Classroom Walk Through

What is it? An observation technique that allows the observer to record “snapshot” information on the effective elements of a classroom including instructional strategies, standards-based objectives, aligned instructional materials, level of cognitive interaction, classroom displays and resources, student engagement, and more.

Why do it? Classroom Walk Through (CWT) provides a powerful tool for instructional leaders to gather information for the purposes of coaching, program planning, and professional development. It is thoroughly research based, and its effectiveness has been well documented. CWT can assist in improving instruction, increasing student performance, identifying professional development needs, and providing data for instructional decision making from the classroom level to the district level.

What are some of the things observers might look for? The CWT observation can focus on a variety of things:

**Teaching Objective/Learning Expectation** - Is the objective/expectation appropriate and aligned with state standards/district curriculum? Is the objective/expectation communicated to the student in “student-friendly” language verbally or visually? Is the teacher teaching to the objective/expectation?

**Target** - Is the lesson on target for the grade level/needs of the students (if below or above grade level)?

**Taxonomy** - At what level of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Knowledge are students working? Is the level(s) appropriate to the learning objective(s)? Is there a balance of high and low order questions/cognitive tasks?

**Text & Materials** - Are the materials and related classroom resources appropriate and supportive of the learning objective(s)? Are the materials differentiated according to student needs?

**Instructional Strategies** - What is the teacher doing? Whole group, small group, or individual approaches? Direct or facilitated approaches? Integrating technology? Modeling?

**Learner Engagement** - What are the students doing? Are they conscious of the learning objective/expectation? Are they actively engaged or passively compliant?

**Learning Environment** - What does the classroom look like? Are there displays, word walls, etc. that support the learning activities? Are there displays of student work? Are there resources, technology, classroom libraries, etc.?

Is it evaluative? Classroom Walk Through is a formative observation process. The difference between Formative (coaching) and Summative (evaluative) observations is provided below:

Adapted from a document from Charlotte County School District, Port Charlotte Florida

http://www.yourcharlotteschools.net/PDA/downloads/CWTFAQ.pdf
Classroom Walk Through

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of Observer</th>
<th>FORMATIVE</th>
<th>SUMMATIVE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coach/Helper</td>
<td>Identify strengths and developmental areas/ to make individual and small group level decisions</td>
<td>To differentiate by “grade” or “rank”/to make systems level decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judge/Evaluator</td>
<td>Professional development, program adjustments, allocation of resources</td>
<td>Personnel appraisal, program effectiveness (keep/don’t keep)</td>
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What research supports Classroom Walk Through? The research-base and history of CWT is extensive and can be divided into two areas:

Content: CWT is focused on the research of effective classrooms, effective instruction, and learning. The primary focus is around Marzano’s “high yield” instructional strategies, Bloom’s “Knowledge Taxonomy”, Lezotte’s principals of learning, and more.

Process: The CWT process is also research-based, extending from the “Manage By Walking Around (MBWA)” approach. The process also has deep roots in Goldhammer’s clinical coaching model, data collection/analysis techniques, and research into instructional leadership. On a spectrum of observation/coaching processes, CWT lies between summative/evaluative processes (such as the FPMS process), and informal observation/coaching. While formative, it provides focus to the observation, as well as a means to collect data on research-based practices and strategies.

Additional research areas include Principal as Leader, Supporting Instruction, and Reflective Practice. Finally, the impact of the entire CWT process has been (and continues to be) researched. Numerous studies point to the improvement in classroom instruction, benefits of reflective practice, and the impact on student achievement.