

Strategy Walk Guide

Strategy walks are a non-evaluative process in which teachers visit classrooms to see a specific strategy being used across multiple settings. The purpose of strategy walks is to provide teachers with an opportunity to “browse, borrow, and build” from one another, thus enhancing their own understandings and ideas about a specific strategy. To be most effective, strategy walks should be part of a cycle of professional learning. They typically occur after learning about a new strategy (via workshops, PLC meetings, or book studies), so educators can see the strategy in action. At the end of a strategy walk, the visiting team of teachers has a collection of ideas about how a specific strategy can be used in a variety of ways across diverse settings.

Before:

- Identify a focus strategy. (Examples: formative assessment, engagement strategies, student-led discussions, technology integration, and writing across the content areas)
- Identify a team of walkers (about 2–5 people) and teachers who are comfortable trying out the focus strategy.
- Together, the walkers and teachers develop a schedule to accommodate 10–15 minutes visits in each classroom and a 30-minute team reflection at the end of the walk.
- Together, agree on protocols for the walkers to capture new ideas when they are in the classroom. For example, is it acceptable for the walkers to do the following?
 - Take photos or videos? If so, can they be shared with others or just the walking team?
 - Record notes during the visit?
 - Talk quietly with one another about the strategy?
 - Ask students questions related to the strategy being used?
 - Explore the classroom environment, including assignments, notebooks, anchor charts?
- Teachers explain to their students what to expect on the day of the strategy walks.
- Schedule a time to conduct the visit and a time to reflect on the experience.

During:

- The walking team visits classrooms as scheduled, ensuring that they arrive and leave classrooms together and on time.
- Walkers “browse, borrow, and build” while following the agreed-upon protocols.

After

- The walking team and teachers convene for 30 minutes to share their takeaways and how they might move forward with implementing the strategy.
- Consider planning another strategy walk during which the walking team agrees to try out the strategies. This way, a different walking team is given an opportunity to browse, borrow, and build.

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Learning Guide for Strategy Walks

The purpose of this learning guide is to help the walking team and teachers work together to plan, implement, and reflect a purposeful strategy walk.

Before

What is our focus strategy?

What is the schedule for the strategy walk?

How will the walking team “browse, borrow, and build” while in the classrooms? (Do they have permission to capture photos or videos, interact with students, and explore the room and materials?)

During

What strategy can we use to best capture our learning during the lesson? This might require a digital tool or a note-taking guide. The design of the tool should reflect the purpose of the visit.

After

What did we browse and borrow? Share notes, photos, and videos that reflect what you learned.

What will we do as a result of this new learning?

How has this experience affected the walking team and classroom teachers?

As we move forward with trying out these new ideas and strategies, we want to be mindful of ____.

If we were to do another strategy walk, what might that look like?