

Californians for Justice: Student Learning Walks Tool

Learning Walks are classroom observations conducted by students. The walk involves teachers hearing from students about what they would like to see in the classroom.

PURPOSE	PRINCIPLES
<p>The purpose of student-led Learning Walks is to center student voice and expertise in the process of instructional improvement. Students are the main client or customer in schools and possess tremendous insight into how to create classrooms that are characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A sense of belonging• Students feeling valued and supported• Relationships that are positive not punitive• Teachers who address bias and advance equity• Actively engaged and empowered learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning walks are about learning, not evaluation or judgment• Learning walks are an opportunity to practice a growth mindset toward students and teachers• Learning walk data will be used solely for reflection, support, and improvement• Each classroom visit will be at least 10 minutes in duration• The learning walks process will teach participants to describe what they see before interpreting it• The learning walks will end with a generative brainstorm of next steps or dilemmas to work on together



Learning Walks Process

PHASES	EXPLANATION
Phase 1: Getting Ready (35 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check-In Protocol (10) • Study available data: Panorama, California Healthy Kids Survey, Dashboard, LCAP Survey, etc. (15) • Think about your goal of creating Relationship Centered Schools—what is your primary question for the learning walk? (10)
Phase 2: Practice (35 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and discuss the tool (5) • Look at any 5-minute classroom video (find online) and practice populating the observation notes tool together (10) • Mini-lesson: Brainstorm examples of what you might write down when you walk into a class—then sort by observation (noting what you see/hear) v. evaluation (adding judgment or assigning motives) (10) • Interviews: Offer 2-3 questions you can ask students. Role play/model that. (10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ What are you learning about today? ◦ How excited and engaged do you feel on a 1-3 scale? (3 is high) ◦ In this classroom, how often do you feel welcomed, noticed, or valued? (1-3: never, sometimes, usually)
Phase 3: Classrooms Observations (45 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-12 minutes per class; 2-3 classes per group; aim for group size of 3-4 (Student observers: Be sure to check in with the teacher in advance) • Capture descriptive data on a note-taking sheet • Observe tasks and students • <i>(Optional) Interview students to get on-the-ground data</i>
Phase 4: The Debrief (30-45 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review your notes and pull 3-5 pieces of data that most relate to our focus (Stay descriptive, resist judgment) (10 mins) • Organize your post-its into 3 categories + other: (15) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Student voice/equity ◦ Teacher moves ◦ Classroom culture ◦ Outlier • <i>(Optional) Do a rating of the three major areas: gut check.</i> • Surface trends and patterns; back them up with evidence (“What do you notice? What is your evidence?”) • Surface key learnings and questions from the group: “What do we wonder?” • Implications: “What are some next steps for further learning or improvement?” • Sign thank you cards for teachers whose classes you visited—it takes braveness and vulnerability to open up your class to observation!
Phase 5: Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create space for everyone to hear each other’s key learnings and places of curiosity • Identify the changes that are required to address the trends and patterns observed in the previous section. What school-wide changes would you like to see based on what you’ve observed? • Work with the school staff to arrive at commitments to action: based on what we learned, what are some immediate, short-term and long-term action steps we can take? Identify who is responsible for following up to realize each one.

Observers will “observe” the work their peers are engaged in and around at the types of interactions happening in the classroom. Here are six sample behaviors to look for...

6 Things Teachers Can Do To Build Relationships With Students

- 1 Notice:** Relationships start simple. Make eye contact, greet us at the door by name, take note of our emotions and yours.
- 2 Listen:** All students want to feel heard. Ask for our opinions, and reflect back what you hear. Pay attention to what’s said and unsaid - to our tone, body language, and emotions.
- 3 Connect:** Use a short welcoming routine like journaling, reflection questions, or circles to create connections in the classroom. And don’t forget to share your interests and life with us too!
- 4 Care:** When a teacher cares, we notice. But 1 out of 3 students in CA cannot name a single caring adult at school. Feeling valued has a huge impact on how we show up in class. Small things add up to show you care.
- 5 Interrupt Bias:** Too many students can point to a belief gap in our schools - unequal expectations of students based on their race, or zipcode. We all have unconscious biases. We are asking you to notice, interrupt, and rewrite these assumptions.
- 6 Empower:** Ask for our feedback on classroom practices, instruction, or content - and then show us how you’re using that input. Structure projects and lessons to give us more ownership of the topics or process. Trust us enough to co-create our education with you.

- From student leaders at Californians for Justice working to create Relationship Centered Schools that value student voice, invest in staff, and create spaces for relationship building.



Learning Walk Phase 3: Classroom Observation Notes

	TASK: <i>What are students being asked to do?</i>	STUDENT BEHAVIORS: <i>How are students engaging with the task and each other? Is there equity in patterns of participation by race, ethnicity, and gender?</i>	TEACHER BEHAVIORS: <i>How are the teachers interacting with students?</i>
Observation Classroom A Observation Notes	Lesson Objective:		
Observation Classroom B Observation Notes	Lesson Objective:		
Observation Classroom C Observation Notes	Lesson Objective:		

	CLASSROOM LEARNING CULTURE	STUDENT VOICE (Try to interview a couple of students)	TEACHER MOVES
Classroom A	<p>Is there evidence that the classroom is a welcoming environment? (e.g. classroom agreements, student work displayed)</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>No evidence – Some evidence – Solid evidence – Outstanding!</p>	<p>Is there evidence that students feel noticed and valued? (e.g. students are greeted by their name, teachers make eye contact with students)</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>No evidence – Some evidence – Solid evidence – Outstanding!</p>	<p>Is there evidence that the teacher is making a proactive effort to build relationships? (e.g. welcome students, connect on a personal and academic level)</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>No evidence – Some evidence – Solid evidence – Outstanding!</p>
	<p>Is there evidence of student engagement and real interest in the lesson/task?</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>No evidence – Some evidence – Solid evidence – Outstanding!</p>	<p>Is there evidence that students have an active voice in the classroom? (e.g. participating in class, asked for their opinions, have a voice or decision making power in classroom)</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>No evidence – Some evidence – Solid evidence – Outstanding!</p>	<p>Is there evidence that the teacher believes in and supports all students? (e.g. high expectations for all, work with students to solve problems vs. pushing them out, includes students struggling the most)</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>No evidence – Some evidence – Solid evidence – Outstanding!</p>
Classroom B	<p>Is there evidence that the classroom is a welcoming environment? (e.g. classroom agreements, student work displayed)</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>No evidence – Some evidence – Solid evidence – Outstanding!</p>	<p>Is there evidence that students feel noticed and valued? (e.g. students are greeted by their name, teachers make eye contact with students)</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>No evidence – Some evidence – Solid evidence – Outstanding!</p>	<p>Is there evidence that the teacher is making a proactive effort to build relationships? (e.g. welcome students, connect on a personal and academic level)</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>No evidence – Some evidence – Solid evidence – Outstanding!</p>
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Classroom C	<p>Is there evidence that the classroom is a welcoming environment? (e.g. classroom agreements, student work displayed)</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>No evidence – Some evidence – Solid evidence – Outstanding!</p>	<p>Is there evidence that students feel noticed and valued? (e.g. students are greeted by their name, teachers make eye contact with students)</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>No evidence – Some evidence – Solid evidence – Outstanding!</p>	<p>Is there evidence that the teacher is making a proactive effort to build relationships? (e.g. welcome students, connect on a personal and academic level)</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>No evidence – Some evidence – Solid evidence – Outstanding!</p>
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