Support Document 6 - Learning Walks

Learning Walks: Good Practice Guidelines

Introduction
Learning walks are a way of sharing good practice and supporting the development of teaching on a particular topic or of measuring the impact of CPD. The “walkers” might include staff from across the college and include members of SLT and ELT.

The focus of a learning walk is always supposed to be positive and developmental and is not part of the performance management system unless it has been agreed in advance.

The purpose of a Learning Walk
- The purpose of the walk will be linked with college improvement priorities.
- In the main, learning walks are used to focus on specific aspect of teaching, learning and assessment and complement the OLTA process and Professional Practice Squares. Within normal college quality assurance processes it is often necessary to be able to judge the effectiveness of staff CPD, curriculum innovations or developments in learning, teaching and assessment, learning styles etc., this can often be done through the use of a short ‘focused stop’ in timetabled sessions across the college.
- Whilst learning walks can be conducted by one individual there is often great value in two professionals discussing what they see through the learning walk. Staff undertaking learning walks should be sensitive to the number of occasions when more than one person conducts a learning walk and the number of occasions learning walks occurs.
- Ideally, learning walks will be built in to the college improvement cycles at the annual planning stage or developed as a result of a specific school issue coming to light.
- The notes from the learning walk will take the form of evidence lists of ‘what is seen’ and short commentary boxes to help build an overall college picture of emerging themes.

The Process for Conducting Learning Walks

Notice
Staff will be provided with one weeks’ notice that Learning Walks will be taking place and the specific theme for the learning walk.

1. Pre-Walk Discussion- 15 minutes
   This should take place prior to the Learning Walks. All walkers involved should have a clear understanding of:
   - Protocols and purpose for the walk - brainstorming possible observations to link to the focus
   - Names of the walkers
   - Sessions to be visited
   - All walkers should be given a Learning Walk Handbook with the template for gathering evidence during the walk.

2. Session Visits – 60 Minutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>PROCESS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes in each classroom (4 classrooms)</td>
<td>The walkers visit each classroom for 10 minutes. They 'look &amp; listen' to the learning and take notes on any evidence that links 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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 minutes corridor talk in between each session</td>
<td>When walkers leave each session, 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 judgements.</td>
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</table>
3. Post Walk Discussion - 30 minutes
   At the end of the session visits, all walkers convene for a debriefing session. They share the observations collected and identify any patterns which may have emerged. Emerging themes may then be formulated based on the evidence. Conclusions are not formed. All evidence and emerging themes are collated by the Lead Walker.

4. Visited Practitioners' Reflection- Optional
   Feedback may be shared with practitioners prior to overall cross-college analysis being shared. The practitioners are asked to read and discuss feedback, identifying how professional practice can be improved through further CPD.

5. Overall Analysis and Summary Report
   Within one week of the Learning Walk, the collated evidence, emerging themes and analysis are shared with practitioners across the college identifying how professional practice can be improved through further CPD.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Lead Walker
   This will be either a member of ELT/SLT or the core observation team. The lead walker will ensure that the evidence and analysis is based only on what is observed in the session and ensure that the walking team do not make unwarranted judgements or assumptions.

   The Lead walker will ensure:
   - that staff in scope for the learning walk receives the one week notice of the learning walk window and the theme/focus for the walk
   - that walkers are familiar with the focus of the walk and evidence to be collected
   - all walkers have read this guidance and are familiar with how to complete the template
   - all walkers are reminded of the protocols which must be observed
   - all walkers are on time and follow the correct process of a Learning Walk
   - all discussions are based on evidence, free of judgement and evaluation
   - collated feedback is shared with staff within one week of the walk.

2. Walking Team
   This will normally be an Advanced Practitioner, Learning Innovation Mentor, IQLV or member of ELT/SLT

   The Walking Team will:
   - participate in Pre Walk Discussion;
   - be familiar with the focus of the walk;
   - be familiar with the guidance and are familiar with how to complete the template;
   - be mindful of the protocols;
   - be mindful of time and process of Learning Walk;
   - base discussions on evidence, free of judgement and evaluation;
   - may assist Lead Walker to share feedback with staff within one week of walk.
Gathering Evidence

The purpose of the session visit is to obtain a brief snapshot of the classroom in order to collect evidence based on the specific focus. Any observations that are documented should be free of any judgement. Learning Walks are a powerful tool to observe and develop common trends in classrooms.

Protocols

A Lead Walker must be appointed to ensure:

- All protocols are understood and time allocation is adhered to;
- Participating staff are involved in the Pre-Walk Discussion;
- Prior to the walk, practitioners should have explained to students that visitors will be entering the classroom;
- Walkers must adhere to the focus of the walk;
- Walkers must refrain from making any judgemental comments;
- Walkers should not disrupt learning in the session;
- Walkers should not speak to one another whilst in the classroom (if more than one Walker present);
- Individual observation templates must be shredded on completion of the Post Walk Discussion;
- The learning walk should not disrupt the natural flow of the session;
- Learning walks should include no more than two individuals in a classroom at any one time;
- The staff should not be drawn away from their work to talk with the observer(s);
- Staff should not prepare additional material (e.g. planning) beyond that which is normally prepared;
- The planned curriculum (i.e. the learning pedagogy) should not be adjusted to accommodate the needs of the learning walk.

Frequency of Learning Walks

Over the course of an academic year, practitioners should experience, on average, no more than one learning walk each half term.

What a learning walk is not

- A replacement for planned lesson observations
- A sole indicator for learning or teaching quality in the college
- An indicator of any individual's teaching performance
- Part of a practitioner's performance management

Outcomes of a learning walk

- A learning walk is part of the jigsaw of information and evidence collected by the college to verify self-assessment and to inform future development priorities
- Feedback to all staff should be designed to be a positive experience focusing on what is good
- The outcomes should be shared cross-college highlighting effective practices as a model for others
- Development issues which relate to individual faculties should not be specifically identified in any feedback but should be used to inform further support and CPD if necessary
- Used effectively, a series of well defined, highly focused learning walks can build a very accurate picture of learning, teaching and assessment at the college.
# Learning Walk Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Observed</th>
<th>Subject:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observer:</td>
<td>Room &amp; Course:</td>
<td>Session Time:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practitioner</td>
<td>Number of items of assessment evidence/learner work seen:</td>
<td>Duration: (max 10 mins)</td>
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### (WWW) What Went Well?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Heading</th>
<th>Further details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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### (EBI) Even Better If

<table>
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<td>1.</td>
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Please suggest a possible CPD activity to help the member of staff action the EBIs you have listed above:

Observer:

Please return the form to Ben Gershaw – Quality Officer OLTA with a copy directly to the practitioner.

Signed: 
Date: