

Dallas School District

Learning Walk Protocol

“Focus on the learning—not the teaching.”

During Learning Walks, small groups of teachers make relatively brief observations of their fellow teachers. These observations are typically 15 minutes in length and cover about 4-6 classrooms. When engaged in Learning Walks, groups of teachers conduct as many substantive observations of classrooms as possible over the course of 1-2 hours. The observers then discuss observations and reflect on connections to their own practice.

Learning Walks are not used to provide feedback to the teacher being observed, although this is an option if the observed teacher so desires. The primary purpose of Learning Walks is for the teachers making the observations to compare their practices with those observed in the classrooms they visit. It is the discussion at the end of a Learning Walk and the subsequent self-reflection by the observer teachers that is their chief benefit. (Marzano Research Laboratory)

Getting Started

- ❖ A teacher leader facilitates the Learning Walks
- ❖ Any teacher may request or accept an invitation to the Learning Walk Team
- ❖ Model teachers to be observed are selected from a pool of volunteers
- ❖ Teachers on the Learning Walk Team secure coverage for ½ day

Before entering the classroom . . .

- ❖ Meet with other members of the learning walk team to review expectations and articulate personal learning focus.
- ❖ Establish protocols and purpose
- ❖ Set timetable
- ❖ Review materials and objectives provided by teachers being observed
- ❖ Review “What to Observe” focus questions, based on *The Art and Science of Teaching* (Marzano, 2007)
- ❖ Review observational versus evaluative feedback

During the visit . . .

- ❖ Enter rooms quietly and move to an area of the classroom that does not disrupt the flow of instruction
- ❖ Move around the room and focus on what the teacher is enabling his/her students to do.
- ❖ Look at what the teacher has written for the students (e.g., learning targets, objective or purpose, agenda, etc.).
- ❖ Observe the students' body language. Are they engaged? If so, how can you tell? Is what they are engaged in relevant to the intended learning goal?
- ❖ Observe evidence of the following questions:
 - What is the teacher doing to help establish and communicate learning goals, track student progress, and celebrate success?
 - What is the teacher doing to help students effectively interact with new knowledge?
 - What is the teacher doing to help students practice and deepen their understanding of new knowledge?
 - What is the teacher doing to help students generate and test hypotheses about new knowledge?
 - What is the teacher doing to help engage students?
 - What is the teacher doing to help establish or maintain classroom rules and procedures?
 - What is the teacher doing to help recognize and acknowledge adherence and lack of adherence to classroom rules and procedures?
 - What is the teacher doing to help establish and maintain effective relationships with students?
 - What is the teacher doing to help communicate high expectations for all students?
- ❖ Walkers should speak with students and teachers only if learning allows for such interactions. Any discussion should be brief and unobtrusive.

After the visit . . .

- ❖ When walkers leave each classroom, they meet for 5 minutes outside of the classroom to share observations. Sharing should be focused on observational data, not judgments or interpretations
- ❖ At the end of the classroom visits, all walkers convene for a debriefing session.
- ❖ Share observations collected
- ❖ Share interpretations and wonderings based on evidence
- ❖ Share connections between observations and personal learning focus
- ❖ Each walker then performs a personal reflection and a commitment to action

- ❖ If the teacher being visited has requested feedback, the facilitator should take notes from this debriefing. Ideally, this feedback should be shared in person.