Learning Walks: An Instructional Improvement Strategy

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• Clarify the purposes of Focus Walks
• Review the Focus Walk process using Seventh Street Elementary as a case study
• Practice a Focus Walk classroom visit and debrief
• Discuss how to start Focus Walks in the fall
• Questions
Is a “Walk” a “Walk?”

**FOCUS WALKS**

**LEARNING WALKS**

**Instructional Rounds**

**Classroom Walk-throughs**
Focus Walks are a series of short classroom visits conducted over time driven by a targeted focus. Patterns are derived from the data gathered during the Focus Walks to guide collective cycles of inquiry: data review, learning, application, and data collection – with stakeholders to improve instructional practices in the classroom.
Focus Walks...

- Provide an authentic process for administrators to demonstrate instructional leadership
- Establish quality dialogue and shared understanding about teaching and learning within a professional learning community;
- Create a school-wide climate of inquiry and research.
- Foster self-monitoring of professional growth aligned to district/school goals; and,
- Build trust in the reflective practice process itself

“When professionals share their talents and skills, they help the whole school develop a collective wisdom.” ~ Robert Marzano
Develop a Focus

Determine Next Steps

Conduct Focus Walks

Share Data with Stakeholders

Introduce Staff to Focus Walks
Who is on the Focus Walk Team?

- What is your culture ready for?
  - District Admin?
  - School Admin?
  - Teachers?
  - Students?
  - Parents?

- Manage the change to eventually include more stakeholders
Introduce Staff to Focus Walks

- Important points to share:
  - Purpose of Focus Walks
  - Emphasize that they are non-evaluative, data is collected without associating teacher names – consider sharing a sample of collected data
  - Share the target of the Focus Walks or communicate when you will co-develop the focus
  - We don’t associate teacher names with the classroom data
  - Highlight when the Focus Walks will begin and when you will share the data collected
A Focus of Inquiry is established before the classroom visits and defines **what to look** for during the Focus Walks. The Focus of Inquiry is used to establish clear expectations as to the type of evidence that will be collected.
A focus can be derived from data, curricular initiatives, common instructional needs based on the TESS framework, or any combination.

The focus IS NOT a list of items or strategies that you check off. The focus of inquiry is described by clear “look fors.”
- What will I see teachers doing?
- What will I see students doing?
- What will I see in the classroom environment?
Set a Focus Walk Schedule

- What classrooms will you visit?
- How many classrooms will you need to visit to gather enough data to discern patterns?
- When should your walks occur to gather data aligned to the focus?
• Started with quick walk-throughs to get a baseline on Reading Instruction and follow up on classroom management

• Look Fors:
  – Teachers are delivering mini-lessons
  – READ Rotations: Students are working independently in centers while teacher works with a guided reading group
  – Routines have been established for moving in/out of READ rotations and for working independently in centers

• Data Collected:
  – Number of students on task
  – Scripted steps from mini-lesson
  – Student friendly learning target for the mini-lesson posted
  – Time it takes students to transition to centers
  – Teacher directions for transitions
  – Teacher/Student ‘talk’ during mini-lesson and guided reading
Develop a Focus

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Introduce Staff to Focus Walks

- Pre-walk discussion
- Classroom visits with interim hallway discussions
- Debriefing session
Pre-Walk Discussion (15 minutes)

- This should take place just prior to the classroom visits. All walkers involved should have a clear understanding of
  - Protocols and purpose
  - Classrooms to be visited and schedule
  - Focus of the walk including ‘look fors’
  - How to collect objective and unbiased data aligned to the ‘look fors’
### Classroom Visits

| 5-10 minutes in each classroom | The walkers visit each classroom for the designated time. They ‘look & listen’ to the learning and take notes on any evidence that aligns to the focus. Walkers may speak to students and teachers only if the learning allows for such interactions. Any discussion should be brief and unobtrusive. |
| 5 minutes corridor talk in between each classroom | When walkers leave each classroom, they meet for 5 minutes outside of the classroom to share observations. The evidence that is cited must be specific to the focus. This is not a time for open discussion or judgments. |
Debriefing Session (15-30 minutes)

- At the end of the classroom visits, all walkers convene for a debriefing session. They share the observations collected and identify any patterns which may have emerged.
- Wonderings may then be formulated based on the evidence. Conclusions are not formed.
- All evidence and wonderings are collated in preparation to share with stakeholders.
Develop a Focus

Introduce Staff to Focus Walks

How will classroom practices be refined? What evidence will teachers collect and when will they share it? When will next set of Focus Walk data be shared? Do we continue with our focus, refine our focus or set a new focus?

Determine Next Steps

Conduct Focus Walks

Share data in current job-embedded supports: pupil free/release days, staff meetings, PLCs, grade-level/department meetings, emails (later in cycle)

Share Data with Stakeholders
Seventh Street Elementary: Share Data with Stakeholders and Determine Next Steps

Half-Day PD
Develop a Focus

Introduce Staff to Focus Walks

Determine Next Steps

Conduct Focus Walks

Share Data with Stakeholders
Learning Target Look Fors:
- Learning Target on board in an I Can Statement
- Learning Target is explicitly introduced to students including why the target is important
- Learning Target is deconstructed with students
- Anchor charts aligned to learning target

Strategic Use of Centers Look Fors:
- At least one center supports/aligns to reading (mini-lesson) target
- Students are able to say what they are learning, why, and what good work looks like (for center aligned to target)

Lesson Structure/Cohesion Look Fors:
- Introduction of Target
- Activities are directly aligned to learning target and learning target is referenced during the activity
- Close with connection/reflection on learning
Develop a Focus

Determine Next Steps

Conduct Focus Walks

Share Data with Stakeholders

- **Data compilation sheet** organized by ‘look fors’
- **Data collection sheet** aligned to ‘look fors’

Introduce Staff to Focus Walks
• What next steps would you recommend based on this data?
Let’s Practice...

3c - Engaging Students in Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INEFFECTIVE</th>
<th>PROGRESSING</th>
<th>EFFECTIVE</th>
<th>HIGHLY EFFECTIVE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Activities and assignments, materials, and groupings of students are inappropriate for the instructional outcomes or students' cultures or levels of understanding, resulting in little intellectual engagement. The lesson has no structure or is poorly paced.</td>
<td>Activities and assignments, materials, and groupings of students are partially appropriate to the instructional outcomes or students' cultures or levels of understanding, resulting in moderate intellectual engagement. The lesson has a recognizable structure, but that structure is not fully maintained.</td>
<td>Activities and assignments, materials, and groupings of students are fully appropriate for the instructional outcomes and students' cultures and levels of understanding. All students are engaged in work of a high level of rigor. The lesson's structure is coherent, with appropriate pace.</td>
<td>Students, throughout the lesson, are highly intellectually engaged in significant learning, and make material contributions to the activities, student groupings, and materials. The lesson is adapted as necessary to the needs of individuals, and the structure and pacing allow for student reflection and closure.</td>
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Video (3:00 – 8:00)
Where do I start?

- Consider conducting a Ghost Walk with staff focusing on 2e: Organizing Physical Space
- Start Focus Walks targeting TESS targeting 2c: Managing Classroom Procedures and/or 2d: Managing Student Behavior
- Create a school-wide PGP Goal around Focus Walk Target
- Calendar time to conduct Focus Walks – JUST START!
High Reliability Schools (HRS) Model: Level 2

• 2.1 The school communicates a clear vision as to how teachers should address instruction

• 2.2 The school supports teachers to continually enhance their pedagogical skills through reflection and professional growth plans

• 2.3 The school is aware of and monitors predominant instructional practices

• 2.4 The school provides teachers with clear ongoing, evaluations of their pedagogical strengths and weaknesses that are based on multiple sources of data and are consistent with student achievement data

• 2.5 The school provides teachers with job-embedded professional development that is directly tied to their instructional growth goals.

• 2.6 Teachers have opportunities to observe and discuss effective teaching.
Questions