

Tips to support learning from practice

The approach to learning from practice featured in this module – learning from what is recorded in public space – relies on gathering photos of public space recordings in a classroom. A challenge of this approach is that some photos work better than others for supporting reflection and interaction with colleagues. However, there are several easy-to-take steps, shared below, that will enhance the likelihood that photos have the needed features.

Creating/Taking Good Shots

1. Test the location of the camera when picking a spot.

The items you photograph in the public recording space should be clear and easily legible. Make sure that the space is properly lit and that your distance from it allows for words, diagrams, etc. to be clear. Be aware that items that appear legible to your eyes may not be legible through the camera – read/interpret the image that appears in the camera display/view finder or try viewing a test shot on your computer to check your image quality.

2. Take one picture to capture the “big picture” and a series of close-ups.

Make sure to take one photo that shows the whole public recording space. If the distance required to fit the whole space in one shot makes some items too small to read, then take additional photos that are close enough to make the information legible.

3. Keep it real.

It is important that the photos document what was written in the public recording space during the lesson. Don't worry about rewriting things to make the space look neater or prettier for the photos. Try to capture what was actually written/drawn during the lesson – the goal is to learn from what you and your students did.

4. Prepare it for future reflection.

You might want to judiciously add a few lines and annotations to the board to help you remember – and others to understand – what is in the photo. Which things go together? What was the sequence in which things were written/added? Make sure it is clear which things were recorded in public space during the lesson and which you added later for the photo (perhaps use a different color).

5. Focus on the public recording space.

Since the focus of these photos is on “before” or “after” teaching, try to take photos of the public recording space when the room is empty and try not to include people in the shot.

6. Be mindful of color choices when writing.

If possible, record in public space using high-contrast colors that are easy to read in photos. When writing on a white surface, use darker colors whenever possible.

Technical Advice

1. Make sure your camera has adequate memory storage ahead of time.

If it is important to capture fine details – small text, intricate drawings/constructions, etc. – you might want to adjust the camera’s settings to take high resolution images. If high resolution is not needed, you might want to **set your camera to take lower resolution images**. These will be easier to upload and share because of their smaller file size.

2. If your pictures are overly dark or bright in areas, try taking photos from different positions in the room to find the best angle. You may want to also try:
 - a. Changing the camera’s position or angle– e.g. shooting into the light will often make your photos darker.
 - b. Adjusting the light sources in your room (including windows).
3. If your pictures are blurry, try:
 - a. Manually adjusting the focus (if this feature is available).
 - b. Adjusting the distance between the camera and the object/space you are photographing. Moving closer to your subject will sometimes produce sharper/better images than zooming in with the camera.
 - c. Zooming out with the camera – close ups can be difficult to shoot with cameras lacking good image stabilization.
 - d. Stabilizing your arms/hands on a table or other stable surface when snapping the photo.