WELCOME TO THE MEASURING AND IMPROVING STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING TOOLKIT WALKTHROUGH GUIDE!

This document describes how to conduct the walkthrough. A walkthrough occurs during instructional time. It gives a team of people an opportunity to gather information about teaching and learning practices by visiting classrooms and other learning environments. Participants typically record what they see and afterwards talk about how their observations connect with different aspects of teaching and learning.

This Walkthrough Guide is designed to be a professional development tool that helps the lead facilitator and instructors engage in discussion about SCL, including what it might look like in the classroom and how it can be better supported. As such, the walkthrough is intended to be a collaborative learning and professional development opportunity for school stakeholders, including the instructors who will be observed. The Walkthrough Guide is not designed to be a tool for collecting systematic, generalizable evidence about instruction, and it is not an evaluation tool; it should not be used to provide ratings of instruction or for other high-stakes purposes.

The walkthrough focuses on three SCL strategies that are likely to be visible to others in most learning environments:

- **Strategy 1:** Learning is personalized to align with students' needs, interests, and pace
- **Strategy 2:** Learning is challenging, engaging, and meets students where they are in a competency-based system
- **Strategy 4:** Learning opportunities promote student agency and ownership

This guide describes the steps for conducting the walkthrough and is intended for lead facilitators of the MISCL Toolkit process.

STEP 1
Prepare for the walkthrough

STEP 2
Conduct the walkthrough

STEP 3
Reflect and discuss walkthrough observations

Prepare for the walkthrough

What you will do:

1. Convene the walkthrough team
2. Identify 2-3 "look-fors" for each SCL strategy of focus
3. Set the tone
4. Plan the logistics and set the schedule
5. Prepare the walkthrough team
6. Check in with teachers whose classrooms will be observed

Step 1.1: Convene the walkthrough team

Walkthroughs generally benefit from including a variety of stakeholders, such as administrators, instructional staff, and students. Each stakeholder will interpret what they see differently and will bring a different perspective to the discussion of findings. It is not necessary to include all these stakeholders in a walkthrough, but it is important to include multiple perspectives. The walkthrough team can be the same as the team that is guiding the larger Measuring and Improving Student-Centered Learning Toolkit administration process.

As you assemble the team, think about how many participants would likely be disruptive to the classroom(s) you plan to visit. Ideally, the walkthrough team would be large enough to provide multiple perspectives but not so large as to disrupt the classroom. The decision to include certain stakeholders may depend on the strategy and practices you intend to observe. For example, if you intend to look for practices from SCL Strategy 1, which focus on students and instructional staff collaborating to personalize learning, it may be important to include students and instructional staff on the walkthrough team.

Which stakeholders to include may also depend on which surveys you administered and on the survey data, just as it was used to inform the selection of classrooms to walk through. For example, if you administered the surveys in mathematics classrooms, you would likely want to focus on observing mathematics classrooms and including mathematics teachers on the walkthrough team if possible.

TIP:

Consider inclusion of family and community stakeholders.

If you decide to include stakeholders such as parents or community members, ensure that everyone on the walkthrough team is comfortable with their inclusion, and make sure that you have completed any necessary steps within your district to have instructor and student consent for family and community stakeholders to observe instruction.

Step 1.2: Identify 2-3 "look-fors" for each SCL strategy of focus

For each selected strategy, choose two to three student or instructional practices (i.e., look-fors) you would expect, or hope, to see in classrooms in your school, based on the results of the surveys and student focus group(s). Consider focusing on some look-fors that reflect student behavior and some that reflect instructional practices. Feel free to draw from the potential look-fors provided in the table below and to identify other look-fors you would expect and hope to see.

Keep in mind that the walkthrough is intended to be a collaborative learning and professional development opportunity for school stakeholders, including the instructors who will be observed. At the same time, classroom visits can create anxiety for those being observed. To reduce anxiety and create a context for reflective, constructive conversation, collaborate with the instructional staff whose classrooms are likely to be observed in the walkthrough to discuss the context for the observed instruction and understand which look-fors are likely to be observed.

Potential Look-Fors by SCL Strategy

SCL Strategy	Potential Look-Fors
Strategy 1: Learning is personalized to align with students' needs, interests, and pace	• Students are working on different topics or skills than other students. • Students are using different learning materials than other students. • Students are working on different activities (e.g., independent work, small group work, watching a video, reading an article, doing research online) than other students. • Students are working on activities at different difficulty levels than other students. • Students are working at their own pace. • Students get help from an adult or another student when they need it. • Instructional staff vary the delivery of instruction that could be addressing differences in students' preferences or pace. • Instructional staff explain things differently if a student doesn't understand something.

Potential Look-Fors by SCL Strategy (Continued)

SCL Strategy	Potential Look-Fors

Strategy 2: Learning is challenging, engaging, and meets students where they are in a competency-based system	• The topic and/or agenda for the day is clearly visible or you observe that the instructor has provided it to/reviewed it with the students.
	
	   • If yes: The topic and/or agenda for the day is aligned with course competencies (if you know what the course competencies are).
	
	   • If yes: Materials, learning tasks, and/or assessments appear to be aligned to the topic/agenda.
	
	• Student learning goals (e.g., competencies, skills, or standards) are aligned to the day's lesson and clearly visible in the classroom.
	
	• Students are provided with activities that focus on big concepts or ideas that require higher-order thinking, rather than procedural or memory-based tasks.
	
	• The instructor (or the assignment) presses the students to explain or justify their thinking.
	
	• Students are provided with activities closely connected with real-life problems or tasks.
	
	• Students appear productively engaged in their work (e.g., are visibly doing work, asking questions).
	
	• The instructor does not complete the cognitive work that students could do.

Strategy 4: Learning opportunities promote student agency and ownership	• Students participate in activities that promote self-regulation and self-management (e.g., setting and monitoring progress toward goals, identifying strategies to use when they are off track or experiencing difficulty). • Instructor explains/teaches what self-regulation and self-management are and how they will help students succeed. • Students are collaborating and communicating. • Students participate in activities that promote use of metacognitive strategies (e.g., cognitive organizers, concept maps, think-alouds, or other strategies that help students think about their own thinking). • Students are doing most of the work or talk related to academic content being addressed in class.

Choose a small number of look-fors for each of your strategies of focus to make the walkthroughs more manageable. Choosing a small number of look-fors will also help to focus the discussion of results and help you to develop clear action steps based on what you observed. Consider whether you might want to focus on the same two to four look-fors over several walkthroughs, as a way to gauge whether practices are changing in ways that support SCL.

TIP:

Choose a small number of look-fors – two to three – to focus on in each walkthrough.

TIP:

Clear look-fors:

- Focus on one student or instructor behavior

- Focus on one SCL strategy or practice

- Are observable based on student or instructor behavior or visible classroom artifacts

The look-fors you choose should be clear, observable, and focused on at least one instructional or student behavior. Each look-for should focus on either instructional staff or students, not both. Make sure the practices you hope to see are clearly defined, as that will make them easier to see during the walkthrough. Consider seeking feedback from a variety of stakeholders including administrators, instructional staff, and students. As you choose or develop your look-fors, make sure everyone understands the look-fors in the same way, and choose look-fors likely to be visible in the classroom.

Step 1.3: Set the tone

Walkthroughs and observations can be stressful for instructional staff, particularly if they are either part of your school's evaluation system or if they are not common practice in your school. Reassure staff that the data collected in the walkthrough will not be used for high-stakes purposes, such as teacher evaluation. Instead, be clear to participants that the walkthrough is intended as a professional development opportunity for everyone on the walkthrough team, including the instructors whose classrooms will be visited. Set the tone for the walkthrough when the surveys are administered, so participants will have a sense of the whole process at the outset. Ensure that communication is clear and consistent throughout the process. Setting the tone can be done in several ways, so choose the approach(es) that will work best in your context.

COMMUNICATIONS TIPS:

- **Be transparent about the process** – Share walkthrough templates and logistics with instructional staff; discuss the process for reviewing findings and planning next steps.
- **Communicate early and often** – Share clear and consistent messages; consider a staff meeting and/or office hours so staff and students can ask questions; give lots of advance notice; recognize this is a learning process.
- **Be clear about the benefits** – There are different benefits for different stakeholders. For instructional staff, the benefits include professional learning communities and a chance to view and share practices. For students, the benefits include a chance to share opinions, see how others learn, and have a voice.
- **Send out a schedule** – Let observers know what time to enter and leave each classroom so that the teachers being observed know exactly what to expect.

Step 1.4: Plan the logistics and set the schedule

Plan the logistics and set the schedule: which classrooms to visit, when to visit them, who will visit, and for how long. If possible, plan to walk through classrooms that took the Measuring and Improving Student-Centered Learning Toolkit surveys. For example, if the focus for administering the Toolkit is to understand and improve the extent of SCL in ELA classrooms and learning environments, you should have administered the survey to ELA instructors, and ELA classrooms should be visited during the walkthrough. If the surveys were administered school-wide, then focus the walkthrough on a particular grade level, content area, or group of instructional staff (e.g., staff new to the concept of SCL). Use the survey data to inform the selection of classrooms to visit. For example, if you found that instructors new to SCL responded differently than more experienced staff, consider focusing the walkthrough in those classrooms. Such a focused approach can facilitate data gathering, support targeted, concise feedback, and avoid overburdening participants.

Ideally, a walkthrough will constitute visits to several classrooms in the same day. Talk with instructors about their upcoming lesson plans and come to consensus about which days might be best to visit multiple classrooms. Depending on the size of the school, plan to visit at least three classrooms, but you may visit more if you wish. Visiting three classrooms will provide some variation in classroom context without making the walkthroughs too burdensome. Plan to watch the beginning of class and observe for anywhere from 10 minutes to half of a class period.

Decide when the walkthrough will begin and when and where the team should meet. Decide when each classroom will be visited and which team members will observe each classroom. This walkthrough is designed for multiple team-members to visit each classroom, so there

will be more than one perspective to discuss. If possible, organize the team so that at least two team-members visit a classroom. However, the whole team does not have to visit every classroom. Finally, schedule the post-walkthrough meeting, which is discussed in more detail in Step 3, in which the team will meet to discuss what they saw during the walkthrough and plan next steps. Consider scheduling the post-walkthrough meeting to occur within a week of completing the walkthroughs, so the observations will be fresh in team members' minds.

> **TIP:**
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> Schedule the post-walkthrough meeting (see Step 3 for details) when you plan the walkthrough schedule. This will help set expectations for the schedule and maintain momentum for the discussion.

Step 1.5: Prepare the walkthrough team

A few days before the walkthrough, convene the team to review the look-fors and plan what you will do in the classrooms. When reviewing the look fors, share several examples, and discuss whether there is enough information to determine whether what you observe is truly a student-centered practice. Reinforce that the walkthrough is a learning opportunity for everyone involved and is not evaluative. The observed instructor should conduct business as usual during the visit. If the team would like copies of the lesson plan or learning materials, request those in advance.

If your school typically includes families and community members in some instructional decisions (e.g., on a school advisory board, or to share input for developing new courses), consider including families and community members on the walkthrough team. Community members could include afterschool program staff, social service providers, instructional partners (e.g., community organizations or museums that offer courses), employers, colleges, or funders. Including families and community members could help foster engagement and investment in the school mission. At the same time, the inclusion of families and community members in the walkthrough could raise privacy concerns or cause discomfort for staff. Include families or community members—or not—depending on what makes sense for your context.

Go over the walkthrough schedule and process with the team, and let each team-member know which classrooms they will observe. As you share the schedule, plan how the team will behave in the classrooms. Think about where team members should stand or sit, whether a copy of the lesson plan or learning materials would be useful, and whether to speak to the instructor or students during the visit. If you decide you will speak to students, discuss and agree on some questions to ask. Also talk to the instructor of the class that will be observed about whether it makes sense to talk to students during the visit, given their lesson plan that day, and—if so—when speaking with students would be least disruptive. A list of example questions follows.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK STUDENTS

- What are you working on?
- What concepts or skills are you learning in this assignment? What have you learned already?
- How are you showing what you learned?
- Do you find this class easy or challenging?
- Are you able to work on things that interest you?
- Are you able to work at your own pace?
- How would you get help on this assignment if you need it?
- Are you working in a group, with a partner, or individually? Did you choose to work this why? If so, why did you make this choice?
- Do you know what you have to do to succeed in what you are working on?
- How does what you are working on help you meet your goals?

Step 1.6: Check in with teachers whose classrooms will be observed

A few days before the walkthrough, gather the teachers who will be observed during the walkthrough. Share the walkthrough schedule with them and inform them who will be observing, as well as how many observers they should expect will be in their classroom at once. Encourage them to ask questions and raise concerns. Remind them that the walkthrough is not an evaluation and that their participation will help build a better understanding of the state of SCL at your school. Thank them for their willingness to participate and let them know who they can contact with any additional questions or concerns leading up to the walkthrough.

STEP 2 Conduct the walkthrough

What you will do:

1. Individually complete the observation guide for each classroom
2. Individually summarize what you learned in each classroom

Step 2.1: Individually complete the observation guide for each classroom

Each person on the walkthrough team should use the observation guide to record their observations. Try not to discuss your observations with any other walkthrough team members during the visit—there will be time in the process to discuss when the walkthrough is complete.

As discussed above, some look-fors focus on instructional staff and some focus on students. If you see a student look-for, note whether all, most, or some students are engaged in it, or indicate that you can't tell, and explain your response. If you observe some students engaged in one of the look-fors, record whether the students you observed appeared to share certain traits (e.g., female students, special education students). If you can't tell, note why. Briefly describe what you observed for each look-for. An example of how the walkthrough observation guide can be completed is shown in the table below. A version of the walkthrough observation guide, which can be printed and used during the walkthrough, follows Step 2.2.

Keep in mind that other team members may record observations that are very different from your own. The walkthrough is intended to allow participants to observe individually, and then come together as a group to identify points of agreement and disagreement about selected SCL look-fors, and what was observed (or taught, in the case of instructors). The information gathered is intended to stimulate reflection and learning among all participants and should not be used for evaluative purposes.

Example of Completed Walkthrough Observation Guide for Strategy 1

Strategy 1: Learning is personalized to align with students' needs, interests, and pace		
Look-for	**Do you see the look-for?** (Circle or check one)	**How do you know?** Note: If you gave a "yes" rating for a student practice, note whether all, most, or some students are engaged in it, or indicate that you can't tell.
Students are working on different topics or skills than other students.	~~Yes~~ No Can't tell	*All students working on different skills related to the projects they are creating.*
Instructional staff explain things differently if a student doesn't understand something.	Yes ~~No~~ Can't tell	*We did observe the instructor providing instruction and ensuring student understanding, but I'm not sure we specifically observed him explaining things differently.*
Summary: *Students were doing some unique activities based on their projects.*		

Step 2.2: Individually summarize what you learned in each classroom

Each participant should summarize what was observed for each practice in each classroom in the last row of the observation guide (see example table in Step 2.1 above). For example, were most students and instructional staff engaged in a given practice? Were the practices clearly observable, or was it difficult to tell? Were there certain groups of students who appeared to be engaged in more SCL practices than others? Note that although observers will initially summarize their walkthrough observations individually, the next Step (Step 3) lays out how walkthrough team members will come together to discuss what they observed and plan next steps.

TIP:

Don't assume. Observers should exercise caution and not assume that a particular look-for is present. It is not always easy to determine whether what you see is an SCL practice.

How would you interpret this scenario?

Students are working on different tasks in a science class—one student is doing research on the internet, another is working on a presentation, and a third is conducting an experiment.

- **Interpretation 1:** Students are working on different content at their own pace and demonstrating their learning in the way that is best suited to their learning needs.

- **Interpretation 2:** Although students are working on different tasks, they are parts of a project that has the same due date for everyone.

It could be difficult to tell which interpretation is accurate without additional context, which may, or may not, be available.

Walkthrough Observation Guide

Classroom:		
Look-for (May choose from list provided in Step 1)	**Do you see the look-for?** (Circle or check one)	**How do you know?** Note: If you gave a "yes" rating for a student practice, note whether all, most, or some students are engaged in it, or indicate that you can't tell.
Strategy 1: Learning is personalized to align with students' needs, interests, and pace		
Look-for #1:	Yes No Can't tell	
Look-for #2:	Yes No Can't tell	
Look-for #3:	Yes No Can't tell	
Strategy 2: Learning is challenging, engaging, and meets students where they are in a competency-based system		
Look-for #1:	Yes No Can't tell	
Look-for #2:	Yes No Can't tell	
Look-for #3:	Yes No Can't tell	
Strategy 4: Learning opportunities promote student agency and ownership		
Look-for #1:	Yes No Can't tell	
Look-for #2:	Yes No Can't tell	
Look-for #3:	Yes No Can't tell	
Summary:		

STEP 3 — Reflect and discuss walkthrough observations

What you will do:

1. Discuss and summarize what you saw for each look-for across classrooms visited
2. Discuss what you think and wonder about what you observed
3. Discuss how the school could better support SCL practices you looked for in classrooms

TIP:

Complete the Walkthrough Discussion Guide (found on pages 14) as you work through Steps 3.1-3.3 below.

Step 3.1: Discuss and summarize *what you saw* for each look-for across the classrooms visited

Once the walkthrough is complete, convene the walkthrough team to discuss the information gathered in the walkthrough. (This meeting was scheduled in Step 1). If at all possible, include students in the discussion, especially if they were in the group conducting the walkthroughs, so they can talk about how they experience SCL in their classrooms. The group members who conducted the visits should bring their completed observation guides to this conversation. Nominate someone to facilitate the discussion and someone to take notes using the walkthrough reflection guide templates. The facilitator should guide the discussion and ensure that the discussion maintains a constructive and non-evaluative tone. Use the guiding questions suggested in the Walkthrough Discussion Guide if they are applicable to your context and focus, but the team can discuss other questions as well. A printable version of the Walkthrough Discussion Guide appears after Step 3.3 on page 14, and includes suggested questions for Steps 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 of this Walkthrough Guide, including a set of questions focused specifically on equity. Consider asking the instructors who were observed to share their own observations about their class before others share.

Discuss whether most students were engaged in a selected target practice, whether the practice was clearly observable, and the specific actions or behaviors that indicated the practice occurred. Stress to observers that they should only talk about what they saw; in this step, they should not share any opinions or inferences about what they saw. Summarize the findings for each classroom for each of the target practices. Indicate if the observers were generally in agreement about the implementation of SCL practices. In particular, ask the instructor(s) if they agree with what other team members saw.

Step 3.2: Discuss and summarize *what you think, or wonder, about the evidence* for each look-for across the classrooms you visited

Review the evidence from the walkthrough and discuss whether there is anything surprising or unexpected and how what you saw aligned with what you expected to see. Talk about the extent to which the evidence from the walkthrough is aligned with the school's SCL focus. Consider any differences in SCL practices suggested by the evidence. Did you observe higher levels of SCL implementation in certain classes? Did certain groups of students (e.g., 12th-graders, students of color, special education students) appear to have a more student-centered environment? Talk about how many students were engaged in the look-fors, and to what extent; consider why this might be the case and think about whether students and instructional staff would benefit from a more student-centered approach. Discuss if there are limits to any of the look-fors—and whether there are circumstances (e.g., for which courses or tasks) in which the practice might not be desirable or feasible. Think about whether students would benefit from more, or different, student-centered practices in the classes observed during the walkthrough, and whether there are any obstacles or challenges to making this class more student-centered.

> **TIP:**
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> **Example discussion questions**
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> - Is the evidence from the walkthough aligned with the school's SCL focus?
> - Does SCL implementation seem to be more prevalent in certain classes, and if so, why?
> - Do SCL practices appear to differ across classrooms, and if so, why?
> - Are there situations in which some SCL practices may not be feasible or desirable?
> - Think about SCL implementation holistically – what is working well and what should you do more of in the future?

The facilitator should ensure that the instructional staff whose classes were observed have an opportunity to share their own thoughts. Whomever was assigned to take notes for the conversation should share them with participants in the day or two after the conversation. Those notes are also an artifact that can be used for the broader Reflection Conversation among the group brought to together to discuss results from all MISCL instruments that were administered.

Step 3.3: Discuss how the school could better support SCL practices you looked for in classrooms

Develop a concrete plan for how the school could better support the specific practices and behaviors instructors are aiming for. Talk about what existing structures or policies can help support these practices and how can these be leveraged. Develop specific actions and resources that will support instructional staff as they work to make these changes, as well as support students to engage in more SCL behaviors. Think about whether there are contextual conditions (e.g., existing norms or policies) that might pose a challenge, how they might be addressed, and who is best positioned to lead the efforts.

Walkthrough Discussion Guide

	Step 3.1	Step 3.2	Step 3.3
Focal Question	What did you *see*?	What do you *think*, or *wonder*, about the evidence?	How can the school better support instructors *to engage in the types of SCL you looked for in classrooms*?
Suggested Guiding Questions	• Were most students engaged in the practice? • Was the practice clearly observable, or was it difficult to tell? Why or why not? • What did you see to suggest that the practice is happening?	• What did you see that surprised/concerned you? • How does what you saw align with what you expected? • How does what you saw align with the school's SCL focus(s)? • Were some look-fors more, or less, prevalent; why or why not? • Why do you think students were (only) able to engage in the practice to the extent they did? • What might be the "limits" of SCL – in what circumstances (e.g., for which courses or tasks) might SCL not be desirable or feasible? • Are there any obstacles or challenges to making this class more student-centered? • Do you think students would benefit from having more SCL practices in this class?	• What existing structures or policies can help support SCL? How can these be leveraged? • What contextual conditions (e.g., existing norms or policies) might pose a challenge? How can we address them? • Who is well positioned to lead the efforts?
Suggested Equity-Focused Guiding Questions	• Did you observe any differences in which students were engaged in particular SCL practice? • What is your evidence that there were or were not different levels of engagement?	• How well do the classes you visited represent the rest of the school? • Were some classrooms more, or less, student-centered; why or why not? • Are subgroup differences in SCL desirable? Why or why not? • Why do you think some students were only able to engage in the practice to some extent? • Would this group of students benefit from a more SCL approach? Why or why not? • What might be the "limits" of the practices – in what circumstances (e.g., for certain groups of students) might SCL not be desirable or feasible? • Are there any obstacles or challenges to making this class more student-centered for students who were less engaged with the practices?	• Consider the same questions as above for specific groups of students