



LEARNING WALKS AND INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS

Developing “V-shaped learners,” Mount Vernon uses learning walks for generating broad views into the teaching and learning ecosystem, as well as instructional rounds for exploring the depths of professional practice. Collectively these methods enable us to map and innovate our school holistically and systemically.

Learning Walks

Learning Walks Allow for Surveying School

On a learning walk, one or more MVPS educators visit a collection of classrooms and learning environments for brief observations. For example, a teacher might spend about 8-10 minutes in 5-6 learning spaces for about an hour in total. At each point in the walk, the teacher observes, listens deeply, questions a few students, looks for examples of visible thinking, and captures a micro impression to send via Twitter before traveling to the next destination. It’s a strong way to conduct a mini ethnography and powerful learning session.



“In education, we talk about all kinds of things -- theories of learning and classroom techniques, and so on. But we never actually look at and talk about teaching together. And if we want to improve instruction, the first thing we need to do is make the classroom walls transparent. We have to do ‘learning walks’ together and talk about what we see. ... We need to talk about the elements of good practice and then strategies for helping everyone in the system improve every year.” (pp. 128-9)

Wagner, Tony. *The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need--and What We Can Do About It*. New York: Basic Books, 2008. Print.

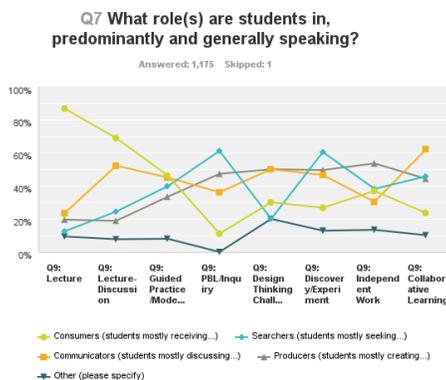
Instructional Rounds

Instructional Rounds Provide Deep Dives

Instructional Rounds are similar to medical rounds in teaching hospitals. An instructional rounds team works collaboratively to dig deeply into professional practice over extended periods of time.

At MVPS, we began piloting instructional rounds (IR) in the Middle School in the fall of 2013. In our Heads of Grade pilot, we teamed four teacher leaders and four administrators to provide multiple lenses and sounding boards for giving feedback and engaging in rich discussions about our teaching and learning practices. During IR, four observers record detailed notes for the visited educator and complete an ethnographic survey that collects data on such things as instructional methods, roles and engagement

levels of student learners, space configurations, and infusion of the MV Mindsets. The notes guide the team debriefs, and the data helps us map our teaching and learning ecosystem in what we call “pedagogy.”



Through “pedagogy,” MVPS deepens our understanding of the teaching and learning ecosystem.

Resources for Instructional Rounds

- Aguilar, Elena. [“Teachers Observing Teachers: Instructional Rounds.”](#) *Edutopia*. March 16, 2012.
- City, Elizabeth A.; Elmore, Richard F.; Fiarman, Sarah E.; and Teitel, Lee. [Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning.](#) Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education, 2009. Print.
- Teitel, Lee. [“Improving Teaching and Learning through Instructional Rounds.”](#) *Harvard Education Letter*, Volume 25, Number 3. May/June 2009.
- Weber, Matt. [“Harvard EdCast: Making the Rounds.”](#) Podcast. *Ed. The Magazine of the Harvard Graduate School of Education*. Winter 2014.

