Learning Walks

BECAUSE
We empower teachers to be reflective of their practice and deepen their pedagogical knowledge

WE BELIEVE
Staff should be active learners that are flexible and responsive

SO WE PROVIDE
Opportunities to share evidence-based practices that allow collaboration, strategic questioning and constructive feedback

THAT LEADS TO
Improved teaching practice and student engagement

AND RESULTS IN
A whole school approach to ensure teachers employ evidence-based effective teaching strategies that improve student outcomes. *(SEF v2)*

INFLUENCERS

Originally, learning walks were just a short (10-15mins) classroom visits designed to obtain a brief snapshot of the classroom and embedded practices in order to collect evidence based on a specific focus. Hilltop Road's Learning Walks were influenced by; Instructional Rounds (Elmore- Fiarman and Teitel). Learning Walks (Lyn Sharrat and Michael Fullan's research) and more recently Conversations of Practice (Jann Farmer Hayley & Helen Timperly), Sprints (Simon Breakspear) and Spirals of Inquiry (Linda Kaser and Judy Halbert).

PRACTICE

Learning walk sessions are timetabled within the school timetable. They typically involve three 1-hour grade sessions.

During the first meeting, teams analyse difficulties students are experiencing within a chosen school focus. Teams identify common areas of development through analysing work samples of students in their class.

During the second meeting, teams observe another grade. This was so teachers could see where students were going/ came from. It was also to highlight continuity of practice between grades. Observation teams set had criteria that they were looking for during the observation. The structure of the Observations is 15 minutes to discuss the observation proforma and problem of practice, 30 minutes observing time and 15 minutes consolidating feedback. Grade teams are also observed by other teams.

In the third session grades met to revisit the problem of practice and strategies implemented. Observation results against the success criteria for the teacher and student were reviewed. Additional feedback is also given individually and as a group. The team then answers and clarifying questions to encourage teachers to interrogate their practices, methods and future directions, acknowledging conversations from an alternative perspective. The team also analyses the evidence in the student work to determine the effectiveness of the strategy. Then as a team they decide to pivot (Co-construct a new practice based on previous analysis and criteria for effectiveness) or persevere (Look at growing this practice to support other students or through other areas of the curriculum).

RESULTS

Teachers were able to have rich focused conversations around teacher practices and discuss student progress in relation to evidence. Staff understanding of professional learning was demonstrated through conversations around best practice and success criteria. New or modified practices were adopted and continued by grade teams.

Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
% of teachers observed displaying agreed practices	83	100	66	80	75	80	66
% of students observed displaying desired behaviours	100	25	50	75	50	40	33