Placemat Protocol

This protocol enables groups of people to review datasets individually, then gather around one big "placemat" and share their insights. It is good practice to use only one theme or dataset per placemat so that each group can dive more deeply into each topic. For instance, a community might look to compare remediation rates across their several local high schools on one placemat, while examining their graduation rates on another.

Materials:

- 1 large sheet of paper per "placemat"
- Markers
- Data packets for each theme/dataset of the protocol

Directions:

Preparation: Create your "placemats" by drawing the below onto your large sheet of paper. Create one placemat per dataset you plan to use for the exercise. Here are suggested questions to use, but feel free to adjust as appropriate for your context

1. What do you objectively observe?
2. What surprised you in the data?
3. What do you believe the data suggest? What do you infer from the data?
4. What questions arise from this analysis (anything that will require further study)?
5. What actions might these data prompt?
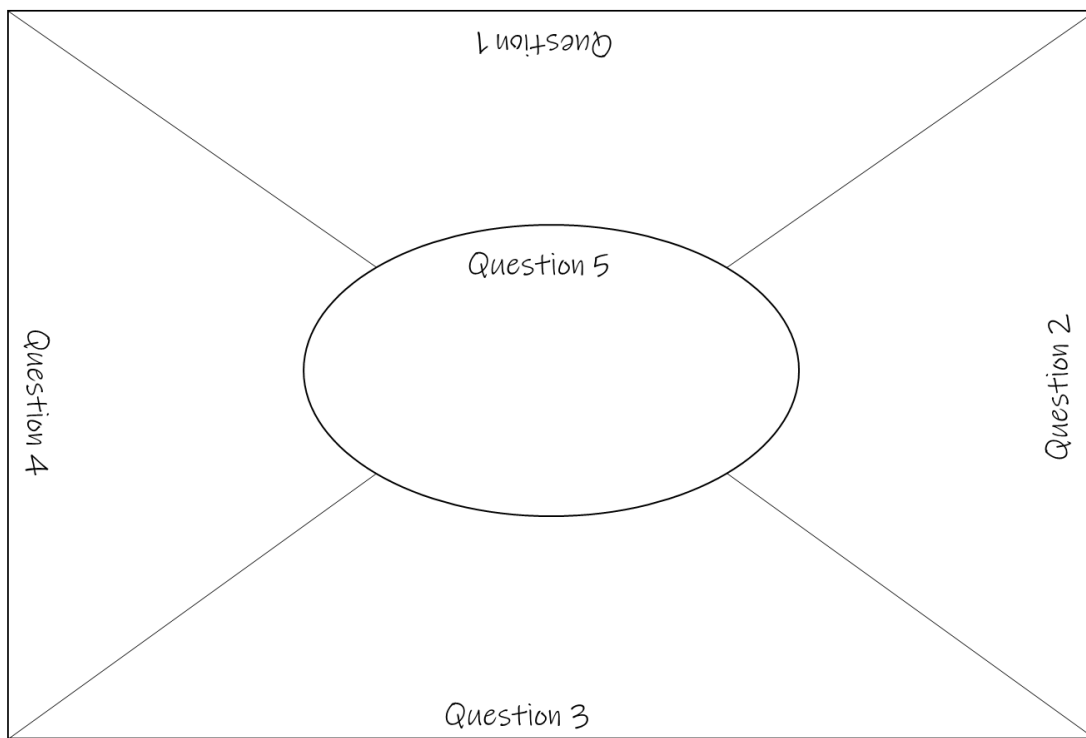
Using the Protocol:

1. *Individual Review:* ~2 minutes of silent review of the dataset in question, with participants noting initial thoughts/reflections/observations/questions on the data in their own notebooks.
2. *Group Discussion (~10 min in round 1, ~6 min in rounds 2-4):* Discuss the 5 "placemat" questions as a group and write your thoughts on the poster paper in the corresponding section. The group doesn't need to appoint one scribe; multiple members can add to the poster simultaneously. Each group will be assigned one color marker so that the final product reflects the various contributions of each group.
3. *Rotate & Repeat*: Groups rotate to the next table. Conduct individual analysis (Step 1) before looking at the "placemat" and adding to it. When contributing to the "placemat", groups should work to <u>add</u> to the responses of the prior group(s), <u>not</u> repeat questions/insights already on the poster.
4. *Review*: Groups return to their original table and briefly discuss their placemat, noting the additions of the other groups.
5. *Share Out*: One member from each group shares 1 inference, 1 question, and 1 action identified through the process about their data point. This member also identifies 1 key "aha" that the additions from the other groups has prompted.
6. *Identify Relevant Next Steps*: the group should identify any key next steps or items for follow-up identified as a result of the discussion. Ideally, the group should agree upon a timeline and responsible parties for this follow-up.

If using the protocol with only one dataset, extend the group discussion (step 2) and skip steps 3-4.

Here's What, So What, Now What

This simple set of questions can be used either as a worksheet, or as guiding questions for groups discussing a particular dataset or metric of their work. This is a particularly effective tool for groups with lesser exposure to data and/or lower comfort levels with using data in the context of decision-making. It can be used to open the doors for considering how to bring data into a particular effort and start to build the data muscle of the collective group.

The Protocol

The following questions guide the protocol. They can be embedded into a PowerPoint slide or turned into a worksheet for individuals to write notes on. Adjust the time as needed but be sure to allow participants to spend adequate time on the first two portions to build their comfort level and understanding of the data.

- **Here's What**. *Describe what you see in the data using factual statements.*
- **So What?** *What are some interpretations you might make about the data?*
- **Now What?** *What implications do you see in the data? What actions might you take? What do you need to investigate further?*

Process:

Option 1: Group Process

The entire process can take place with the whole group discussing each question for the suggested timeframes below.

1. *Here's What. (10 minutes)* Describe what you see in the data using factual statements.
2. *So What? (10 minutes)* What are some interpretations you might make about the data?
3. *Now What? (15-20 minutes)* What implications do you see in the data? What actions might you take? What do you need to investigate further?

Option 2: Mixture of Individual Review/Group Discussion (recommended)

1. *Individual Review (5-10 min)* – participants review the data and making notes for both "Here's What" and "So What" questions
2. *Group Discussion (15-20 min)* – participants share key observations and inferences from questions 1 and 2, and the facilitator guides the group to begin diving into "Now What?". Participants can take individual notes on the group discussion or appoint a scribe to capture key ideas.
3. *Reflections* – when the discussion has ended, the group should identify any key "ahas" and next steps identified as a result of the discussion. Ideally, the group should agree upon a timeline for follow-up.

Note: For larger groups, facilitators may wish to build in a step prior to larger group discussion for a "turn and talk" in which participants turn to a partner for some initial reflections, and then share out their thoughts with the larger group as part of the full group discussion.

Data Walk

This exercise allows stakeholders to engage with data on education outcomes and reflect on their implications, especially as they relate to achievement gaps and equity. Participants take time to individually examine and process data presented in poster format, then discuss the data collectively, with the ultimate goal of identifying solutions to improve student outcomes. This protocol is especially useful for bringing community members into the education discussion to build a shared understanding of challenges and opportunities facing students, schools, and school districts.

Materials

- Large posters of data charts. Data should be presented in a simple, clear visual format.
- Post-it notes
- Bold pens (e.g. sharpies)
- A helpful "facilitation guide" and additional planning materials can be found at the Education Trust-West website here: https://west.edtrust.org/do-it-yourself-data-slides/

Directions

Introduction (5-10 minutes)

Put up prompts to help guide discussion, using the questions below or similar prompts.

- What are your general reactions to the data? What questions do these data raise for you?
- What's the story behind the data? How does this connect to your personal experience?
- What further information would be helpful?
- What solutions can you think of to address the issues raised by these data?

Explain the activity (summarize the individual reflection, pair-share, and large-group process, each of which is described below, so participants know what to expect)

1. Data walk + individual reflection (20 minutes)

Participants will have time to walk around the room to observe each chart and the data it shows.

- Participants will be asked to use the post-its provided to write down and post reactions to the data seen; prompts are provided
- Give participants time to walk around the room and complete the individual reflection

2. Pair-share

- Instruct participants to pair up with someone they haven't yet interacted with, and take time to discuss and share their thoughts, using the same prompts previously provided as a guide for the conversation.

3. Full group share-out and discussion

- Invite the whole group to come back together, and share out observations that surfaced in their individual reflection and paired discussion. As a facilitator, seek to draw out the thoughts and feelings of those in the room in response to the data shown, rather than offer insights yourself.

4. Closing

- Focus on forward-looking questions as you close, asking what actions they think can be taken to improve outcomes and combat disparities.