THE PRACTICE OF PUBLIC LEARNING

Supporting educators to create a generous, honest thinking space.

The practice of Public Learning is designed to help educators keep student learning at the center of their collaborative conversations. It is an opportunity to be metacognitive about teaching. When educators go public with the questions they have about their students' learning and then share the data they collect to help answer those questions, learning becomes the centerpiece of powerful teaching. Public Learning is not a one-way street. It depends on a dialogue between the public learner and their colleagues. This dialogue requires social and emotional support—both to be vulnerable and share uncertainty, and to be open to **Supportive Challenge** from colleagues. Inviting multiple perspectives on the Public Learner's student data is an equity strategy, as everyone shares the responsibility for supporting all students and helping the Public Learner see what they may not notice on their own.

For more information about the practice, read chapter 3 of the **Lead by Learning Playbook in Adult Learning**.

STEP INTO PRACTICE

One of the best ways to begin the practice of Public Learning is to provide teachers a model of what it looks like. Below is a facilitator's guide.

PREPARE: Invite one educator to model the "Learner" role in the Public Learning Protocol and one or two other colleagues to model the "Listener" role. In advance of your meeting, prepare your Public Learner. Choose someone who is reflective and open to sharing uncertainties. Ask them to collect relevant student data from two or three focal students and to be prepared to share a dilemma or question about those students' learning connected to that data.

FRAME: Open the session by framing the purpose of Public Learning not as searching for the right answer or judging this teacher's competence, but figuring out together how to best serve students.

LEARNER OPENS: Invite the Public Learner to use the sentence stems in the first part of the Public Learning Protocol to introduce their student learning dilemma and the data related to it.

QUIET MOMENT FOR DATA: Give the whole group a quiet moment to look at or listen to a sample of the student learning data.

LISTENERS REFLECT: Invite the Listeners to choose one or two sentence stems from the third part of the Public Learning Protocol to affirm and supportively challenge the Learner's thinking.

OPEN DISCUSSION: Invite the Public Learner to kick off the open discussion. Remind the group that the Public Learner does not need to respond to all of the Listeners' questions, only those that they decide will push their thinking forward.

LEARNER CLOSES: Return to the Public Learner and ask them what they're thinking or wondering at the end of the conversation.

HIGHLIGHT THE PROCESS: Express gratitude to the Public Learner and acknowledge that it isn't easy to share uncertainty in front of colleagues. Notice how the Listeners refrained from offering their own solutions and instead supported the Public Learner to articulate their own next steps.

REFLECT: Invite all teachers to engage in the final step of the Public Learning Protocol to reflect on the collaborative practice.

PUBLIC LEARNING PROTOCOL

PUBLIC LEARNER OPENS - 3 minutes

If the learner runs out of things to say, listeners do not jump in, but keep this as the learner's thinking space.

- My focus …
- I am hoping my students will …
- I am wondering ….
- The student learning information (data) I brought today …
- I would like help thinking about …

QUIETLY LOOK AT OR LISTEN TO DATA - 3 minutes

Public learner resists the urge to talk listeners through the data.

LISTENERS REFLECT - 2 minutes

The listeners' goal is to understand the learner's thinking, not solve the learner's problem.

- It sounds like you are hoping to see/hear…
- I'm curious what you mean by… ?
- A strength that stands out to me in the data is…
- Something I'm not yet seeing in the data is…

OPEN DISCUSSION - 6 minutes

The public learner kicks off the discussion. Listeners help the learner understand what the data is showing, clarify goals, and name possible next steps.

- What would success look like? What might be getting in the way?
- In your data, I'm curious to know more about…
- To better understand your focal students, what would you like to find out about next?

PUBLIC LEARNER CLOSES - 2 minutes

A listener offers to record what the learner says.

- I used to think… but now I think … because…
- Something I want to pay more attention to…
- My next step is …

PARTICIPANTS REFLECT - 3 minutes
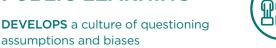
Think of the role you played today:
- How did it feel to collaborate in this way?
- What did you learn about yourself and your teaching?
- What are you thinking now?

MAKE IT YOUR OWN

INVITE YOUR TEAM TO CONTINUE TO PRACTICE PUBLIC LEARNING.

- What form of student data do you want at the center next time? Will teachers share similar or different data?
- How might colleagues be grouped strategically depending on the learning goal?
- How can the practice weave into existing collaboration time?

PUBLIC LEARNING

DEVELOPS a culture of questioning assumptions and biases

SUPPORTS the vulnerability required for educators to question what is or isn't working in their own practice

ENCOURAGES teachers to build their own knowledge about student learning

BUILDS an asset-based stance towards students and adults