusts lesson to meet students' needs.</li> <li>• Grade Level/Course Level Expectations/Alignment to Standards</li> <li>• Teacher aligns lesson objective(s) with grade/course level expectations.</li> <li>• Teacher aligns lesson objective(s) with curriculum standards.</li> <li>• Teacher states lesson objective(s).</li> <li>• Teacher posts lesson objective(s).</li> <li>• Teacher defines lesson objective(s) in student-comprehensible language.</li> </ul>



<p><b>5 Debrief with the Planning Team and Teachers: Analyze and Interpret Walk-through Data</b></p>	<p><b>6 Determine Next Steps</b></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define the purpose of the meeting and communicate the time limit for the session.</li> <li>2. Assemble in small groups (e.g., content-alike, grade-alike, cross-disciplinary).</li> <li>3. Use the following questions to analyze and interpret the walk-through data. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) What observations can we make about this data?</li> <li>b) What trends do we see in this data?</li> <li>c) What do we see when we compare scores by content area, grade-level, and/or to other walk-through data?</li> <li>d) What data draws our attention?</li> <li>e) What is unique or unexpected about the data?</li> <li>f) What preliminary conclusions or generalizations can we draw about this data?</li> <li>g) What questions are raised by this data?</li> <li>h) What other kinds of data would we like to have?</li> <li>i) What can we celebrate?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>Staff members could . . .</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. create SMART goals for improvement.</li> <li>2. engage in problem solving related to a target improvement goal.</li> <li>3. create professional development opportunities.</li> <li>4. plan for additional walk-throughs.</li> <li>5. collect additional data about teaching, learning, and the learning environment.</li> <li>6. conduct action research.</li> <li>7. share information with parents and other school/district stakeholders.</li> <li>8. radically celebrate.</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Identifying Improvement Actions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What teacher actions are needed to improve learning and performance?</li> <li>2. What student actions are needed to improve learning and performance?</li> <li>3. What systemic actions at the school/district level are needed to improve learning and performance (such as changes in curriculum, schedule, grouping)?</li> </ol>

<b>IDEAL Problem Solving</b>	
<p><b>I</b> dentify the dimensions of the problem.</p> <p><b>D</b> etermine alternative solutions.</p> <p><b>E</b> stablish standards and evaluate each alternative solution.</p> <p><b>A</b> dopt and implement a plan.</p> <p><b>L</b> ook back, evaluate, and adjust.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (I) Identify the problem that needs to be solved.</li> <li>2. (I) What are the causes of this problem?</li> <li>3. (I) What positive results do you expect will occur when you solve this problem?</li> <li>4. (D) What are some possible ways to solve this problem?</li> <li>5. (E) Which alternative solution(s) do you choose to solve the problem?</li> <li>6. (A) What obstacles, if any, do you have to overcome in order to solve this problem?</li> <li>7. (A) What is your plan for applying the solution you chose?</li> <li>8. (L) Do you predict that this plan will work? Why?</li> <li>9. (L) When will you evaluate your solution strategy to make sure it is working?</li> </ol>

## Matrix for Planning, Conducting, and Debriefing Walkthroughs

Purposes	Observers	Visits/Time/ Frequency	Data Gathering	Feedback/ Debriefing
<p>1. Identify progress made on school improvement initiatives (e.g., literacy and numeracy, technology integration, differentiation)</p> <p>2. Observe . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•student engagement</li> <li>•teaching</li> <li>•lesson design</li> <li>•curriculum implementation</li> <li>•safety</li> <li>•classroom environment (e.g., walls, bulletin boards)</li> <li>•student behavior</li> <li>•classroom climate</li> <li>•assessment</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul> <p>3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul> <p>4.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Principal</li> <li>2. Assistant Principal</li> <li>3. Dean</li> <li>4. Teachers</li> <li>5. Parents</li> <li>6. Coaches</li> <li>7. Mentors</li> <li>8. Researchers</li> <li>9. Counselors</li> <li>10. Special Ed Staff</li> <li>11. District administrators/ directors/ coordinators</li> <li>12. Teams of the above</li> <li>13.</li> <li>14.</li> <li>15.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 3-15 minutes</li> <li>2. Once for a whole day visiting all classrooms and repeat every few weeks</li> <li>3. ____ classes per week</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> <li>7.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Checklist with specific indicators (“look fors”) identified by administrative team or professional literature</li> <li>2. Checklist with specific indicators (“look fors”) identified by teachers prior to walk-through</li> <li>3. Notes on specific examples/ evidence related to the target(s) of the walk-through</li> <li>4. Interview data from students</li> <li>5. Research-based software (e.g., Teachscape, McREL, Administrative Observer)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Written note about observations placed in teacher(s) mailbox after walk-through</li> <li>2. Report to the entire staff at a joint meeting</li> <li>3. Reflective questions and conversations with teacher teams and/or with entire staff</li> <li>4. Personal visits later with teachers sharing observations and learning more about what took place prior and/or after the classroom visit.</li> <li>5. Observation report is shared with entire staff and celebration, problem solving, and goal-setting occurs in grade-level, cross-disciplinary/grade teams</li> <li>6. Staff development representatives review data and determine professional development needs and delivery systems appropriate to continuously improve</li> <li>7.</li> </ol>