



WHAT ARE WE NOTICING?

A Human-Centered Data Noticing Protocol

PURPOSE:

This protocol supports leadership teams in broadening the definition of data by surfacing observations, stories, behaviors, and contextual factors alongside numerical indicators. It helps teams slow down interpretation, amplify diverse perspectives, and build shared understanding before moving to analysis or action.

WHEN TO USE:

- Before reviewing quantitative data
- When teams feel stuck, defensive, or overwhelmed by “the numbers.”
- To surface equity-centered evidence that may be missing from the dashboard
- As a regular leadership or coaching practice to normalize noticing as data

How It Works: 1 - 2 - 4 - ALL

1

Individual Noticing
(3-4 minutes)

Prompt: What are you noticing right now about student learning, engagement, or experience - beyond what just the numbers show?

- *Individually, jot down observations in these categories:*
 - **Learning & Engagement** (participation, questions, persistence)
 - **Relationships & Routines** (interactions, transitions, belonging)
 - **Context & Conditions** (timing, community factors, staffing, systems)

Prompt: Share at least one observation that feels important and at least one that feels uncertain.

- *As you share/listen, look for:*
 - Repeated patterns
 - Differences in perspective
 - Observations that are easy to overlook

2

Pairs
(4-5 minutes)

4

Groups of 4
(5-6 minutes)

Prompt: What patterns are emerging across what we're noticing? What data might we miss if we only looked at numbers?

- *Capture:*
 - Shared patterns
 - Any tensions, contradictions, or unanswered patterns

As a whole group, name:

- Patterns showing up across groups
- Contextual factors influencing current conditions
- Questions that deserve deeper inquiry

****Facilitator Reminder:** This is about naming questions, not jumping to conclusions.

ALL

Whole Group Sense Making
(6-8 minutes)

CLOSURE

- Which of these observations are within our control to act on?
- Which require broader system support or collaboration?