The Role of INFORMATION in Professional Work

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All professional work depends on the collection, analysis and use of relevant information.
professionals require INFORMATION about:

1. the situation confronting them
What are we dealing with?
use of specialised tools and techniques to collect data
What are we dealing with?
experts know how to read and interpret data (convert it into information)
Professionals do not commence treatments/interventions/solutions without first obtaining detailed information about the situation at hand.
The development of *tailored* solutions to specific problems is a characteristic of professional work.

(as opposed to the routine implementation of one-size-fits-all solutions)
Q. To what extent do educators use data to understand the situations confronting them and to decide on appropriate courses of action?

(or are educational data used primarily to monitor and evaluate?)
professionals require INFORMATION about:

2. effective strategies
With an improved understanding of the task / problem, the challenge is to decide on an appropriate course of action.
What do we know about effective solutions?
A professional *knowledge base* provides information about effective practices and solutions.

- What are the alternative approaches?
- What has been effective in the past?
- Under what conditions?
Professionals aspire to evidence-based practice

(practice supported by research)
professionals require INFORMATION about:

3. progress
Is there evidence of progress?
What should I do now?
The monitoring of progress often requires measures that can be compared over time.
Measures of individual growth / learning are among the most powerful measures of educational progress.
A challenge is to convert test data into useful *information* about

- where students are up to in their learning
- what progress they have made
- what might be done next to support their further learning
professionals require INFORMATION about:

4. the outcome
Information about the outcome is required to evaluate how well a treatment / intervention / solution has worked.
• Was the initiative effective?
• Was it more effective than the alternatives?
What did we learn?
Information about how well an initiative has worked adds to our professional knowledge base.
in summary...

Professionals require INFORMATION about:

1. the situation confronting them
2. effective strategies
3. progress
4. the outcome
The collection and interpretation of data are crucial to professional work to support student learning.
ENJOY THE CONFERENCE!