

DATA DIG

TO UNDERSTAND LEARNING

A routine to **SEE** your learners and **ADAPT** to **MEET** their needs.

To dig, you need data. What is the “right” data? Look around you. **Everything you see is data, and therefore an opportunity to dig.** In a data dig, you are not trying to prove something. You are not measuring. You are gathering information that helps you better understand your learners so you can help them learn.

Data digs aren't one-offs. Once you dig, you want to dig further, in new places, all the time.

GOT SOME DATA? LET'S DIG!

WHY A DATA DIG?

We are trying to understand what our learners are experiencing in real time, which includes:

- a scan of what they can do
- a snapshot of what might be getting in the way of their learning
- any structural inequities or implicit biases that may impact the learner experience

To truly dig, we must approach data with curiosity and care for our learners.

STEP INTO PRACTICE



PREPARE

Select a piece of data to dig into. Ground this data and avoid equity traps by situating the data appropriately.

GOALS: Does this data help you explore something you're trying to figure out?

BOUNDARIES: What opportunities and limitations exist in this data?

GRAIN SIZE: Does this data give you a big picture view of all of your students? Or does it give you a close up look at one learner?

TIMING: When is this data from? Does it tell you something about where your learners are coming from, or where they are now?



BEFORE YOU DIG

Remember:
MINDSET MATTERS

Settle in. Grab something to write with and a piece of paper. Give yourself permission to pause all the other things you're juggling right now. Paying attention to your learners is important.



For more information about the practice, read chapter 1 of the **Lead by Learning Playbook in Adult Learning.**

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DIGGING INTO DATA

Use these guiding questions to explore, reflect, interrogate. Let your curiosity guide you.

FIRST GLANCE

- What is your goal for students?
- What do you notice? Any surprises?

DIG DEEPER

- What does this data tell you about your learner(s) in relation to your goal?
- What does this data reveal about your work: your goals, your routines, your interactions?

EQUITY FOCUS

- What does this data NOT tell you about your learner?
- What assumptions might you be making about your learner to fill in what you can't see in the data?
- How might dominant narratives or your lived experience influence your assumptions about the learner or their context?

TAKE ACTION

- What does this data reveal about your work: your goals, your routines, your interactions?
- What questions do you want to pursue further?
- What will you adapt in your practice to better support your learners?



AS YOU DIG

As you dig deeper into your data, you move beyond assumptions, build empathy, and expand your knowledge about your learners. This helps you better support their learning.



EQUITY FOCUS

These questions are complex and it can be challenging to examine a blind spot. Pay attention to the emotions and reactions that emerge, including discomfort, anger, confusion, or fragility. They can alert you to your core values and belief systems that may drive your decisions. Your response also reveals your relationship to the learner or the system you work in.



MAKE IT YOUR OWN

PERSONALIZE YOUR DIG

- What questions might you add to this data dig to make it more relevant for you and your learners?

CONTINUE DIGGING

- What felt exciting about this data dig and how can that motivate you to dig again?
- What data do you want to dig into next?
- How can you integrate data digs as a routine practice at your site?

IT'S IMPORTANT TO DIG WITH OTHERS

- Who can offer other perspectives on the data?
- What do you want support thinking about from others?