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Using Data in Schools
Facilitation Guide

What is it?

When practicing truth-seeking, we look for multiple sources of data that can give us a rich picture of a challenge or situation. At a classroom level, the busy-ness of the profession can tempt us to forgo using the variety of assessment methods that would otherwise help paint a fuller—and truer—portrait of a student or classroom's academic progress. Use this activity to have participants read an Education Week article and explore ideas from a number of education experts on how to create a richer portrait of student learning using multiple data sources.

Why use it?

> ***Truth-seeking*** *is rigorously pursuing the information we need to better understand our world and then using that information in an honest, fair, and empathetic manner.*

Truth-seeking is the process of finding and evaluating information that deepens our understanding of the world around us. In the classroom, truth-seeking is part of the daily work of teaching. As teachers, we have a great deal of influence on our students' lives, and the assessments we use can play a large role in shaping their future. Acting with moral responsibility and intellectual character means that we base our assessment on high-quality, multimodal data that paints a realistic picture of where our students really are in their development as young people. It means that we work hard to avoid basing our assessments on stereotypes or culturally or personally biased perceptions of our students. Regardless of whether or not we feel we are personally compatible with a student, our assessment needs to be **honest**, **fair**, and **empathetic**.

In this activity, participants will read an article from Education Week that includes commentaries from different education experts. In small groups, they will consider how different types of student data reflect Principled Innovation character assets such as truth-seeking, intellectual humility, and honesty, and how they can use varied types of data to gain a more complete understanding of the students in their classrooms.

What you need

- Time: 45 minutes
- Article: **Response: How To Use Data - & How Not To Use It - In Schools (Opinion)**
- A learning community split into seven groups (each group can be 2-5 people)

Instructions

Step 1: Prepare

Provide the participants with the following definitions:

> ***Truth-seeking*** *is rigorously pursuing the information we need to better understand our world and then using that information in an honest, fair, and empathetic manner.*
>
> ***Honesty.*** *Being open, trustworthy and truthful in a sincere and straightforward way. When we are honest with ourselves and with others we nurture trusting and authentic relationships and environments that support engagement and collaboration.*
>
> ***Humility.*** *Being honest with ourselves about what we can offer, acknowledging that there's always more to learn, with a genuine desire to advance the best interests of the community.*

Have the group brainstorm some possible sources of information that teachers use in the classroom to understand their students. Then, have them break up into seven groups and assign each group one section of the article (the article is made up of a series of seven responses from different education experts and researchers).

Step 2: Read and Analyze

Ask each group to read the commentary section they were assigned. In their small groups, ask them to discuss their responses to the following questions.

- What is the main point being made in the commentary you read? What recommendations does this person have for how and what types of data should be used, or not used, in the classroom?
- How do these recommendations reflect the act of truth-seeking? Do you think that following these suggestions would help you as a teacher better understand the "truth" about your students? Why or why not?
- How do these approaches to data reflect the concepts of honesty and humility, as defined in the Principled Innovation framework?

Step 3: Present and Discuss

Come back together as a full group and ask each small group to share the main points of their commentary and discussion. If students have classroom teaching experience, ask them to share their own experiences with using data in the classroom. Have students identify one practice that they would like to try in their own classrooms, if given the opportunity.