Photo Learning Walkthrough

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In conducting two new workshops for school leaders called *Assess Yourself,* and *iPad for Assessment,* we have discovered an interesting approach to ascertaining just how students are using technology in your school. It's called a *Photo Learning Walkthrough.* A previous article in this series, **Assessing the Impact of Technology,** explained how to use an iPad to quantify the results of learning walkthrough of your school, using the online instrument *Education 3.0 Walkthrough.* This instrument provides a list of things to look for, with the familiar four-point Likert scale to measure the presence or absence of each item, like this:

Education 3.0 School Walkthrough
LEC Leadership Institute

School		Area	
Date		Time	

To solve worthwhile problems, students:	1	2	3	4	Comments	In thei
work with a collaborative project group to solve an issue of public interest as well as academic importance.	○	○	○	○		search on and reliab what they
find the concepts in one subject fully coordinated with the topics and assignments of the others.	○	○	○	○		use real-t and from issues an
learn the aspects of their subjects actually used in the real world, such as probability and statistics, estimation and measurement in math.	○	○	○	○		use an ex tutorials, to their la
						use digita knowledg

To collaborate productively, students:	1	2	3	4		To tell
work in a credit-bearing team project group with a faculty coach, during time alloted for this purpose within the school day.	○	○	○	○		employ ir bring dee and prese
meet with their peers in spaces designed especially to facilitate small-group project work.	○	○	○	○		borrow fr to make possible.
use desktop videoconferencing for distance-learning, discussions with subject-matter experts, guest speakers, or remote teachers.	○	○	○	○		publish th portfolio
connect to multilingual, multicultural and international resources, and applied them to their academic projects.	○	○	○	○		present th outside th and digita
To employ appropriate tools, students:						To be c
use digital communication technologies such as instant messaging to work with teachers, peers, and community.	○	○	○	○		identify o new direc get the jo
listen to podcasts on mobile devices, that extend and enhance their academic work.	○	○	○	○		are rewar relationsh
use digital tools such as videoconferencing, shared documents, and learning management systems to get their work done.	○	○	○	○		apply arti expressio work.
use digital tools to develop animations, videos	○	○	○	○		are assign

This week's article describes a different mode of walkthrough assessment, using photographs rather than Likert scales. Here's how it works.

1. Set your goals
What do you want to accomplish this year at your school? How do you want things to be different? What do you want to see more of? Less of? What modes and styles of instruction do you want to encourage? Discourage? How do you want students to be using technology? How not? One school we worked with set forth these goals:
   - Student engagement.
   - Integration of technology.
   - Collaborative Learning.
   - Joy in learning.

So you see that these are not summative goals, but process goals. A summative goal might be, *50% of our students get in to the college of their choice,* or *50% of our students score above average on the state test.* These kinds of summative goals can't be approached through a learning walkthrough. Nor can these kinds of goals be accomplished without careful attention to the kinds of process goals listed above. Our undue attention to a small subset of summative goals over the last few years has drawn our attention away from the day-to-day processes that really make a difference. So set some goals that you can see and hear in the hallways and classrooms and laboratories and libraries at your school. It's these goals that you ill quantify and track with your Photo Learning Walkthrough, hereinafter referred to as PLW.

2. Adopt a protocol
The principal of the school in this case set a standard procedure for conducting the PLW on a weekly basis. Each week, she and her assistant principals would walk through the school, iPad in hand, and shoot a photo whenever she saw students at work. No exceptions -- three students seated on the floor in the hall talking with each other; snap. Open a classroom door, see 20 students filling out a worksheet, snap. In the library, see a student giving a presentation to a small group, snap a picture. The only students you don't shoot, according to this school's protocol, are those passing between classes. After 25 photos, she'd stop shooting.

As long as you follow your protocol consistently, shoot whatever you see, and leave out value judgements as you decide what to shoot, the PLW will work as an assessment device. The school in this case did their walkthrough's randomly, at various times of the day, and varied their routes through the school to cover every place where students were to be found, including on the athletic fields.

3. Walk through and shoot
Follow your protocol, grab your iPad (or your iPhone, or your digital camera) and shoot. Shoot students and teachers at work. Shoot everything, making no selective judgments. Shoot a consistent number of photos on each walkthrough.

4. Quantify
Sit down with your iPad. Make a little spreadsheet with *Numbers*, like this:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1		Oct 7, 2011	Oct 14, 2011	Oct 21, 2011	Oct 28, 2011	
2	Student engagement.					
3	Integration of technology.					
4	Collaborative learning					
5	Joy in learning.					
6						
7						

Now, open the Photos app, and find the 25 photos you just took. Consider the first goal, *student engagement*. Look closely at each photo. Does it provide clear and convincing evidence of the kind of student engagement you'd like to see at your school? If yes, give it a 1. If not, give it a 0. Enter the total points for student engagement into cell B2 of the spreadsheet.

Next, consider the second goal: *integration of technology*. Go through each photo in turn: does it show the integration of technology into the curriculum? Give each photo a one or a zero, and enter the total into cell B3. And so forth until today's column is filled.

Repeat the process next week, or whenever your protocol dictates. When you've amassed enough data for an analysis, your spreadsheet will look like this.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1		Oct 7, 2011	Oct 14, 2011	Oct 21, 2011	Oct 28, 2011	
2	Student engagement.	14	16	9	12	
3	Integration of technology.	5	10	13	6	
4	Collaborative learning	7	14	5	4	
5	Joy in learning.	12	7	9	13	
6						

5. Analyze
Compute totals for your columns and rows, like this:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1		Oct 7, 2011	Oct 14, 2011	Oct 21, 2011	Oct 28, 2011	
2	Student engagement.	14	16	9	12	51
3	Integration of technology.	5	10	13	6	34
4	Collaborative learning	7	14	5	4	30
5	Joy in learning.	12	7	9	13	41
6						
7		38	47	36	35	

Now look, think, and learn. First of all, in the case at hand, fewer than half the photos provide evidence that the school's four goals are being met. So, we know there's work to be done. On the other hand, we'd want to know what was going on at this time last year on this same measurement; and we'll want to measure it again next year, or next month, in the very same way. Day by day and week by week fluctuations are not to be worried about; it's the accumulated totals that matter.

And while the photos provide substantial evidence of *student engagement*, the amount of *collaborative learning* seems low in comparison. On the other hand, the overall fluctuation of evidence on all four goals combined is relatively stable.

6. Discuss
Once you've gathered and analyzed a large sample of data, do the totals and email the spreadsheet to your leadership team. Project your iPad as a photo frame with the (now huge) collection of photos playing one after the other on the big screen. Ask each of the team to look at the combined spreadsheet on their iPad and talk about what they conclude. Close the meeting with a discussion of what we need to do next to move forward toward our four goals. Repeat this discussion at the next faculty meeting.

7. Repeat
Repeat steps 3 and 4 each week throughout the school year. Repeat step 5 monthly, and step 6 quarterly. The result will include an interesting assessment of your progress toward these goals, and a periodic reminder and discussion that should provoke continued growth.

(To practice steps four and five right now, with someone else's data, connect to iPad Photo Walkthrough.)