



Illinois Connections Conference

Using Walkthrough Observations to
Improve Instruction

Scott Warren

- Director of Contracted Services for *HSTW/MMGW*
- Former Highly Skilled Educator in KY
- Former Principal at a *HSTW* site
- Former math and P.E. teacher
- Former basketball coach and athletic director
- Current Band Booster Club President



Changing Role of the Principal

- Few things have changed with standards-based accountability more than the role of a principal. To effectively manage a school simply isn't enough. Principals must lead instruction first!

Richard DuFour



Why Focus on Instruction

- Research on Instruction
 - SREB Research - An effective instructional leader should spend over 50% of their time working on instruction!
- It is what we can control



I'm a REALIST

- Principals would love to spend 50% of their time on instruction but:
 - Kids fight
 - Teachers complain
 - Parents think we are McSchool
 - And the 5 B's



What are the 5 B's

- **Busses**
- **Beans**
- **Balls**
- **Bucks**
- **Bathrooms**

Therefore, we must find a simple steps that send a clear message that we focus on improving instruction.

Teacher Observations

- From sporadic to continuous
- Follow-up
- Expectations must rise for teachers
- Using department leaders??????
- Interviewing students – Focus Groups
 - In which classes are you learning the most and why?
 - What can the school do to get students to work harder and learn more?
 - What is an example of the best work you have done in high school? What conditions encouraged you to do this work?
- Reflective Writing



Going Beyond Annual Observations

- Walkthroughs
 - Quick
 - Individual
 - Focused on a specific area
 - Does not need a schedule



We Need to Find Time to Walkthrough

- Finding one hour a day – easier said than done!
- If there is such a thing, what do you do on a typical school day?
 - **Brainstorm with others to make a list of your various responsibilities during a day. Try to determine approximate amount of time devoted to each activity.**



The Art of Delegation

- Can we delegate anything?
- Can we do things outside the school day?
- Is any of it “secretarial work?”
- Is any of it “supervisory” that others can do?

Two Possible Organizers

Management	Inst. Leader

	Urgent	Not-Urgent
I M P		
N I M P		



Why Walkthrough?

- Efficient use of time
- Instructional leaders must know instruction in their building
- Non-threatening
- Data
- Not Scheduled (good and bad)



The Great “Schools of Education” Myth

- The formal observation is not to evaluate a teacher, but to improve the instruction.
- Walkthroughs provide the data to improve instruction that formal observations cannot.



Words of Warning

- FOCUS
- FOCUS
- FOCUS
- FOCUS
- Make sure we are clear about our expectations.



WHY FOCUS??

- According to research all good instruction must include is:
 - Active engagement
 - Reading and Writing Strategies
 - Address the auditory, kinesthetic, visual, and tactile learners
 - Address multiple intelligences
 - Be developmentally appropriate
 - Use technology
 - Maintain time on task
 - Include student choice
 - Maintain a positive atmosphere
 - Continually include checks for understanding
 - Use new information from brain-based research
 - And many more



In Other Words

- Clearly articulate to teachers what you are looking for when you complete walkthroughs.
- How do we do that?



Types of Walkthrough

Any walkthrough provides information. The following examples give focus to a walkthrough. However, an administrator may create his/her own to address specific needs.



University of Pittsburgh (p. 4)

- Based on Lauren Resnick's work
- Focus on Clear Expectations
- Originally used with elementary schools
- Includes observing class (often with a counterpart) and student questions



Student Questions

- What are you learning?
- Why do you need to know this?
- How do you know if your work is good enough?
- See form provided
- How can we word these for high school students?
- What will we learn?

We can't practice this...

- But:
 - What other questions might you ask?
 - How can we use the information gathered?
 - How can this information impact instruction?
- Answer these three questions in your groups



Instructional Practices (p. 5)

- Focus on instructional practices
- 5 or 10 minute observations
- Various times of the day
- Only note what is observed
- Data over time
- Easy to use



Best Practices (pp. 7-13)

- Created by Highly Skilled Educators in Kentucky
- Based on Zemelman's Book (page 6)
- General or content specific
- Non-threatening
- Subliminal change in instruction
- Train staff before using



Review and Edit

- Review the various pages
- How could you use these?
- Can you edit to make them “more high school” or more “Hawaiian.”



Higher Order Thinking (pp. 14-115)

- Easy to use
- Clear data
- Focus on questioning
- Excellent when aligned with state assessments
- Teachers must have training prior to use



Using the Form

- All questions noted
 - Verbal
 - On board
 - On quizzes
 - On tests
- Keep statistics for improvement
- Set goals

To Become High Performing Schools Must:

- Go beyond students having knowledge of facts.
- 1996 Presidential Commission
 - All major test developers
 - 98% of questions were at acquisition level
 - By 2004 – Only 48% at acquisition level
 - Some states have gone beyond that already!



SAT Report

- Twelve most common words missed by students:
 - Trace, analyze, infer, evaluate, formulate, describe, support, explain, summarize, compare, contrast, predict

Classroom Assessments (and Questions) Must:

- Look like state assessments
- Ask higher level questions
- Require students to use knowledge

- A simple example:

Examples of Levels

- King Midas finds a satyr, keeps him for a week, and then returns him to the god Dionysus. Dionysus rewards Midas by granting him a wish. King Midas wants to be able to turn things into gold by simply touching them. He realizes the harm in this when he can't eat (the food turns to gold) and when he loses his daughter (who is turned into a gold statue). He requests that this power be removed from him; he returns home to find his daughter restored.



Typical Questions

- Who was the god?
- What did Midas want to do?
- What happened to his daughter?
- **BONUS:** What would you wish for if given a similar opportunity?



“Tougher” Questions

- Give comparable examples of others who have suffered because of greediness. Your examples can be real or fictional.
- Think of an alternative wish that King Midas might have requested. Analyze the request to determine some unexpected outcomes that might result from the granting of this wish?

Strategy – Assessment Alignment

- Here is a simple exercise to get teachers started on the process of raising assessments.
 - **Have all bring last two tests to a faculty meeting.**
 - **Have all highlight verbs and determine levels of questions.**
 - **Have departments work together to create higher level questions.**
 - **Set expectations for questions on assessments.**
- **Power Verbs (page 16)**



New Strategy in Planning Stage

- Rigor Audit

- Collect Classroom Assessments
- Have teams benchmark them against proficient
- SREB will model using NAEP Levels and assist schools in completing the process against state assessments.



Example – Mathematics Proficiency

- Question cues: requires use of analytical skills, drawing reasonable conclusions, making appropriate conjectures or inferences by applying logical reasoning on the basis of partial or incomplete information, requires student to defend ideas and to give supporting examples.
- Requires understanding of algebraic, statistical and geometric and spatial reasoning that is relevant to the field.
- Requires algebraic operations involving polynomials; justifying geometric relationships.
- Requires the application of scientific and technical principles to everyday situations.
- Requires judging and defending the reasonableness of answers or solutions to problems that routinely occur in the real world or chosen technical field.



Professional Development Follow-up – Specific Concerns

- Literacy Across the Curriculum (p. 17)
 - Look for specific strategies
 - Look for focus
 - You develop the look-fors

New Idea

- Evidence Boxes
 - Sample of assignment
 - Rubric
 - Sample of quality student work
 - Sample of low level student work
- Follow-up with staff looking at student work (collaboration)



Others

- Phi Delta Kappa
- Instructional Focus
- Hybrids - to address specific need such as staff development follow-up (i.e. Literacy)
- Specific concerns:
- Scripting



Follow-up

- Positive notes
- Presentations at faculty meetings
- Generic data for decisions/progress
- Determine staff development needs
- Set goals

Guidelines

- Clear Expectations to Teachers
- Not for Evaluation - little paperwork
- Visit all (include C/T and Fine Arts) over a specific time
- Create a management form
- Complete walkthroughs at various times



Using the Information

- Data to determine staff development
- Follow-up to staff development
- Implementation check of initiatives
- Specific need of school or district

Pitfalls

- Time - Time - Time
 - Move from important to priority
 - The key to failure of walkthroughs
- Never “not evaluating”
- Snapshots, not the whole movie – some lead-ins are great and the movie stinks!
- Unclear to teachers/lack of trust

Building a Schedule

Teacher	9/9	9/10	9/11	9/12	9/13
Johnson	8:30-8:45				
Bird	8:45-9:00				
Jordan	9:00-9:15				
Thomas		1:30-1:45			



Other Pitfalls

- CAVE People
- All lights are never green
- Finally!



Walkthroughs can be like marriage!

- Don't let walkthroughs follow the three stages of marriage!
- Tri-weekly
- Try weekly
- Try weakly



Questions

- Scott Warren
- 404-879-5613 (w)
- scott.warren@sreb.org

Thank you

The Balloon Ride

A man in a hot air balloon realized he was lost.

He reduced his altitude and spotted a woman below.

He descended a bit more and shouted, “Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don’t know where I am.”

The woman replied, “You are in a hot air balloon hovering about 30 feet above the ground. You are between 40 and 41 degrees north latitude and between 59 and 60 degrees west longitude.”

“You must be a teacher ” said the balloonist




“I am,” replied the woman. “How did you know?”

“Well,” answered the man, “Everything you told me is technically correct, but I have no idea what to make of your information, and the fact is I am still lost. Frankly, you haven’t been much help so far.”

The woman below responded, “You must be an administrator.”

“I am,” replied the balloonist, “but how did you know?”



“Well,” said the woman, “You don’t know where you are or where you are going. You have risen to where you are due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise which you have no idea how to keep, and you expect me to solve your problem.

The fact is you are in exactly the same position you were before we met, but now, somehow, it’s my fault.”