

Final Transcript – Ottawa Clip P8

DETERMINING A GRADE

Narrator: When determining a grade for the report card, teachers apply their professional judgment – a purposeful and systematic thinking process – to a collection of evidence of learning for each student. This process involves reviewing the evidence to ensure that it is valid and reliable, analysing the evidence of learning that has been gathered, looking for trends or patterns on which to base a judgement, and then making a judgement to determine the grade.

Teacher (Jennifer): You need to have enough pieces of data that you can look at a student's work, look at the body of evidence that you have and be sure that the mark that you're giving is truly reflecting their learning. If you have enough pieces of evidence, then you can take out outliers that don't make sense in your data set or you can look for trends in your data and decide which mark to give the student based on what you're seeing.

Vice-Principal (Joan) : The idea of developing an assessment plan before you actually start your learning cycle, if you do that all at the outset, it's not an add-on, it's not something extra that you need to do, it's actually going to make your life so much easier because when then you get to the end of it, your validity checks will have been done because you've already made sure that you're tools, assessing because you've planned it out that way. And then if you consciously and intentionally gather all that evidence as you go along, then you'll have a multitude of evidence so that's where your reliability comes in.

Narrator: With intentional planning of assessment with instruction, teachers will have a body of evidence that represents each student's achievement of the overall expectations, and provides information about the student's learning progress throughout the grading cycle.

Teacher (Lisa): My assessment plan involves ensuring that I'm evaluating the overall expectations and ensuring that I'm giving the student multiple opportunities throughout the unit to show me their understanding and ensuring that those assessment tools are a link to the different categories of the achievement chart.

Narrator: By reviewing the evidence first, teachers determine which evidence is the most relevant representation of the learning.

Teacher (Lisa): Definitely some of the assessment activities allowed the student to provide a little bit more evidence of their understanding and those again were the activities that required them to explain their thinking, apply their understanding to different situations. Looking at my chart I can see that I highlighted the grades that are connected to more of those richer assessment activities.

Narrator: When analysing the evidence, teachers look for trends and patterns that show the student's most consistent level of achievement, giving special consideration to the more recent evidence.

Teacher (Stephanie): So the first thing I do is look for the most consistent level of achievement...

Narrator: One way to look for consistency is to determine the mode, a mathematical measure of central tendency.

Teacher (Jennifer): So this student is going to get a 3 plus. It becomes a 3 plus because if I'm looking at the mode I can see that most of his marks are in the 3 range...

Narrator: Teachers give special attention to the more recent data. This is particularly important when the trend in the data shows growth and improvement over time.

Teacher (Matt): I give special consideration to the most recent evidence when a student is able to perform a similar task regarding the same expectation and is able to show improvement on that particular task and that particular concept.

Teacher (Lisa): The more recent data I've collected is more important information because they've had more opportunity to practice the skills, more opportunity to discuss the concepts, use the concepts and apply the feedback.

Narrator: Another factor to consider when determining a report card grade is how much emphasis to give each piece of evidence. Some data will receive more weight or emphasis than others.

Teacher (Erin): I don't weight everything the same because I give a lot of exit cards where I'm just checking in to see how they're doing and so those assessments really help me to decide where to go next - do I have to spend longer on this concept or can I move on. Some unit tests have more questions on them and they have to show what they know throughout the whole unit, where at other times I'm giving them a quiz that's just focusing on a few expectations. Some tasks give them more opportunity to show what they know.

Narrator: Occasionally the data collected from a product may not match what the teacher has observed or learned through conversation with the student. An outlier is a piece of evidence that goes against the identified trend.

Teacher (Erin): I also look to see if there are some outliers. So if this child is generally doing, you know, in the B range for example and all of a sudden is getting a Level 1, that's something that is going to be a little bit of a trigger to see what went on there.

Teacher (Julianna): She consistently showed me that she got a B+, so I feel fairly confident that that is where she's at in her understanding, however I did go back and look at the knowledge and understanding to see whether or not it helps me justify that that grade and she did in one area get a Level 2, but because we had a chance to sit down and talk about that and sort of figure out where it is she was having those sort of misconceptions, misunderstandings, by the time she was able... by the time we came back to that topic again, she was able to apply those things and showed me that she

does in fact understand that concept. So that Level 2, it would be an outlier, something that I kind of discounted because it doesn't really reflect or show her true understanding of the concepts. I feel confident in discounting that Level 2 because it doesn't represent what she knows currently.

Teacher (Jennifer): When I had an outlier, that was an opportunity for me to go back and check in with that student and see if I could come up with a reason why there was an outlier; so whether I had missed something or whether the student had missed something, or sometimes an outlier was just a piece of data to ignore when looking at the overall grade.

Teacher (Rola): In his achievement I noticed that all of his grades at 4 minus, I noticed an outlier in his... on his grade body of evidence and it was 3 minus. By looking at his trends and looking at the outlier, I knew that there was something that I had to go back and clarify from his work, so I gave him another chance to really do another task in order to speak to those criteria after I have given him feedback and we clarified the expectations. Then he got a 4 minus on his... for his final grade...

Narrator: The evidence that students and teachers gather during assessment for learning and assessment as learning is useful in dealing with outliers.

Teacher (Helene R.): I think the assessment as and for learning is essential, it's very valuable if I want to have a grade that is very representative of the student learning. So what I can do, because I have the assessment for learning and as learning, I verify what the data that I have for the summative assessment, I verify if it's match well. It helps first to verify my last or recent evaluation. It make more fair for the student and it's represent his learning. So I think it's necessary. You cannot have just a last evaluation and use this one. It's a process from the beginning. I will ask myself is it because the student did not understand what to do in the task or it's because he did not get it, but I will verify by asking him orally. It's make my professional judgment more informed. It makes the grade more accurate, more valid, and reliable.

Narrator: Having analysed the evidence for trends or patterns, teachers apply a purposeful and systematic thinking process to determine the grade.

Teacher (Lisa): So the evidence I'm going to be discussing today is with respect to our Grade 4 math unit on geometry and I've created a chart that allows me to review and analyze the evidence that I've collected about the student's learning. At the top of the chart I have the overall expectations laid out clearly and at the side of my chart I have the assessment tools I've used. I've ensured to use a range of tools that I used over a period of time and I also made sure that I connected the overall expectations to the achievement chart categories. I can see which assessment tools focused on which category of achievement and I found that having that information clearly laid out for me, allowed me to feel a little bit more confident about the validity and the reliability of the evidence that I've collected. Looking at my chart I can see that I highlighted the grades that are connected to more of those richer assessment activities. I've also highlighted the grades that are connected to the conference opportunities and I've highlighted the grades that I collected towards the end of the learning. So those are the grades that I'm going to take, I'm going to find the mode and I'm going to feel confident with the grade.

So what I did is I took the grades that I decided to use. I lined them up. I had first thought about taking the mode which was clearly a 3 minus, and then I thought I'd look to see what the median was as well, and it also turned out to be a 3 minus. So it was really clear to me that the student is working at a 3 minus based on the evidence I collected.

Narrator: With a carefully crafted assessment plan, a collaborative relationship with students, and informed professional judgement, teachers can feel confident that the report card grades that they determine accurately represent their students' learning.