

Principals Observing Teachers and Students

Redefining the Walkthrough

Steve W. Dunn



Declare and examine a focus in your school!

Redefining the Walkthrough

As a former principal of an inner city, second language demonstration school, Steve understands that quick drive-bys do not give the teacher or principal a clear understanding of what is occurring with teaching and student engagement. Walkthroughs should never be used as evaluation but rather should be targeted based upon the professional development and focus of the school to measure growth. This eliminates teacher concern about what is being inspected and helps teachers focus on what is important. It also helps administration, coaches, and staff developers work together to create dependable high-quality learning environments.

Checklists DO NOT give deep feedback. Professional development on the Deliberate Dozen (12 overarching principle 'look fors'), regardless of what is being taught helps administration have a clearer lens as they visit the classroom. Data forms for student engagement also help teachers understand who's doing the talking. Three factors are explored regarding student engagement when direct instruction is occurring. Feedback can then be examined by the teacher for deeper reflection on student engagement patterns within the lesson.

"I can't believe how transformational these forms are – my teachers know what I'm looking for and I can very quickly get useful information that drives professional development!"

"Working with Steve completely transformed my ideas of walkthroughs! I feel like I actually have a purpose when I walk through classrooms, and the walkthroughs actually connect to our professional development goals!"

~Monika Summer, Shakopee Public Schools



"The one doing the talking is doing the learning."
Steve Dunn



Principal Assistance

When needed, principals can encourage teachers who need supports to reach out to their instructional coach. This allows coaches to continue to work with teachers who really desire to change or improve and helps redistribute coaching so they are more effective in a two-week coaching cycle.

Observations to Inform

Instruction

Walkthroughs should help form staff development plans for the year. If possible, have a group of teacher leaders, coach, and administration form a team to walkthrough at least once a month. Walkthroughs should help define and streamline the work of the PLCs.



Two Types of Data

What is the teacher saying and doing?

What are the students saying and doing?

Staff Buy-In

As the school decides on a focus (remember focus should not have a plural), teachers and administration can work together to create observational forms to use during the walkthroughs. These forms keep the focus on the building/team goals while also providing data for teams to analyze, which should be used to *design professional development around staff need*.

