

Walkthroughs/Informal Observations: Overview and Resources

Ohio Teacher Evaluation System 2.0

Overview: Walkthroughs/Informal Observations:

Observations of teaching provide important evidence when assessing a teacher's performance and effectiveness. As an evaluator observes a teacher engaging students in learning, valuable evidence may be collected on multiple levels. While many of these interactions may take place in the classroom, a more formal instructional setting, it should be noted that evidence of teacher practice is visible in many settings. Some teacher behaviors are observable in the classroom while other evidence may be obtained from formal conferences, informal conversations, and evidence of practice, as well as input from colleagues, parents/guardians and students.

As part of the observation process, ongoing communication and collaboration between evaluator and teacher help foster a productive professional relationship that is supportive and enhances a teacher's professional growth and development.

A walkthrough/informal observation is a

- Tool to inform evaluation that provides the opportunity to gather evidence of instruction over a series of short classroom visits;
- Method to allow evaluators opportunity to gather additional evidence on identified focus area(s) to enhance teacher practice;
- Process for giving targeted evidence-based feedback to teachers; and
- Means for evaluators to visit classrooms more frequently and more purposefully.

As part of the teacher evaluation system, walkthroughs/informal observations should, whenever possible, be focused on gathering evidence related to the teacher's identified focus area(s). However, evaluators are not limited to only collecting evidence on the identified focus area(s). Evaluators must ensure they have sufficient evidence to provide a Final Holistic Rating at the end of the evaluation cycle.

Guidelines for Walkthroughs/Informal Observations

Informally Observe Teachers

Teachers who are fully evaluated will have a minimum of two walkthroughs. Walkthroughs are informal observations (less than 30 minutes); these may be announced or unannounced.

Informally Observe Often

The evaluator's presence in the classroom should send a positive message to teachers. Conducting walkthroughs consistently and frequently can have a positive impact on teacher practice and student learning. Find time to observe teachers at varying times of the day because what occurs in the morning can be different from what occurs in the afternoon.

Focusing on Identified Areas for Support

Focus area(s) may be determined during the required conference following the first Formal Holistic Observation or during the previous year's Final Summative Conference. The focus may be area(s) of relative strength and/or area(s) for improvement. Determination of focus area(s) should mirror the level of autonomy used to develop Professional Growth Plans:

- Teachers rated Accomplished – Self-Directed by teacher
- Teachers rated Skilled – Jointly determined by teacher and evaluator
- Teachers rated Developing – Guided by evaluator
- Teachers rated Ineffective – Determined by evaluator

Evidence gathered during walkthroughs that occur after the Formal Holistic Observation should be focused on the teacher's identified area(s) for support when applicable. Evaluators are not limited to collecting evidence on the identified focus area(s). Evaluators must ensure they have sufficient evidence to provide a Final Holistic Rating at the end of the evaluation cycle.

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Make Time to Follow Up

Follow-up communication to walkthroughs is a critical component. Follow-up will often be in writing, but the evaluator should extend to the teacher an invitation to discuss any comments provided face-to-face. The evaluator may also offer resources to support teachers in enhancing their practice. If possible, evaluators should follow up with the teacher on either the same day or the next day. To impact practice, teachers should receive feedback in a timely manner.

Teacher-Driven Observations

While it is recognized that evaluators have many demands on their time, encouraging teachers to identify instructional periods for the evaluator to observe can be a means for the evaluator to collect evidence related to the teacher's identified focus area(s).

Types of Data

Data collected as evidence of teacher practice may be quantitative, qualitative, or a combination of both. Quantitative data includes measures of values or counts expressed as numbers. For example, the evaluator could use a checklist to tally the types of questions asked (higher versus lower levels). The evaluator might also chart the number and types of assessments used. Qualitative data can include scripted notes detailing patterns of activities, feedback shared and events observed. In both cases, accuracy is essential to ensure the credibility of the process and the evaluator.

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Walkthrough: General Form

Teacher Name:

Grade(s) and Subject Area(s):

Date:

Evaluator Name:

Time Walkthrough Begins:

Time Walkthrough Ends:

Directions: This form serves as a record of a walkthrough by the teacher's evaluator. The evaluator will likely not observe all the teaching elements listed below in any one informal observation, nor is this an exhaustive list of evidence that may be observed. This record, along with records of additional informal observations, will be used to inform the holistic evaluation of the teacher.

EVALUATOR OBSERVATIONS	
Teacher is consistent and effective in communicating appropriate, needs-based, differentiated learning goals	Communication strategies and questioning techniques check for understanding and encourage higher-level thinking
Instructional time is used effectively	Information is presented in multiple formats
Teacher combines collaborative and whole class learning opportunities	Routines, procedures and transitions are consistent, effective and maximize instructional time
Rapport and expectations for respectful, supportive and caring interactions with and among students and the teacher are evident	Feedback is substantive, specific, timely and supports student learning
Lesson makes clear and coherent connections with student prior learning and future learning	Teacher selects, develops and uses multiple assessments
Teacher demonstrates content knowledge and uses content-specific language and strategies to engage students	Teacher uses differentiated instructional strategies and resources for groups of students
Other:	Other:
Identified Focus Area(s) and Aligned Evidence, if Applicable:	
Evaluator Summary Comments:	

Evaluator Signature:

Photocopy to Teacher

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Walkthrough: Open-Ended Form

Teacher Name:

Grade(s) and Subject Area(s):

Date:

Evaluator Name:

Time Walkthrough Begins:

Time Walkthrough Ends:

OBSERVATIONS
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Evaluator Summary Comments:
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Evaluator Signature:

Photocopy to Teacher