

Final Transcript – Ottawa Clip J8

INFORMING PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT

Narrator: On an hourly basis, teachers make decisions that have profound implications for students. How students feel about themselves as learners -- whether they enjoy learning and strive for excellence -- is closely related to their teachers' professional skills both in differentiating instruction and assessment and in helping students understand how they can improve.

Growing Success defines professional judgement as, “a purposeful and systematic thinking process” that is “informed by professional knowledge of curriculum expectations, context, evidence of learning, methods of instruction and assessment, and the criteria and standards that indicate success in student learning.”

Teacher 1: I think again, I have to go back to the curriculum and really sort of think what is it I need to do and how do I need to set it up for them to meet with success. Sometimes it's breaking down, chunking individual pieces to get them to the journey and understanding what those pieces are and then through the journey, reflecting on where I need to spend more or place more emphasis. So when it comes to the end of the road in the learning journey for the particular year, so year-end expectations are where I'm... my destination is with my students.

Teacher 2: So I used my professional judgment to decide which specific expectations will go into the overall evaluation of the students and the overall expectations are all used for assessment but the specific ones I have to pull out the specific expectations that I really want the students to focus on and that I want to make sure that they've demonstrated understanding of.

Teacher 1: Ultimately I guess at the end of the day when I think of professional judgment it really also means knowing those students, the students who are in the room in front of me, who I'm working side by side from September to June. I think that when you know a student, everybody comes with their own personal baggage that may affect their learning on a particular day or how they're responding or reacting to certain things. So if I feel that an individual has not perhaps risen to the occasion or provided their best opportunity, I try to allow them another opportunity to go back in to show their learning in another way possibly as well. And so I pull the body of work, my observations, my conversations, samples, whether they're rough or finished products and examine the journey based around the expectations, and think okay, where, where was there a target, where was the target for that year and how successful were they at meeting it, exceeding it or approaching it. Sometimes when I put something out there for students in general to work with and then I bring it back and I see some common patterns, trends, difficulties, and I reflect on it and decide perhaps the situation wasn't set up properly for them to meet with success; that there may have been pieces missing in their journey or in the teaching

and in the practice for them to be successful. I may even look at the design of the task and consider sort of what was the task asking them to do, what was in place, what was the background knowledge that they would have had to have had in order to be successful with a particular task? And if there's consistent gaps, over a common body of students, then I would have to go back in and redesign tasks to set them up to be more successful. I'm using my professional judgment, I... I have to use my observations to guide my practice, I need to reflect and that includes daily reflection, sometimes on the spot reflection through the observations as I'm spending time around the room, working with individual students and seeing where their successes are and where there are struggles and constantly revisiting and planning, revisiting, planning, reflecting, planning as I go through that journey.