

Personal Learner Profile

Description/Steps:

Students, in grades K-12, interact and engage with a series of questions that help them to get to know themselves as a person and a learner. This can be a document, project, or even a conversation that helps teachers learn more about their students. Learner profiles may include information such as: skills, strengths, and interests; aspirations and passions; life experiences, how the student likes to learn, and struggles or potential barriers to learning. Knowing your students as individual learners is the key to providing culturally responsive-sustaining learning experiences.

Purpose:

Creation of personal learner profiles fosters an environment of personalized learning that not only meets students where they are, but teaches metacognition about themselves as learners, and recognizes the unique strengths, passions, preferences, cultures, family and cultural components, and learning styles of individual students. Rooted in UDL (Universal Design for Learning), this teaches self-reflection, self-advocacy, and when used intentionally, can build community and connection between learners if shared. Bringing student voice into the learning process while recognizing the individual nuances of the student as a person and learner is also a culturally responsive practice that promotes equity and elevates the individuality of all learners. Finally, personal learner profiles are a key first step into goal setting for students and deepen the practice of identifying areas of strength and challenge to set meaningful, appropriate goals for students to reflect upon and measure over time.

Application: When and where can I use it?

This instructional move can be used with learners in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Best positioned early in the school year or semester, the design of this technique requires students to reflect upon who they are as an individual, and as a learner. The profile created early on is intended to be flexible and revisited frequently through reflection as students grow as learners across a unit, course, semester, or year.

The practice of creating a personal learner profile can be deepened through additional tools such as interviews, data-conferences, and individual conferences with students. Additionally, including the family's voice in the creation of the profile offers a strong and personalized connection to home and makes evident the desire to see each individual student realize their full potential through a successful learning experience.

Getting Started: What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

Learner profiles can be as simple or as complex as the teacher sets out to make them. It might be helpful to consider small and expand the practice over time, either with the

same class of students or across courses or years. Profiles can be paper-based or technology-based. Consider starting with questions or prompts and expanding to more of a portfolio with reflection built in. Digital tools such as MS Teams, See Saw, and programs such as Word or PowerPoint can bring not only ease of organization but also meet our next generation learners where they are and offer a more interactive platform.

Consider starting with two sets of questions under the buckets of "Who am I?" and "Who am I as a learner?" Offer prompts and build from there (beginning examples available at links below). Be ready with models for students who might initially be reluctant or hesitant.

Finally, consider how, when, and if these profiles are made public- whether to peers, other adults who interact with the student instructionally, or with family members. Be transparent about whether profiles will be public or private. Sharing with others allows students to connect to others in the learning environment, foster opportunities to recognize and leverage strengths, and build upon successes along the journey.

Next steps in the application of personal learner profiles would be for the teacher to use the information learned about each learner to tailor the learning experiences within the classroom or course. Additionally, engaging in individual goal setting further strengthens the meaningful learning that is possible when teachers know students as individuals, and students know themselves as people and learners who can advocate, reflect, and grow over time.

Read more about this Instructional Move:

[Personal Learner Profiles Build Student Agency, Teacher Capacity \(knowledgeworks.org\)](https://knowledgeworks.org/)

[Getting to Know YOU with your Learner Profile - Rethinking Learning \(barbarabray.net\)](https://barbarabray.net/)