

Final Transcript – Ottawa Clip P7

GATHERING EVIDENCE OF LEARNING FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES

Narrator: If evidence of learning is to be reliable, we need to be confident that it accurately reflects what students know and can do. Thomas Guskey points out that “any *single* measure of learning can be unreliable”. By triangulating the evidence, teachers can increase the reliability of the evidence, and the interpretations made from it.

Narrator: Typically, students are asked to demonstrate their learning by generating a product.

Stephanie: Okay, so today, right now, we’re going to talk about our cumulative task, our final task for our structures unit and our geometry unit. We’re going to build a structure. And so we’re going to take all of those learning goals that we have looked at in math and science and we’re going to put them all together and we’re going to make a structure.

Lisa: Sometimes a product isn’t a true representation of their knowledge. Sometimes a product doesn’t always turn out the way that a student planned or that we planned. And so if you give the student an opportunity to explain their thinking, that’s really where you get a true idea of what their knowledge is.

Narrator: One way of triangulating evidence is to collect data from different sources, such as observations of performance and conversations about the product.

Lisa: What have you guys built with the blocks?

Children: We built a parliament building.

Lisa: Very good. You’ve done a great job of using that picture to help you create your structure. Alex, what are some of the 3D shapes that you’ve used to build up your structure?

Alex: It’s a rectangular prism.

Lisa: Excellent. What other 3D shapes have you used?

Alex: A cube.

Lisa: A cube. I love it! And what have you used here?

Alex: A cylinder.

Lisa: So that was one, two, three 3D shapes. And I notice that you don't have your name over on the bubble that says "I can name four 3D shapes". Well, I bet you can. I bet you there's one more that you can name, and then you'll be able to go over and put your name over on that bubble.

Child: It is so easy.

Lisa: What about this one? We haven't talked about this one yet.

Child: ... or that one.

Alex: It looks like a triangular prism.

Lisa: A triangular prism. Good! You should go put your name over on that bubble. Off you go.

Stephanie: The product isn't always enough because, again, it's only one real style of getting that evidence and we're human, we're all different, and not all of us have a strength of being able to produce a product, or write it down, or create something, or draw a picture. And we need those other outlets to be able to shine. So if I create a paper task which might benefit a certain number of students in my class, there are going to be students that will not do it well, because that's not their strength. And so, what I take out of that, is I see – I look at the product and I see what they've given me and I can determine "Okay, what did they do well in that?" But then if something's unclear, I have to go back and I have to actually conference with them, because perhaps they just simply could not write down what they wanted to say. So having them talk to me, and I would scribe down, scribe what they say verbatim, I wouldn't correct anything; I would just ask guiding questions and they could tell me what they thought. And then I would write it down and then that would be my evidence. So a conversation along with a product.

Child: What are you going to write Miss?

Stephanie: I'm writing down what you tell me. So using all our success criteria, you're telling me what you've learned. You're showing me that you've learned 2D and 3D shapes and you can use geometric vocabulary to describe them.

Child: I used "long", that's not a – that's not a geometric word.

Stephanie: What would be a geometric word, then?

Child: Uh... face.

Stephanie: Ooh. Can you show me a face? Okay, excellent.

Child: And corner.

Stephanie: Can you show me a corner?

Stephanie: Mm-hmm. What's this, right there?

Child: A side.

Stephanie: This?

Child: Oh, a vertex.

Stephanie: It's a vertex? Is there a vertex on that one?

Child: This.

Stephanie: Where?

Child: If you look this way, it goes like here.

Stephanie: Oh, okay. So I'm just writing down some of our conversation, so that I can put this away and I can remember it.

Lisa: ...I sometimes will prompt them with questions. And I can be prompting at the beginning of creating a product, in the middle, or the end. And the information they give me at the beginning where they're explaining what their plan is, I think is just as important and valid representation of their learning as what they show me at the end.

Stephanie: There's also different learning styles, students who would rather do something than explain it; students who would rather write it down than do it, and so it really offers students an opportunity to show us their best. Learning about the evaluation process has definitely confirmed my belief that we all learn differently. I really have appreciated the idea of giving far more freedom to students, and I have found that incredibly motivating for them, and I have found that my evaluation actually becomes easier because they are— they're motivated to do it. And so they're achieving at a faster rate than I was expecting. If I give them lots of opportunities to show me their learning in a variety of different ways, to reach all learners, then I find that when it comes time to evaluate, then I have a stronger confidence in being able to say "he can do this, or she can do that".