

**LEARNING WALKS AND TALKS
IN PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS**



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LEADERS

Metro Region, Qld. Australia

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A Primary and Secondary School

LEARNING WALKS AND TALKS

Learning Walks and Talks provide an opportunity for administrators to be involved in a program developing and enhancing leadership competencies by focusing on reciprocal and respectful relationships. It is an approach for leaders to use to engage in reflective inquiry with teachers to positively impact student achievement and support the learning culture within each school. It creates an explicit framework to observe and talk about teaching decisions in and across classrooms that promote learning together as teachers and administrators.

Learning Walks and Talks help instructional leaders understand how they can best support assessment-based instruction that takes place in classrooms.

Practice sessions focus on:

- understanding classroom practice;
- building a common language;
- reflecting on developing patterns and trends in a school;
- asking students 5 questions to determine how assessment-capable they are
- asking teachers reflective questions about practice;
- giving constructive feedback to formulate a plan for next steps; and
- defining the support that an administrator (lead learner) can provide to teachers and students.

As well, relationships are built and improvement occurs when many educators care about the focus and work in each other's schools.

Learning Walks and Talks culminate in reflective conversations which engage professional communities to elaborate, extend, apply and evaluate their thinking to create new knowledge and to go beyond what they already know. Teachers are able to articulate what they do in their classrooms and why they teach the way they do by thinking about the criteria they use to make decisions every single day in their planning and teaching to impact student learning (Parameter # 1: Sharratt & Fullan, 2009, 2012). Leaders need to be able to do the same – and add it to their Circle of Practice.

PROCESS**REFLECTIONS****STAGE ONE****Pre-Conversation with “Walkers”:**

- What is the context of the school?
- What is the school focus within its School Improvement Plan (SIP)?
- What is your Action Research/Collaborative Inquiry question?
- What can we expect to see?

STAGE TWO**A focus on data:**

- What is the school’s SMART goal?
- What does the student data and evidence tell you?
- What evidence exists to support teachers using assessment data to differentiate instruction?
- What is the focus of our Walk? What would you like feedback on?

STAGE THREE

Protocols for the Learning Walk and Talk include:

- Notifying “Walkers” of any classrooms that may be closed for the Walk on this day
- Walking in each classroom for 3-5 minutes in groups of 3-5 people (Note: when there are no “Walkers”, leaders do Walks and Talks often throughout the school week to get a sense of the patterns of classroom practice)
- Focusing on observing and talking with students only – not each other or the teacher
- Asking students, when appropriate, **5 Key Questions:**
 - What are you learning?**
 - How are you doing?**
 - How do you know?**
 - How can you improve?**
 - Where do you go for help when you have a question?**
- Note-taking occurs in the hallway/meeting room afterwards – **not** in classrooms!
- Discussion with teachers can happen after many Walks and **not** while they are teaching.

PROCESS**REFLECTIONS****STAGE FOUR****Making notes and having focused conversations in the meeting after the Walks. Think about the following:**

Students:

- What did you observe the students doing?
- What are the students learning?
- Are the students able to articulate their learning?
- What are the students saying and to whom?
- What student work was in view? Was there Descriptive Feedback on work?
- What evidence exists to indicate that instruction is adjusted to reflect the level of student skill and knowledge?

Teachers:

- What is the teacher doing?
- What is the teacher saying and to whom?
- What instructional decisions is the teacher making?
- What student work is in view?
- What did you note about the classroom environment?
- What evidence shows that instruction is informed by diagnostic and formative assessment data?
- What decisions are teachers making about instruction that is differentiated using assessment data?

5 Key Questions for teachers:

- What are you teaching?**
- Why are you teaching it?**
- How are you teaching it? What if students haven't learned it?**
- How can you improve?**
- Where do you go for help?**

PROCESS	REFLECTIONS
STAGE FOUR continued	
<p>Participate in a facilitated conversation based on the observations and evidence identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin with “what did you see” (i.e.) “I noticed that...”; “students are able to...”; “a pattern in the primary division or in the school is...” • What reflective question(s) would you like to ask the teacher to help you understand his/her instructional decisions? • What is the Professional Learning that could be implemented to support staff in going deeper? 	
STAGE FIVE	
<p>Developing an Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What learning is necessary for the Next Steps to be implemented in this school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – for the administrators/leadership team? – for the teachers? – for the students? • What strategies will you use to build collective capacity? • What expertise can you find in the School Board/District/Diocese to support your learning? • How will you know that you are moving in the right direction? • Observers return at a later date to support the implementation and monitoring of the Action Plan developed. 	

PROCESS	REFLECTIONS
<p>STAGE SIX</p> <p>Consolidating the learning from the Walk and Talk for the school's next level of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the learning for us as a school? • What is the next level of work that needs to happen? • What do we need to implement more deeply? • Based on the data, what Collaborative Inquiry questions should we ask first? • Are there any classrooms here that could be recommended as 'Demonstration Classrooms'? 	