

How to Use Walk-Throughs to Expand Your School Leadership



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What this booklet is about

This book is about how to develop a classroom walk-through process that gives you greater influence as a school leader. You'll build respectful collaborative relationships between you and your staff as you improve learning results through formative feedback.

In 2007, the Association for Supervisions and Curriculum Development (ASCD) defined walk-throughs as “brief visits to classrooms throughout the school, two to five minutes long, conducted on a frequent basis, informal and non-evaluative, and designed to collect patterns of data that can help members of the professional learning community improve their teaching practices.”

What's missing from this dry definition are instructions in how to conduct effective walk-throughs, how to collect data through observation, how to use walk-throughs for collaboration, how to get teacher buy-in, how to aggregate data from walk-throughs, and more. The devil is in the details.

For that purpose, this book is devoted to helping you see walk-throughs in a fresh light. This content will provide you with detail about how to expand your leadership role and effectiveness using walk-throughs as a core part of your management strategy.

Congratulations!

Just by picking up this booklet—and flipping through the collection of tips, strategies and best practices that are inside—you're on your way to:

- ◆ Defining a walk-through process that achieves your goals.
- ◆ Expanding your leadership capabilities.
- ◆ Improving school performance.

1

Chapter

❖ The Real
Value of Walk-Throughs!

Chapter #1

❖ **Bring New Vigor to Your Leadership**

As a school leader, you've been tasked with an unusually complex job. You must lead a group of diverse, highly creative, and autonomous employees—which is itself a challenge for any leader.

You must lead them consistently despite a huge number of variables that seem to defy uniformity.

And you must do it while navigating the tricky political and social waters of a collaborative community of educational professionals.

Yet, much of what goes on in the classroom itself is opaque to you, and you rely on data-driven measures, such as test scores and teacher evaluations to give you a window into what's happening in the classroom.

Unfortunately, relying on test scores and teacher evaluations is like an autopsy at the end of the year. These measures tell you the results of

what happened, but not the process that led to those results. One of the biggest values of walk-throughs is that if problems are discovered early, they can be corrected and student achievement will not continue to suffer.



*Walk-throughs are separate
from formal teacher
evaluation processes.*

*They are intended to build
collaboration and quality.*



The Ideal Feedback Loop

Ideally, as an administrator, you would engage with teachers to improve teaching during the process, not at the end of the school year when the best

you can hope for is to change performance next year.

What this means for you as a leader is that **you must be in the classroom where the action is happening while it's happening**, which means doing walk-throughs. Performance can then be measured on a variety of in-process teaching metrics rather than results at the end.

Put “Process” into Your Walk-Throughs

Walk-throughs at heart are simple and they can provide exceptional opportunities for communication and collaboration.

But walk-throughs by themselves are not a panacea. Walk-throughs that are done poorly, without adequate planning, forethought, and input can cause anxiety, not just for teachers, but also for administrators.

As mentioned before, having a data-driven process will ensure that you collect the right kinds of data based on the purpose of the walk-through.

A data-driven process must describe what you plan to observe, how you will score observations, frequency of observations, and so on.

What Gets Measured, Gets Done

Walk-throughs provide a clear road-map for teacher improvement.

For instance, determining there is a problem based on an initial walk-through observation is only the beginning of the process. You then have to formulate an action to correct the problem, and continue doing walk-throughs to measure progress.

You will never know if the action taken was appropriate, unless you continue to make observations, and teachers will often not implement the new strategies unless they know that they will be monitored.

Of course, the walk-through process must include a way to record, as well as aggregate and disaggregate data so that you can compare performance on a particular metric over time.

Walk-through observation tools that allow administrators to use their smartphone or tablet (Android smartphones and tablets, iPhone, iPad, Blackberry, Palm, and Windows Mobile) to collect data in the classroom can significantly speed up and simplify the process of collecting and analyzing information.

The Real Impact of Walk-Throughs

Various experts have pointed out that student achievement and school success is enhanced when teachers get authoritative approval, work in a collaborative environment of engagement, and are able to develop relationships with other teachers. Walk-throughs can provide a framework for accomplishing some of these goals.

Essentially, if you want to have real impact, you must be involved. And the easiest, most influential way to be involved is to create a collaborative walk-through process.



Measuring lets you detect variance, record where improvement is possible, and note improvement when it happens.



To-Do Ideas:

- ◆ Evaluate your own walk-through process:

Is it primarily being used to provide corrective feedback, or is it part of an open, collaborative communication process?

How do teachers view the process?

Are you collecting and recording data consistently?

2

Chapter

❖ A Tool for
Gaining Teacher
Confidence & Support

Chapter #2

❖ 5 Powerful Perspectives on the Walk-Through Process

As an administrator, you want to be friendly and supportive of teachers, but you also want to be the clear, respected authority who inspires confidence. Walk-throughs allow you to walk that fine line. Here are 5 perspectives on designing and using walk-throughs to expand your leadership.

1. Create common cause with teachers.

Walk-throughs can be top-down, scary events for teachers. Or, alternatively, they can be opportunities for you to create a self-growth environment that teachers appreciate.

The truth is teachers know more than you do about what's going on in their classrooms. For this reason, walk-throughs can breed resentment. Teachers might think, "Who are you to come in here and judge me?"

The way to not only avoid that sentiment, but

also to build bridges is to involve teachers in developing the walk-through process, rather than making it a top-down event.

By allowing the walk-through process to be collaborative, you encourage teachers to create the ‘look fors’ that will be observed and discussed. This creates a sense of “common cause,” like we’re in this together.

You acknowledge their inherent discomfort in being observed but support them in the process of using self-reflection to improve performance.

Through collaborative design, teachers can also gain a better understanding of what you are looking for as an administrator, such as seeing if students are engaged, if students are being taught on the appropriate grade level, evidence of planning, what is on the walls of the classroom, and what they are learning as opposed to what they are doing.

2. Foster a culture that fits your vision.

It’s been proven that the culture of an organization is a direct reflection of it’s leadership. In other

words, culture is the outcome of leadership behaviors and vision, which affect the staff, who in turn affect the students.

What do you want parents and community leaders to “feel” about your school? What sort of reflection would you like on yourself? And what are the mechanisms for shaping culture?



Through communication about the walk-through process, your observations and feedback will be aligned with your vision and teacher expectations.



Culture is shaped in part through policy and procedure, but these are really just tools for communicating culture. Ultimately it's communication itself that shapes and spreads culture. As an administrator, you must create opportunities for the right kind of communication.

Walk-throughs are a communication tool. The information you gather becomes your talking points with teachers. Trends can be analyzed. Problems highlighted. Solutions discussed. Culture shaped.

Teachers become stakeholders by talking about the process and determining collectively the focus questions around which walk-through observations will be done. The collected data can drive staff meetings and can be incorporated into the school improvement plan.

3. Raise teacher engagement.

Teachers operate mostly in isolation. They have little opportunity to know whether they're doing it right or wrong, better or worse than someone else.

They hope they are. They trust they are. But it's also easy to get bogged down and into a rut. Burn-out is a real challenge.

Through creative collaboration, every teacher raises their level of interest and interaction. The 'synergy' of thinking through problems together benefits everyone especially the students — because collaboration builds energy and excitement for teaching.

The walk-through as a unifying tool can be modified to provide the right level of collaboration. For instance, peer walk-throughs can be arranged, where teachers observe one another, or different observation protocols can be used to compare teaching techniques across classrooms.

4. Eliminate communication paralysis.

Administrators are people, too. You have your own set of fears and challenges with regard to the management function, just as managers do in any industry.



Educator Susan E. Sather sees walk-throughs as “a significant step in influencing real change in schools by getting administrators close to the classroom and building their capacity to become instructional leaders.



Managing others is not easy and the feedback conversation is one of the most difficult for any leader. As an administrator, you might not have taught school in a while, possibly making you feel insecure about your instructional knowledge.

Therefore, it's enormously useful to have tools that give direction and shape to the observation and feedback process, saving you from grappling for the right things to say and the right ways to say them. A good data collection tool used during walk-throughs will let you reference specific trends instead of relying on your knowledge and skill alone to provide feedback.

The added benefit of gathering consistent data during walk-throughs is being able to speak knowledgeably about specifics to teachers as well as to parents, staff, and district officials.

5. Measurably impact performance.

Researchers Beverly Freedman and Clay LaFleur in *Making Leadership Visible and Practical: Walking for Improvement* report that truly effective change is slow, broadly collaborative and collegial, supported by data and evidence, and led by a steadfast, affiliative leadership.

Richard Elmore in *Building a New Structure for School Leadership* draws our attention to the fact that administrators spend a great deal

of time making changes to the structure of the organization, but that most of these do not result in higher student achievement. He indicates that we see higher student achievement only when we impact what is happening in the classroom.

While walk-throughs are not the only way to collaborate with teachers, they are certainly one of the most effective tools at your disposal.

To-Do Ideas:

- ◆ Evaluate the culture of your school. Does it reflect your vision?
- ◆ Consider if a walk-through program could enhance your leadership and the synergy between you and your staff.

3

Chapter

❖ Use Smart Data
to Make Wise Decisions

Chapter #3

❖ Good Data Drives Quality

Observations have long been a tool for improving teacher performance. Unfortunately, they have more often than not been somewhat arbitrary and infrequently executed. New tools are changing that picture so that walk-throughs are becoming a key part of school improvement, through consistent implementation and data collection.

Data Collection Complexity

As with any data-driven analysis, the more data points you have, the better. An individual classroom walk-through provides a single snapshot of what is happening in a class on a particular day. But the observation might be quite different during a different class activity or on a different day. For this reason, a series of walk-throughs provides a more realistic view than an occasional visit.

But collecting and comparing data across a series of visits means you have a complex data

collection and analysis process to contend with. It will be important to have a robust data collection and analysis tool.

For instance, suppose you wanted to collect data about the 'management of student behavior.' A web-based observation tool accessed through your smartphone or tablet could contain a drop-down list with ratings, such as Unsatisfactory, Satisfactory, Excellent.

Depending on which rating you select, an appropriate checklist would appear, allowing you to select the items that substantiate your rating. Selecting 'Excellent,' for example, would present a checklist of items that would let you give positive feedback to staff.

Selecting 'Unsatisfactory' could display such items as:

- ◆ Chaos in the classroom.
- ◆ Teacher does not acknowledge the breaking of classroom rules.

- ◆ When teacher acknowledges classroom violations, nothing is done about it.
- ◆ Students talk out-of-turn with no consequences.
- ◆ Students do not remain in their seats.
- ◆ Cell phone use disrupts teaching without consequences.

These items will help you coach the teacher with specific suggestions.

In addition, when your data collection tool allows for it, you can aggregate data from different classrooms, showing you if these behaviors are prevalent among teachers at your school. Additionally, you could disaggregate the data and report by teacher or by grade.

Most important, when you are using a robust walk-through tool, you can periodically run a time-line report and hope to see significant improvement as you make your staff aware of

the problems being observed.

Data Helps Answer Strategic Questions

As part of your leadership role, you routinely consider quality-focused questions that need data-driven answers. These questions include:

- ◆ Where are we doing a good job with instruction?
- ◆ What should receive priority in our school improvement plan?
- ◆ What direction should we take for staff development?

By designing an observation tool around these kinds of specific questions, you can collect a body of data that gives you a complete picture of the school.

Over time, you will get a kind of “album” of your school’s strengths, patterns of practice, and

needs, which you can use to engage with the district, and provide planning direction for the school. Instead of making guesses or arbitrary decisions, you can refer to the data to support your positions and lend credibility to your plans.

Data Interpretation Is an Opportunity for Collaborative Leadership

Data still requires interpretation. You have plenty of room in the walk-through process for making quality decisions by using the data to drive discussions.

Data can be used to drive the topic of staff meetings, can drive training and in-service plans, and can provide individual teachers with personal development goals.

But data is only as good as the way it's used. Consider the data from walk-throughs to be a starting point for discussions, and emphasize that it's part of a process.



“Teachers benefit [from walk-throughs] by learning to use reflection to increase their knowledge, skills, and performance; strategically aligning classroom instruction to district curriculum; and increasing student learning across grade levels.”

*~ Kathy Larson of the
Cooperative Education
Service Agency, Wisconsin*



Use The Right Tool for a Data-Driven Process

If you plan to run your school at peak efficiency and quality, it's enormously useful to use a powerful observation tool that lets you collect data consistently and in a form that is easy to aggregate, disaggregate, analyze, and interpret.

The eWalk[®] is one such tool, allowing you to design observation programs, collect data through your smartphone or tablet, and run analysis processes. The output can be emailed to individuals or groups. Reports can be generated as visual charts that are a great jumping off point for discussions.

To-Do Ideas:

- ◆ Consider your strategic planning questions. Would walk-through data help you plan?
- ◆ Evaluate your observation tools. Do they allow for various purposes, like teacher collaboration, resource evaluation, teacher performance improvement, etc?

4

Chapter



Examples of
Successful Walk-
Through Models

Chapter #4

❖ A Variety of Purpose-Driven Walk-Through Models and Philosophies

Here are several examples of successful walk-through models. Notice that while all of the experts cited here agree that walk-throughs are an effective way to improve teaching and learning, they all have unique and often different philosophies. Indeed there is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to walk-through models.

- Shirley Hord, Scholar Emerita at the Southwest Education Development Laboratory and the Scholar Laureate for the National Staff development council states:

The concept of getting principals into classrooms is a good one and should be encouraged. However, if the walk-through is become of her perfunctory, four to five minute visit, with the slip of paper handed to the teacher with no follow-up conversation, we think that sends the wrong message. Without substantial conversations about real classroom practice, not much transfer,

reflection, or application to teaching practice will occur.

- Ruby Payne, an expert on poverty and mindsets of economic classes, reflects on her use of walk-throughs:

As a former principal, I did walk-throughs on a daily basis but did not always use a checklist. Checklists are incredibly valuable for all teachers, but particularly for beginning teachers as they help them know what to pay attention to in the classroom. Of particular note for students in poverty is the nature of the relationships in the classroom. The research is clear that if the teacher is perceived by at-risk students as cold and controlling, the student will not learn, even if the teacher's pedagogy is excellent.

- Mike Schumacher, in his book 'Results now: How we can achieve unprecedented improvements in teaching and learning,' says:

We are looking for school-wide patterns with respect to two things: (1) the general quality and substance of instruction; and (2) students' attentiveness—are most of them on task?

- Todd Whitaker, professor of Educational Leadership, Indiana State University says:

In addition to asking individual teachers to observe several of their colleagues well engaged in teaching lessons, we have also found it useful for teachers and administrators to conduct small-group focused classroom walks. In such focused observations, typically a small group (ideally between three and six) of educators visit a teacher's classroom for a group observation. Conducted on a school-wide level, focused classroom walks can be a powerful way to observe firsthand what we are doing in classrooms throughout the building in terms of specific areas of instruction.

- In 'Classroom walk-throughs: Learning to see the trees and the forest,' Howard Pitler says:

The purpose of a walk-through is not to pass judgment on teachers, but to coach them to higher levels of performance. Walk-throughs are not teacher evaluations, they are a method of identifying opportunities for improvement and supporting the sharing of best practices across the school.

Additional Walk-Through Philosophies and Models

A principal in Rhode island uses small walk-through teams of teachers observing each other's classrooms guided by questions derived from school-based meetings. Following these observations the entire teaching staff has rich discussions about what is working and what is not working and where they must make plans for improving instruction.

The classroom walk-through developed by Carolyn Downey has the specific purpose of helping teachers learn to reflect proactively on teaching practices before implementing them in the classroom. These walk-throughs are short informal observations, with a focus on curriculum and instruction and include time for reflection.

In Seattle Washington, a principal uses a walk-through that encourages self reflection and builds teacher capacity. Useful 'look-fors' are agreed upon during planned, focused conversations between administration and the teacher to be observed. Look-fors can come from individual

teachers as they set goals relative to their own improvement and expertise, from the grade level teams instructional goals; or from the entire staff as a means to school improvement. When look-fors are established building-wide, the administration provides both individual and school-wide feedback.

Teacher Walks

When a teacher observes another teacher, they can get good teaching ideas that they never thought of themselves, or see things that don't work and perhaps they too are guilty of using.

Teacher walks offer a way of having non-threatening classroom observations and also afford teacher 'walkers' to glean new ideas for their own teaching.

Teacher-walks provide staff with opportunities to learn from each other and can transition them from a culture of isolation to a culture of collaboration and support, especially for new teachers. Most teachers are 'voracious idea-scroungers,' and any useful idea or technique

that they observe in a colleague's classroom will eventually impact their own teaching strategies.

Summary of Walk-Through Models

Some models are designed to support research and instructional practices found to positively impact student learning. Other models focus more directly on the school's desire for a deeper



Some of the most valuable information can be recorded by asking students relevant questions about what they are learning from the lesson you are observing.



reflective understanding of their structural and curricular practices with regard to student development. In addition to teaching practice, several models have shifted their walk-through data collection to student behaviors, student responses, and student interviews.

Most successful walk-through models provide information that is recorded and shared in an electronic format to give a real-time picture of the state of instruction in the school.

When an electronic tool is used (such as eWalk[®]), data points can be quickly aggregated, disaggregated and shared with all members of the learning community to identify needs, major progress, and set staff development priorities.

To-Do Ideas:

- ◆ Consider the most pressing needs of your school. Which walk-through models might help you gather relevant data for improving in these areas?
- ◆ Review research-based walk-through strategies by experts in the field.

5

Chapter

- ❖ Protocols for
Conducting
a Classroom
Walk-Through

Chapter #5

❖ How to Do a Walk-Through

So far, we've talked a lot about what a walk-through is, and the variety of ways it can be used. We have not yet touched on the protocols for doing a walk-through in the classroom itself.

Walk-through protocols refer to the way walk-throughs are conducted. The decisions you make about protocols are, of course, related to your purpose and the walk-through models you've chosen to use.

Some walk-through models have a single observer while others have a team. And, while the usual observer is an administrator, there are models that have teachers observing their peers and even students observing the classrooms.

So again, the protocol relates to the purpose: What do you want to find out about, and who can best collect appropriate data?

For instance, students would be capable of collecting data with regard to student engagement or classroom rapport. But they would not be in a position to collect data about pedagogy, alignment to standards, or the use of higher-order thinking skills by the teacher.

Here are some things to think about when considering your own walk-through protocols:

- ◆ Length and frequency of walk-throughs.
- ◆ Observations tools and techniques.
- ◆ Announced vs. unannounced observations.
- ◆ Walk-through follow-up.

The Length and Frequency of Walk-Throughs

Although most models define the length of a classroom observation as being three to five minutes, there are some who prefer times as high as twenty minutes. The length of time depends on the focus of the observation.

For instance, Dr. Robert Marzano promotes what he calls instructional rounds. In Marzano's view:

During instructional rounds, small groups of teachers make relatively brief observations of their fellow teachers. These observations are longer than a typical "walk-through" (i.e., longer than a few minutes), but usually shorter than an entire class period. When engaged in rounds, groups of teachers conduct as many substantive observations of classrooms as possible within part of a day or the entire day.

Observation Tools and Techniques

Virtually all successful walk-throughs are conducted by being unobtrusive and minimizing the impact on learning and teaching.

Some experts advocate staying at the back of the room, while others claim that by remaining at the back of the room you are unable to see the students' faces and their interaction with the instruction. Some experts suggest moving to different places throughout the room.



Administrators are under extreme pressure to increase school performance, which requires time-intensive supervisory processes. Better tools will makes the walk-through process both efficient and effective.



When it comes to recording observation data in the classroom, teachers can get anxious and distracted if the observer is standing there scribbling profuse notes during the visit.

Some observers avoid the issue by recording nothing until they leave the classroom. However, most successful walk-through models use hand-held smartphones and tablets to check off 'look-fors' and make anecdotal notes if necessary.

Collecting data electronically allows for uniform and unobtrusive data collection on the spot, as opposed to making long-hand notes in the classroom or trying to remember what you wanted to say afterwards.

Furthermore, it makes the task of assembling, analyzing, and retrieving data quick and effortless, allowing you to easily access and view observations over time.

Announced Vs. Unannounced Observations

There are opinions for each, but which one you choose would depend on your purpose and the culture of comfort and trust in your school. If the

teachers are well aware of what you are looking for, advanced notice might not be an issue. One principal puts it this way:

As long as the walk-through process is never confused or overlapped with evaluation or assessment, I think the idea of announced or unannounced becomes less significant. I think that the question of announced vs unannounced is another way of asking how can we make teachers trust the process of learning through professional learning communities.

Walk-Through Follow-Up

Teachers might wonder, “What was that about?”, when a principal visits their classroom and leaves without comment. The opportunity for school improvement is lost without systematic feedback.

A written summary of the observation paired with a conversation about the visit are powerful feedback tools. Candid feedback from a walk-through observation can enlighten teachers to their own practices and is a powerful tool for school improvement.

Most walk-through models advocate following up soon after the observation to reduce teacher anxiety. But what is “soon?”

Experts often suggest following up with a conversation within the next day or two. However, if you make 10 four-minute walk-throughs a day, it might not be possible to follow-up with all ten teachers in that time frame.

For this reason, it’s attractive to many administrators to be able to email a copy of the observation form showing what was recorded during the observation, along with a quick positive note, such as “I enjoyed my brief visit to your classroom!”

Observers who have the capability to do so will typically send this email to the teacher within an hour or so of concluding the visit. It’s an efficient use of time that is much appreciated by teachers who naturally feel anxious after an observation.

Robust walk-through software like eWalk[®] has the ability to provide charts that illustrate walk-through data, giving teachers a quick visual of their progress.

To-Do Ideas:

- ◆ Try different walk-through protocols to discover what works best in your environment.
- ◆ Consider how you would provide follow up and feedback from walk-throughs.

6

Chapter

❖ Creating
Meaningful
Observation Criteria

Chapter #6

❖ How to Use Walk-Through Templates and ‘Look-For’ Elements

When using electronic walk-through tools, the observation instruments are called ‘templates’ and are made from a variety of elements. The elements are your ‘look-fors’ based on what you are trying to accomplish and the data you’re interested in gathering.

Having these templates stored on a smartphone or tablet allows you to unobtrusively collect data by using simple check boxes, check lists, drop down lists, and other features, such as anecdotal notes. The templates allow you to collect data uniformly across a series of observations.

What to Look For?

But before you begin to construct and populate your template, you must decide: What do you want to know? What is it you hope to accomplish by doing this series of walk-throughs? What will you focus on?

Walk-throughs can focus on a variety of things, including:

- Teaching skills
- Student learning
- Special education
- Non-classroom activities
- Resources
- Planning
- Multiple focuses at one time

Once you decide on the purpose of your walk-through, you can identify the specific and discreet 'look fors,' and build the template to collect that data.

Templates can be created for specific groups, such as an observation template just for special education kids, or one just for student teachers, or one for use during peer observations, called 'teacher walks.'

An element needs to meet the following criteria:

- ◆ **Is it meaningful?** Meaningful data is that which makes a difference with regards to how it impacts student learning.
- ◆ **Is it measurable?** Measurable data is data that varies, and is an observable capable of change.
- ◆ **Is it actionable?** An actionable item is something that you can do something about. In the case of teaching, it would be something that could be changed or improved.
- ◆ **Is it observable?** Observable data is something that is detected by one or more of your 5 senses. While this may seem obvious, here's why it's an important point:

You may be able to enter a classroom and immediately know that the teacher is not prepared for the lesson—you can just 'sense' it. But if you simply say "The teacher didn't seem prepared," how would that help the teacher improve? In this case, preparedness would have to be defined with

observable items as:

- Is there a lesson plan for this date ?
- Is the teaching based on the lesson plan ?
- Does the lesson plan relate to the curriculum?
- Is the lesson plan aligned to standards?
- Are the materials required for the lesson available?



Teacher evaluations
determine competence,
but walk-throughs foster
professional development
and growth.



Designing a Template

Once you know what to look for, you'll need to create a template that allows you to gather the right data effectively.

For example, Which questions can be answered by a yes/no choice or a series of number choices? Which questions require a detailed list of choices? What are the right rubrics for those choices?

When using a robust electronic observation tool, there are a variety of features that can be used for designing a template to capture this data.

The following examples of data collection features are drawn from the eWalk[®] tool, which makes questions/content fully and easily customizable to each reflect individual walk-through requirements. Depending on the tool you use, you may have fewer or different options than those described below.

Simple Check Boxes

Sometimes you simply need to identify and track the presence or absence of something, or answer

a quick yes/no question. Adding an “on or off” type of checkbox to your template makes that easy.

Checklists

2. Learning and thinking skills

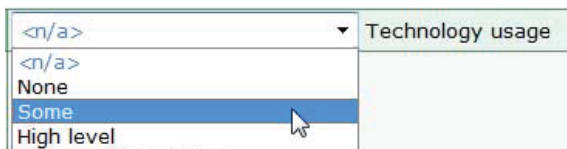
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Critical thinking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Problem solving	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication
<input type="checkbox"/> Creativity/innovation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/> Contextual learning
<input type="checkbox"/> Information/media literacy		

A checklist is typically a series of checkboxes in a list. This enables you to choose as many of the items as you wish, and the list has all the possible options. The checklist has more detail than a simple checkbox, and that is the main purpose—to record all the possible detail that could be observed for a particular item.

For example, suppose you checked a checkbox that said ‘Technology is used during the lesson.’ Then, if you attached a checklist of technological items to this element, you could indicate exactly which technology was being used in the lesson, such as computers, scanners, digital cameras, LCD projector, the internet, and email.

Checklists can be used to provide even more detail because they can be used to record how many of each item was being used, or to even rate each item being used such as ‘needs repair,’ ‘needs replacement,’ or ‘in good condition.’

Drop-Down Lists



Drop down lists offer several choices for one data point. For instance, “Teacher conveys content’s importance” might have a rating list that says:

- Not applicable
- Unsatisfactory
- Basic
- Proficient
- Distinguished

Drop-Down Lists with Rubrics

Proficient ▾ Goals and objectives			
Exceeds Almost all of the time objectives and goals include basic knowledge/skills and central themes/concepts of the discipline.	Proficient Most of the time objectives and goals include basic knowledge/skills and central themes/concepts of the discipline.	Below Some of the time objectives and goals include basic knowledge/skills and central themes/concepts of the discipline.	Unsatisfactory Less than half of the time objectives and goals include basic knowledge/skills and central themes/concepts of the discipline.

Furthermore, you might want to add rubrics to further define your choices. Instead of just saying “Basic” you could add a defining rubric such as, “Teacher communicates the importance of the work with little conviction and students react accordingly.”

Combined Drop-Down Lists and Checklists

Yes ▾ Effective instruction strategies observed	
<input type="checkbox"/> ID Similarities & Differences	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative Learning
<input type="checkbox"/> Summarizing & Note Taking	<input type="checkbox"/> Setting Objectives & Providing Feedback
<input type="checkbox"/> Reinforcing Effort & Providing Recognition	<input type="checkbox"/> Generating & Testing Hypothesis
<input type="checkbox"/> Homework & Practice	<input type="checkbox"/> Cues, Questions & Advance Organizers
<input type="checkbox"/> Nonlinguistic Representation	

You can also combine drop-down lists and checklists. The drop-down list with checklist allows you to have a checklist for each item in the drop down.

For example, if you are collecting data about student grouping, the drop-down choices might be ‘whole class,’ ‘pairs,’ and ‘small groups’. There could then be a checklist for each of the

groupings and each checklist could be different according to the type of grouping.

Note: These features, including anecdotal note-taking, are available in the eWalk[®]. Other tools may or may not have these data collection options available.

Manual Text Input Fields



1. Engaged with lesson 

The presentation was so entertaining, it was impossible not to be engaged !

The screenshot shows a light blue header bar with the text '1. Engaged with lesson' and a green checkmark icon on the right. Below the header is a large, empty white rectangular text input field with a thin grey border. The text 'The presentation was so entertaining, it was impossible not to be engaged !' is visible at the top of the input field, suggesting it is a placeholder or a sample entry.

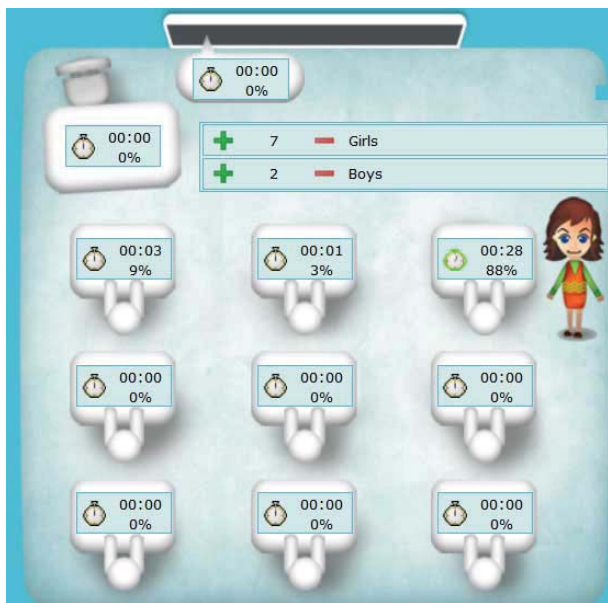
These fields would be used sparingly in your walk-through reporting. Imagine that you recorded the subject as ‘math’ in one place, ‘mathematics’ in another place, and ‘Maths’ in yet another place. All of these would be interpreted as different subjects on the report. For the purposes of generating reports, it’s best to use drop-down lists and checklists for uniformity.

Of course, manually inputting text is fine for making notes, such as something you want to ask for clarification about. But if it’s data you intend to track using reporting functions, use uniform data collection features.

Manual Number Input Fields

These are limited to numbers only. In this way, you can isolate specific numerical data in your reporting.

Timers and Counters



Timer/counters are a series of specialized elements that provide you with the ability to count (the number increases each time you tap the '+' icon, and decreases each time you tap the '-')

icon), and to time events (the timer stop watch starts timing the first time you tap the timer icon, and stops when you tap it a second time.)

A robust timing tool, like the one contained in the eWalk[®], will allow you to make comparisons among areas of focus in the classroom.

For instance, the eWalk[®] provides a visual of a classroom divided into a grid of 9 areas. You can use this to compare such things as how much time the teacher spends in each area engaging or making eye contact.

You can even time the period between when the teacher asks a question and one of several pre-defined actions occurs, such as ‘the teacher answers,’ ‘ a student answers,’ or ‘the teacher gives a prompt.’

Remember Why You’re Doing It

All of these features are simply tools that help you or others in the walk-through program define and measure teacher and student interactions for the purpose of improving instruction and quality.

7

Chapter

❖ The eWalk®
—a Walk-Through
Power Tool

Chapter #7

❖ eWalk® Is the Complete Walk-Through Tool

Throughout this book, you've seen a variety of ideas and tips for using walk-throughs to enhance your leadership, improve teacher performance, and increase collaboration. We hope these ideas have encouraged you to consider enhancing your walk-through program.

We also hope that we've demonstrated the value of collecting data uniformly, using consistent observation criteria that is meaningful, measureable, actionable, and observable.

We've emphasized that data collection and analysis tools are more effective when you can create robust templates, store and retrieve data easily, and email your recorded data soon after completion of a visit.

Using a powerful tool like the eWalk® allows you to collect, manage, and analyze data from

multiple walk-throughs. The intuitive interface, the simplicity of the reporting features, and extras, such as an extremely useful *web-based interface with offline clients for handheld devices*, the ability to interface with Media-X's formal *assessment instrument*, and a new *polling feature* make the eWalk[®] the most effective walk-through observation and management tool on the market.

Reporting

The versatility of eWalk's reporting is one of its most appreciated strengths. Users can control the look of the report graphs by the data collection methods used.

On the following page is a graph which was derived from a drop down list of classroom formats.

This example comes from a district-wide aggregation of data from 5049 walk-throughs. It could easily have been filtered to use data from particular schools, grades, subjects or teachers.

Overall Template Report

Graph Output Type	Report Type	Display Value
Animated	Standard Report	Exclude null values
Select Site		Select Subject
All Sites		All Subjects
Filter by Grade Level		Filter by Subject
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade 8	<input type="checkbox"/> -Select Subject-	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade 9	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Education	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grade 10	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Math	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade 11	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Science	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade 12	<input type="checkbox"/> Language Arts	

Apply Filters Print Print as PDF Save As Close

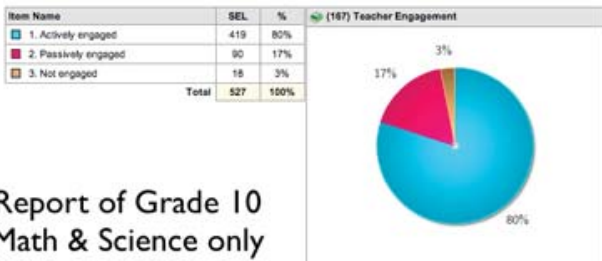
: The ability to view notes for an element or click [here](#) to view the notes for 'Note!'.

Page 1

Gates walkthrough Revision 1 (536 walk-throughs)

From August 1st 2004 to May 18th 2011

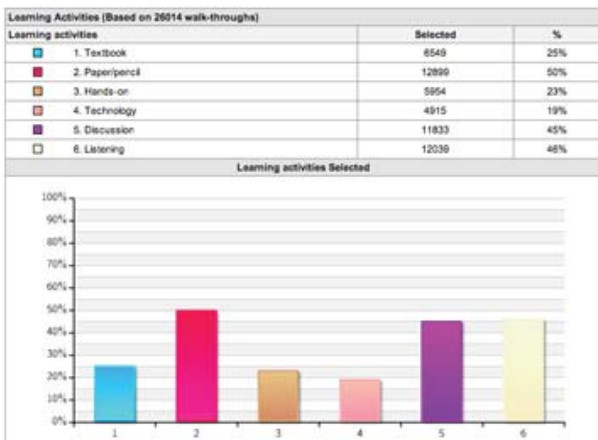
Drop Down List



Report of Grade 10 Math & Science only

When checklists are used to collect data, bar charts are produced. The example on the next page shows the aggregation of data regarding classroom materials.

As you can see from these samples, the graphs and charts render aggregated data in easy to read, visual formats.



Web-Based Interface

With a non-web-based walk-through system, data gathered by observers is stored on individual hard drives, stored on paper in files, or simply forgotten before it's written down.

And even when the data can be retrieved, only the observer who owns the file has access to it. If others collect walk-through data in the school, they alone have access to the data.

While one person could be given the responsibility to be 'the keeper of the data,' the complications

of assimilating, aggregating and reporting back to individuals make this tedious, time consuming and in the end, very impractical.

Alternatively, when the web is used, all observers can upload their data into a single system, and the system aggregates it automatically.

Moreover, those who are authorized can access the data immediately, and they can query the data themselves for their own tabulations and graphs.

Web-based walk-through observations permit the sharing of standardized forms and templates, so that everyone is collecting comparable data that can be accurately analyzed. Rubrics within these templates ensure all observers know exactly what they are looking for and precisely how to rate what they observe.

Standardized Templates Lead to Uniform Data Collection

Electronic observation templates are essentially standardized forms that are easy to use and facilitate the rapid collection of observations.

Without structure, observers may simply record data that stuck out because it was unusual or amusing. If the data were purely anecdotal, it would be incredibly tedious to analyze as each comment would have to be manually scrutinized and then categorized into the appropriate areas.

eWalk[®] templates have the flexibility of not only collecting standardized data, but also the facility to record anecdotal notes about any of the pieces of standardized data. This preserves the ability to make anecdotal notes.

Integration with Assessment

eWalk[®] is integrated with the Media-X formal assessment instrument, mVal[®]. When using mVal[®], eWalk[®] observations are always available to provide additional information about any of the dimensions that are being evaluated formally.

If eWalk[®] has been used during the course of the year, then the time line reports can indicate if the teacher has been making progress in any of the dimensions that are under review. Thus eWalk[®] can be used as a tracking and monitoring system to verify progress or substantiate difficulties.

Polling

Media-X has just created a survey system that works with both 'QR' barcodes for those with a smart-phone, or text messaging for those with a text-only cell phone.

The system allows you to build a questionnaire on the web. Then our system generates a QR code for the questionnaire that you can either project on a screen or print on a handout.

Imagine being at a staff meeting where participants can either:

1. Use their smartphone to take a picture of the QR code and immediately go to the questionnaire online
2. Use their text-only phone to text 'abc' to the provided telephone number and immediately get the first question. Once answered (typically with 1 for YES and 2 for NO), they get the next question.

Meanwhile, you can project the results on a graph in real-time as the responses come in from the participants.

Polling can be a fun way to generate discussions and interactions and the anonymity of teachers using voting technology allows staff to answer honestly. Polling facilitates the engagement of those who may be reticent to participate in group discussions. It also eliminates ‘follow-the-leader’ voting when data is collected with a show of hands. An unexpected outcome of a polling exercise is the group bonding and communication about the poll and it is an excellent ice-breaker at staff meetings.

In addition to live events, you can use polling with staff by sending the QR code or text code by email.

Conclusion

eWalk[®] from Media-X Systems, is an easy-to-use system for collecting, analyzing and storing data.

Media-X Systems products are built around our own web-based platform, mxWeb, which provides robust web-based performance and provides secure connectivity to handheld and desktop clients. Our products are used extensively by K-12 educators across the US and Canada, and soon in the UK and New Zealand.

Our top selling product, eWalk[®], is a flexible data gathering and reporting tool with handheld clients for most smartphones and tablets including Android, iPhone, iPad, Blackberry, Palm, and Windows Mobile.

eWalk[®] also features a desktop client for use with tablets, netbooks and laptops. eWalk[®] provides mobility for most of the MXWEB product line. Currently Media-X products are used in more than 2,000 School Districts and well over 10,000 schools. We work closely with customers on new features and evolving requirements for web-based and mobile enhanced features. eWalk[®] allows schools to ‘digitize’ their current classroom observation forms to incorporate their own existing terminology, focus, descriptors and initiatives.

eWalk[®] includes a variety of built-in statistical reports, including cross tabulations, comparisons, etc. Each data element is presented numerically and visually. For greater control, Media-X can provide eWalk[®] statistical reports customized for your organization.

Some of the key features of eWalk® are:

- ◆ Conduct school or district-wide walk-throughs/ data collection analysis.
- ◆ Use instant built-in reports and or export aggregated data for more granular analysis.
- ◆ Create custom data-collection templates and share these with all, or a group of users.
- ◆ No programming required anywhere—just point and click!



Ultimately, the greatest advantage to using eWalk[®] is creating a community of collaboration and instructional excellence, fostered by a well-designed walk-through process.



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About Media-X Systems

We're turning walk-throughs and informal observations into data you can use. The eWalk® from Media-X Systems is an easy-to-use system for collecting, analyzing and storing data. The eWalk® is currently being used in over 10,000 schools.