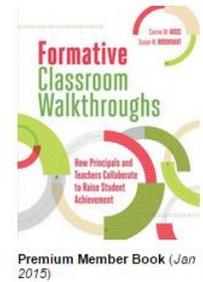


An ASCD Study Guide for *Formative Classroom Walkthroughs: How Principals and Teachers Collaborate to Raise Student Achievement*

This ASCD Study Guide is designed to enhance your understanding and application of the information contained in *Formative Classroom Walkthroughs: How Principals and Teachers Collaborate to Raise Student Achievement*, an ASCD book written by Connie M. Moss and Susan M. Brookhart and published in January 2015.



You can use the study guide before or after you have read the book, or as you finish each chapter. The study questions provided are not meant to cover all aspects of the book, but, rather, to address specific ideas that might warrant further reflection.

Most of the questions contained in this study guide are ones you can think about on your own, but you might consider pairing with a colleague or forming a study group with others who have read (or are reading) *Formative Classroom Walkthroughs*.

Chapter 1. Promoting a Culture of Professional Learning

1. Learning inside of doing is a concept that we promote in this chapter. Thinking about your school culture, do you and your colleagues—administrators, coaches, and teachers—currently view your daily practice as an important source for collaborative inquiry and professional learning?
2. Thinking about your own professional growth, where would you start if you were to construct a professional learning target for yourself? What evidence would you use to help you set a clear target? What information would you track and monitor in order to gather evidence of your professional growth? How would a professional performance of understanding and professional look-fors help you self-assess and document your growth?
3. How would you promote a professional learning culture in your building or district where daily lesson-level evidence of student achievement is used to shape and monitor professional development decisions? What would be the advantages of such a culture?
4. One big idea that weaves throughout this book is that information only becomes feedback when the person receiving it recognizes it as such and uses the information to improve his or her work. With that idea in mind, describe the role of the information that teachers receive from the classroom walkthrough process currently used.
5. How do the administrators and teachers in your school self-assess and self-regulate their own practice? Does your school culture both expect and support the notion that improving one's own professional knowledge and practice is a crucial part of daily educational work? If not, what could you do to nourish this growth mind set?

Chapter 2. Exploring Formative Walkthroughs

1. In this chapter we make the following assertion: *Classroom information, no matter how frequently or carefully collected, only becomes evidence when educators use it to improve student achievement.* How is the information collected from classroom walkthroughs used in your school? Who uses the information most frequently and why?
2. Thinking about the walkthrough protocol currently used in your building or district, are the educators performing walkthroughs and those being observed able to explain how the items on the

walkthrough protocol promote a cohesive theory of action for effective teaching and meaningful student learning?

3. Have you ever considered the idea that the best practices that we look for in today's classrooms are based on what worked in 20th century classrooms? Why might it be useful to think of classroom practices as effective rather than "best"?
4. Throughout the book we promote the concept that those who do a classroom walkthrough learn more by "sitting in the student's seat" to understand what the students are doing during the lesson than they do by focusing on what the teacher is doing during the lesson. How would shifting to that perspective change the conclusions that are drawn regarding the quality of the lesson?
5. If you are an educator who is responsible for performing classroom walkthroughs, do you currently use the evidence that you gather to improve your own professional practice? If you do not use walkthrough information for your own professional growth, how could you begin using the information that you gather to inform your own professional development?

Chapter 3. Feeding Professional Learning Forward Through Effective Feedback

1. How would you characterize the professional climate in your school? Is the climate conducive for collegial feedback conversations?
2. How do you go about collecting evidence about student learning—both the classroom processes they use and the achievement that results? How do you intentionally tie the content of your feedback to teachers to this evidence?
3. Thinking of the micro view of feedback, how do you go about choosing the words you use to give feedback to teachers? How do you choose the setting—the time and place—that you deliver this feedback?
4. Thinking of the snapshot view of feedback, how do you make your feedback an episode of learning for both you and the teacher? How do you engage the teacher in conversation?
5. Typically, it is easier for the giver of feedback to think about helping the teacher learn than to think about his or her own learning. Now that you realize that both parties in a feedback conversation should be learning something, how will you go about intentionally identifying your own learning when you give feedback?
6. Thinking of the long view of feedback, how do you currently support teachers in using what they learn from your feedback? How do you take your own next steps based on what you learn from a feedback conversation with a teacher? Typically, acting on feedback is the developing edge for those learning to give professional feedback in schools; if this is the case for you, what steps will you take to enhance the "feeding forward" aspects of your feedback?

Chapter 4. Looking for a Worthwhile Lesson

1. Have you ever used a learning trajectory to plan a unit or group of lessons as an individual or department? What are the advantages of doing this kind of planning with your colleagues? How might you use learning trajectories as a grade level or discipline to bring cohesion to what students are learning?
2. In our work with teachers and administrators we have learned that one of the challenges educators face when designing a potential learning trajectory is making the shift from describing instruction (what the teacher will do) to describing exactly what students will learn. How would you help a group of educators shift their planning to focus squarely on what students will learn in each lesson as a result of the instruction?

3. One of the most meaningful lenses teachers can use as they plan a worthwhile lesson is to think of the common misconceptions or areas of confusion that students have regarding the specific content. How does considering student needs with the lesson's content provide an important avenue for increasing the worth of any lesson to students?
4. Have you ever considered specific criteria for judging the worth of a specific lesson? Do all the educators in your building—those who are walking through classrooms and those being observed—share an understanding of what makes a lesson worthwhile in terms of deepening student understanding and raising student achievement?
5. Students live their learning one lesson at a time. How do you currently ensure that students engage in daily lessons that lead to important standards, focus on meaningful content, and meet individual student needs with that content?

Chapter 5. Looking for a Learning Target

1. A learning target is not a just a statement that a teacher writes on the board. In fact, in this chapter we underscore the idea that if students are not aiming for it and intentionally self-regulating and self-assessing in order to reach it, a lesson might have a learning intention but not a learning target. Using this comparison, do most of the lessons you observe have a high-quality learning target?
2. Other than writing a learning target statement on the board, how do teachers in your building currently share learning targets with their students?
3. Comparing the five characteristics of a learning target described in the Collaborative Inquiry Guide from Chapter 5 to what the teachers in your building commonly refer to as a learning target, where do you notice areas of agreement and gaps in understanding?
4. In your school are there teachers who confuse a learning target with an instructional objective? How would you help them understand the difference?
5. Have you observed teachers partnering with their students to aim for and assess student understanding using a learning target? If so, what did you notice about the role of the student in getting himself or herself to the learning target?
6. Educators are often confused with the concept that each lesson has a unique learning target. How does the four-column framework presented in this chapter help you explain the idea that educators design a learning target for the current lesson but then must design a new learning target for tomorrow's lesson?

Chapter 6. Looking for a Performance of Understanding

1. How do you distinguish between a classroom assignment or activity and a performance of understanding?
2. Thinking about the characteristics of a performance of understanding described in this chapter, how many lessons (i.e., during the course of a day within your building) engage students in a performance of understanding?
3. Is it possible to gather sound evidence of where students are in their understanding of the concepts, skills, and reasoning processes in the lesson without engaging them in a performance of understanding?
4. With the popularity of social media, many teachers are turning to the Internet to exchange and even sell ideas for classroom activities. How would the characteristics of a performance of understanding help teachers become savvier about selecting ways to help their students learn important content and skills during a lesson?

5. Without having descriptions of high-quality look-fors in their work, students may be engaged in a fun activity, but they are not engaged in a performance of understanding. How does that distinction help you weigh the effectiveness of a lesson that you observe and feed professional learning forward?

Chapter 7. Looking for Student Look-Fors

1. Student look-fors are usually the most difficult aspect of a learning target theory of action for teachers to plan and implement successfully. When you already know something, it seems like all you need to do is be able to say "I can" to the learning target. In order for students who are just learning something to gauge the amount and quality of their progress, more specific criteria are needed. How will you help teachers look into the content, skills, and thinking processes they are trying to teach and work on identifying specific look-fors for students?
2. In your school, are there many teachers who confuse the directions for an assignment with the criteria for learning (the look-fors)? Or, upon reflection, do you do this yourself? Reflect on what this means for the learning climate in your school. Are you inadvertently sending the message that compliance is more important than learning? If so, what might you do about that?
3. How many different forms of student look-fors do you observe in your school ("I can" statements, checklists, rubrics, guiding questions, or other formats)? How are they related to the type of learning target the students are trying to reach?
4. Describe the quality of student look-fors that you have observed in your school. Are they about learning (as opposed to completing an assignment), general (when possible), distinct from one another, complete, and observable? Do most of the criteria exist along a continuum of quality?
5. How have you observed students using look-fors in the classrooms in your school? Can you add any uses to the ones described in Chapter 7? Are opportunities for using student look-fors built into lessons (as opposed to assuming students will "just do" it)?

Chapter 8. Looking for Formative Feedback

1. Take a moment to remind yourself that there are three views of feedback, introduced in Chapter 3: the micro view (what are the content and characteristics of the feedback?), the snapshot view (what did both parties learn?), and the long view (what improvements in learning resulted from the feedback?). Applying this framework to the feedback you observe in your school, do you notice that one view is emphasized more than others? Which view is it, and what might you do about it in your school?
2. How do teachers in your school check for students' understanding of feedback? How do they know when students understand their next steps in learning? How do they know when their feedback is effective?
3. Describe the occasions when you see teachers deliver feedback in your school. Does most of it happen on practice work or on final, graded work? Do you ever observe feedback being "wasted" because it doesn't result in any improvements in learning? What changes in instructional planning might help the feedback you observe in your school be more useful for student learning?
4. Do you think there is a relationship between the type of feedback teachers give in your school and the classroom climate? Specifically, can you describe a relationship between the way feedback is treated in various classrooms and whether students are focused more on learning or more on getting good grades (or both)?
5. To give effective, learning-focused feedback, teachers need deep content knowledge and deep understanding of how students learn particular content. How can you help support teachers for

whom this might be a challenge, for example, teachers who are teaching out of their discipline or teachers who are teaching new (to them) content?

Chapter 9. Looking for Student Self-Assessment

1. This chapter presents some information about the relationship between motivation and learning. It cites research to suggest the limited role that external rewards (e.g., stickers) should play in learning. Although the research is clear, teachers often use external rewards in their classroom practice. Describe the role that external rewards play in classrooms you have observed. Why do you think external rewards are used in these ways in your school?
2. What opportunities do students have for self-assessment in classrooms you have observed in your school? What sort of look-fors (criteria) do students use for self-assessment?
3. How do students in your school or classroom understand the connection between their self-assessment and their further learning or improvement?
4. Do teachers in your school teach students how to self-assess? What does that look like? What sorts of strategies do they use?
5. Are the students in your classroom or school assessment-capable? In fact, most likely there is a range of assessment capabilities among students in your school. Describe that range and then envision what you and the teachers in your school should do to increase the level of students' assessment capabilities.

Chapter 10. Looking for Effective Questioning

1. Many teachers are used to thinking about "questioning strategies" as an instructional method. In order to think of questioning as an assessment method, you need to consider the evidence that students' responses to the questions offer about their thinking. Are the teachers in your school used to thinking of questioning in this way? More generally, how is questioning most often used in your school?
2. Estimate the percentage of the questions in classrooms in your school that use the Initiate-Respond-Evaluate (I-R-E) format. Why do you think teachers use I-R-E questioning in your school?
3. Estimate the percentage of the questions in classrooms in your school that are open questions. How skilled are students at responding to open questions? How are these questions used in instruction and assessment?
4. Do the teachers in your school use probing questions (follow-up questions) to facilitate student discussion and students' responding to each other? What has been their experience in using this technique? What effects do they (or you) see on student learning?
5. Chapter 10 presents several teacher questioning strategies (e.g., the reflective toss, wait time, random calling, think-pair-share), some more familiar than others. Which ones are already used in your school, with what effects, and which ones are you interested to try?
6. Chapter 10 also discusses teaching students to write good questions. To what extent is that part of classroom practice routines in your school? What effects, if any, on student learning have you noticed as a result?

Chapter 11. Formative Walkthroughs and Schoolwide Improvement: Lessons Learned

1. Think about the example of Principal Tom Dinga highlighted in this chapter. How does his use of e-mail messages to share what he sees in daily walkthroughs inform your own practice? Is this something you could see benefitting the teachers in your school? Why or why not?

2. When you compare the effects on your school culture of the walkthrough process that you currently use and the effects the formative classroom walkthrough process described in this book, what are the biggest differences that you notice?
3. How might some of the lessons learned shared in Chapter 11 help you think of ways to use evidence from formative classroom walkthroughs to improve the quality of conversations between building administrators and parents?
4. Several of the administrators highlighted in this chapter saw a need to refine the lesson planning process to align more closely with a learning target theory of action. How does your present format for teacher lesson plans align or conflict with the kind of teaching and learning that we describe in this book?
5. What we've learned about formative classroom walkthroughs is that they create learning partnerships between teachers and students; among teachers within a grade level, building, or district; among administrators and teachers; and among an administrative team. Do your current walkthrough practices forge these kinds of learning partnerships? If not, what might be the obstacles that prevent those partnerships?

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