

# HOW DOCUMENTATION CAN AMPLIFY LEARNING

TEACHER AS RESEARCHER

## Why Documentation

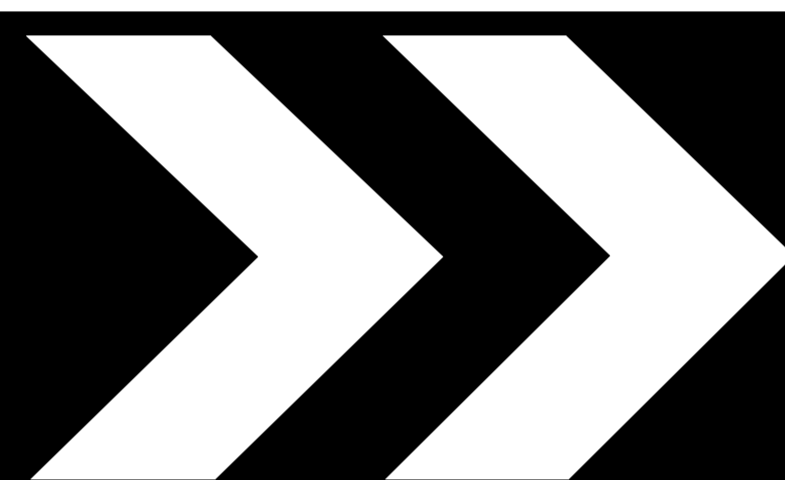
When we document, we curate valuable information that will guide next steps in learning. Documentation allows us to share the holistic and complex story of learning; however, the ultimate purpose is to **AMPLIFY** the learning of both teachers and students. When students' words, thoughts, and questions are made visible, they feel heard, valued, and in charge of their own learning. When students are asked to discuss and reflect on documentation that has been collected, they have the opportunity to deepen their learning and the learning of others.



**Learners see their growth over time when they have an opportunity to interact with and reflect on documentation on an ongoing basis. This builds self-confidence and inspires deeper learning.**

*"Documentation calls upon the teacher not to know with certainty, but instead to wonder."  
~Wien, Guyevskey, and Berdoussis*

## Shifting From Product Display to Pedagogical Documentation



Pedagogical documentation helps us to value the process of learning over the products. When we display products of learning, we are making something that has been done or said visible to an audience; this often has little impact on learning. However, learning can be amplified when we ask our students to connect with, reflect on, and think deeply about documentation that captures their learning and the learning of others.

## DOCUMENTATION

### OF Learning

#### OBSERVABLE

What did we do?

What did we think?

What did we say?

### FOR Learning

#### REFLECTIVE

Where do we go from here?

How can I connect and build on others' thinking?

### AS Learning

#### METACOGNITIVE

How do I learn best?

How can I tell the story of my learning?

How can I examine my thinking to support future learning?



"The heart of documenting is capturing the learning and thinking while it is happening, not simply the act of capturing what is happening or has happened [...]. The reality is that many [learners] are not aware of their own thinking when learning [...]. This is why it is imperative for learners to have ample opportunities in exploring how to make their thinking and learning visible [...]. When thinking is visible, it becomes clear that learning is not about memorizing content, but exploring ideas."

~Toliano and Hale

# Pre-Documentation

1

To make certain the documentation you are collecting is worthwhile, ask yourself, does the documentation...

- ▶ tell a story about the learning?
- ▶ cause ownership of learning?
- ▶ make meaningful connections?
- ▶ encourage metacognition?
- ▶ move learning forward?
- ▶ give learners a voice?
- ▶ support growth?

## INTENTION SETTING

"Thoughtful determination should happen prior to documenting so that learners do not end up with too many photographs, [conversations, notes], or videos that can cause a paralyzed state of mind when confronted with what to do with it all."

~Tolisano & Hale

Think critically about what is going to be documented and why. Setting an intention and being purposeful about what you are looking for will inform what you choose to collect as evidence. Consider:

- 1 What type of evidence of learning, thinking, and/or feeling will you be looking for?
- 2 What type of documentation will capture these moments most effectively? (conversations, video, photo, making thinking visible strategies, other.)
- 3 How will you capture and organize your documentation? (pen and paper, google docs, phone/iPad...)

# During Documentation

2

When you are documenting, and you recognize that you will be reflecting on and sharing this documentation with others, your perspective changes. Documentation is a learned skill that improves with practice as you begin to understand better what types of thinking and learning will be powerful to capture and share.

*Making thinking, learning and feeling visible allows students to be metacognitive about their learning.*



As you document, you should be continually asking yourself:

- what will help me tell the story of the thinking and learning that is happening right now?
- what type of documentation will best be able to tell this story?
- am I collecting evidence based on my learning intentions?

Look for Learning

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Capture Learning

How can I document over time to capture the complexity of learning?

WISE WORDS  
and how to use them

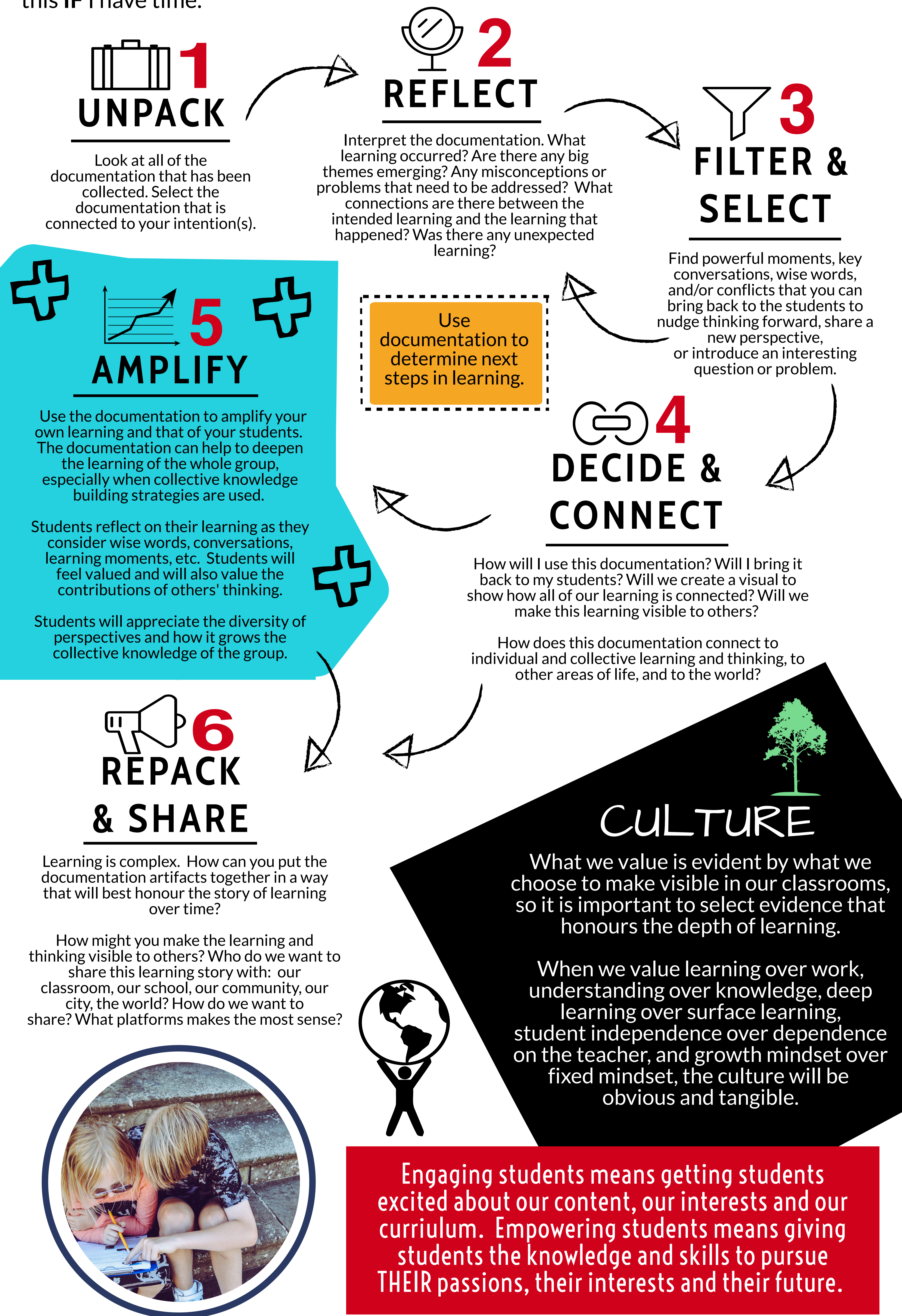
When your students say something insightful and powerful or ask an interesting question, consider making it visible and asking the class to connect to the thinking.

**THE ANSWER IS IN THE ROOM!**

"Telling will never be as effective as experiencing."  
~George Couros

What will you do with the documentation artifacts you have collected? How can you use them to inform your next steps and to amplify your own and your students' thinking and learning?

This step is an integral part of the learning process. It is not an 'add-on' or an 'I'll do this IF I have time.'





# STUDENT AS DOCUMENTER

## How can we involve our students in documenting their OWN learning?

To truly empower our learners to have ownership over their own learning, they will need to be able to reflect on where they are with their learning, set goals for the next steps in their learning, and capture and select evidence to show how they are meeting those goals. Many educators are creating learning maps based on the curricular competencies to foster growth and to put students at the center of their own learning.

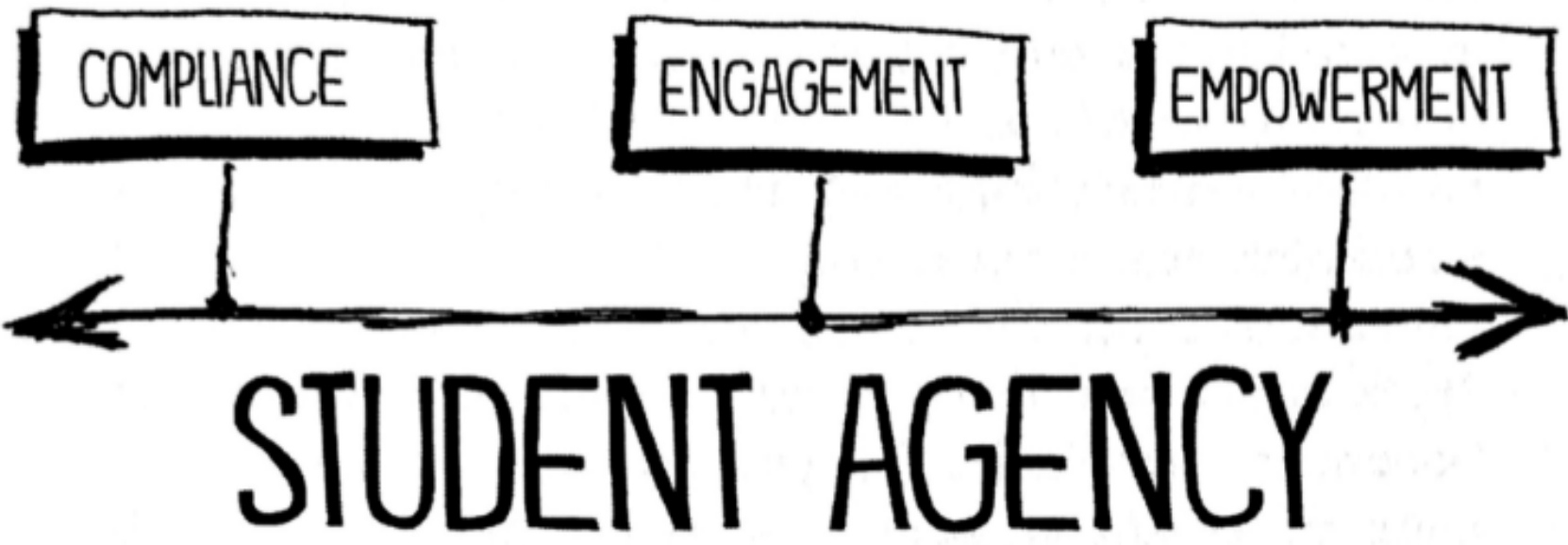


### Sample Learning Map

BIG IDEA: Why is affordable housing a problem in BC?	First ➡	Next ➡	Then ➡	How can I challenge myself? ➡
Building Empathy	I can understand that people have needs and that they can be different.	I can question and listen to help me understand others and explain their needs.	I can connect to the needs of others and describe the challenges that those needs create.	
My Evidence	See my evidence in: •	See my evidence in: •	See my evidence in: •	See my evidence in: •
Reasoning With Evidence	I can use relevant information as evidence to support my thinking.	I can adjust my thinking as I find new evidence.	I can justify how the choices I made in my design were based on my family's needs.	
My Evidence	See my evidence in: •	See my evidence in: •	See my evidence in: •	See my evidence in: •
Ideating and Prototyping	I can generate many ideas to solve a specific problem.	I can choose one idea and develop a prototype.	I can use feedback from testing and my peers to help me redesign and improve my prototype.	
My Evidence	See my evidence in: •	See my evidence in: •	See my evidence in: •	See my evidence in: •

## HOW TO CREATE A LEARNING MAP

- 1 Determine the time frame for using your learning map. They can be created for a unit, a term, or a whole year.
- 2 Determine what big skills you want students to walk away with at the end of this time frame. You may consider curricular documents, your background knowledge, and the big ideas you want students to understand deeply. Use these as your main categories.
- 3 Think about how each skill develops. Ensure that your ‘first’ category is accessible to all students in your class, keeping in mind this may change year-to-year. The goal is to create a step-by-step journey for students to follow.
- 4 **Check your steps:**
  - Avoid creating a rubric. Rubrics are for products; learning maps are to guide the process of learning.
  - Avoid using judgment words/qualifying words like ‘good’ or ‘strong’ or ‘clearly’ or ‘solid’. The level of how well they can meet each goal is evident in their evidence.
  - Check the verbs you have chosen to ensure students can actually collect evidence of that step.
- 5 **Remember:**
  - Learning maps are not meant to be an achievement scale. Students can be at different levels of achievement within each box of the learning map, and go through the mastery scale for each box as they progress with their learning.
  - Students should be given opportunities to interact with the learning map regularly to set goals, collect evidence of how they are meeting their goals, and check in with the teacher to see how they are doing with their goals.



To see samples of learning maps created by educators in the Central Okanagan School District, go to:

<http://bit.ly/LearningMapsILT>