



**Final Report: BRITTNEY MERRYWEATHER
JUNE 4, 2015**

Education 419 – MIDDLE YEARS/SELF-REGULATED LEARNING COHORT

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Brittney successfully completed EDUC 315 School Based Orientation Practicum I (weekly visits and a two week practicum), EDUC 323 School Based Orientation Practicum II (weekly visits) and the initial three weeks of EDUC 419 School Based Extended Practicum at Eagle Mountain Middle School in Anmore, BC (SD#43 Coquitlam). Based on advice from the Teacher Education Office, Brittney embraced the challenge of changing placements at the end of the third week of the 10-week practicum. Furthermore, Brittney successfully completed weeks 4 – 10 of EDUC 419 School Based Extended Practicum at Hillcrest Middle School in Coquitlam, BC, (SD#43 Coquitlam) with Rose Ngo as her School Advisor and Cynthia Clerc as her Faculty Advisor.

Subjects taught (Eagle Mountain): Blended Grade 7/8: Integrated HaCE/Genius Hour (Inquiry Based Learning) -focus on brain health, mental health awareness, neuroanatomy, neurophysiology

Subjects taught (Hillcrest): Grade 8: French, Science, Math, Language Arts, HaCE

Classroom Composition (Hillcrest):

Core Class: Gr. 8, 30 students (18 M/12 F): 1 Q (Learning Disability); 2 P (Gifted); Pull-out learning support for 3 students in math and language arts.

Switch Class: Gr. 8, 29 students (18M, 11F): 1 Q (Learning Disability); 4 P (Gifted); Pull-out learning support during French for 2 students and during science for 1 student

Extra-Curricular: Gardening Club

PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES

Brittney demonstrates enthusiasm and passion for teaching and learning. In working with staff and students Brittney was always courteous and professional and demonstrated a commitment to ethical standards. Brittney is dependable and made herself available during the breaks and after school to assist students. She communicated with students' families as necessary to help support student learning and social responsibility.

Throughout the year, Brittney had many professional development opportunities. She participated in professional development sessions offered by the school, district and the Middle Years/Self-Regulated Learning Cohort. Additionally Brittney sought out her own professional learning. She read many scholarly articles and books and attended several educational workshops, particularly with regards to self-regulated learning, social emotional learning, technology and inquiry based learning. She took notes, asked good questions and was inspired to seek further information about innovative educational practices. Brittney networked with other teachers at conferences and continues to maintain contact. Brittney was particularly inspired by EDCAMP35, a participant driven conference, where she collaborated with educators from around Metro Vancouver. There, Brittney initiated a topic entitled "Inquiry and Problem based learning" and wanted to learn more about integrating inquiry within the curricular expectations. She was intrigued by *The Maker Spaces* discussion and thought about how she might incorporate some of these ideas in the future.

INQUIRY AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICES

Brittney is a true reflective practitioner. She is able to look critically at her own teaching to ascertain what worked well and areas where improvement is necessary. I appreciated the fact that she would act upon constructive criticism and try to incorporate her advisors' suggestions into her teaching. In Brittney's detailed weekly reflections, she analyzed the successes of the week, but she also commented on the challenging parts of being an educator. She wrote about how she addressed these challenges and made specific and realistic goals to plan for them in the future. Brittney experimented with new teaching strategies and approaches to learning during her practicum experiences. She is very metacognitive and is a good role model of a self-regulated learner.

Brittney was able to apply new understandings in her practicum with the focus of her inquiry question: *Does building productive failure into lessons enhance learning and better prepare students for life after school?* She used the results of many studies to incorporate risk into her teaching by first asking students questions to activate prior knowledge, then try out an activity, investigate, and reflect back on their answer. She also tried this approach in math, by giving the students problems to figure out before discussing the concept or formula, promoting a trial and error approach, and hence, risk and failure. Brittney came to realize that since her students had not been primed to do this, it did not work very well. She had to make major modifications to her approach so that the students felt successful. Brittney should continue to investigate motivation through challenge and promoting metacognition but recognizes that she needs to remember the social and emotional component of learning too.

CURRICULUM, PEDAGOGY AND ASSESSMENT

Brittney's lessons followed the Ministry of Education learning outcomes from the curriculum. She addressed these learning outcomes by drawing on relevant examples and tried to integrate subject matter when possible. For example, in the first three weeks of Brittney's extended practicum, she prepared and delivered an integrated unit from HaCE and Science. Through hands on learning, 3D and 4D digital applications of neuroanatomy, graphing and reflective journals, students learned concepts about mental health awareness and neuroscience. In her new placement, Brittney prepared an integrated unit for language arts (persuasive essay writing), science (optics) and math (triangles and Pythagorean theorem). In HaCE she taught a unit careers and jobs and a unit on culture in French.

Brittney has excellent planning skills. Her lessons were well-organized with captivating hooks, sometimes in the form of engaging narratives and she drew her lessons to suitable closures. There was individual work, partner work and group work. Brittney used good proximity in the classroom as a means to keep students on task and involved in the lesson. She was always well prepared which allowed for structure but also for flexibility. Brittney's flexibility and open-mindedness were great assets in the fast paced, middle school teaching environment. As the practicum progressed, so did her ability to "read" her students (their capabilities, their needs, their thresholds) and then adjust her lessons accordingly. Consequently, she has also gained considerable skill in the area of formative assessment as she fine-tuned lessons based on the day-to-day actions, behaviors and the progress of her students. She learned to provide essential information, balancing direct and indirect instruction. Brittney also learned appropriate time allocation and prioritized learning intentions in the course of study.

Throughout her practicum experience, Brittney employed a wide variety of teaching strategies including co-operative learning, jigsaws, stations, and gallery walks. She saw value in sharing circles and community building projects. When students conducted science experiments or other hands-on learning, Brittney was well organized with the distribution of materials and was conscious of safety.

Brittney kept detailed records of students' work. She guided students through the co-construction of assignment criteria so that assessment and evaluation followed logically. She used a variety of ways to assess student learning including anecdotal comments, the use of checklists, marks, rubrics, self and peer assessment, tests, quizzes and interviews. Brittney also made use of *Plickers*, a digital formative assessment application, and *FreshGrade* an interactive web based application designed to increase communication and collaboration between parents, teachers and students through digital portfolios.

Brittney and other UBC Middle Years teacher candidates participated in a "Teacher Candidate-Teacher-on-Call" day within the Middle Years Cohort. In preparation for this day, Brittney left notes and had assignments prepared. She enjoyed the challenge of following another teacher's plan for the day.

DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Brittney recognized that all students learn at different rates and in different ways and made adaptations as necessary. In the early part of her program, Brittney worked on learner profiles with her students and continually referenced them for individual and group needs. She devoted time at the breaks and after school to helping students who were struggling. Brittney offered to provide different or more challenging work for the students who fully understood lesson material.

Brittney encouraged her students to be self-regulated learners. She created a poster with the Self-Regulating Learning Cycle which helped students be conscious of their goals, plans, strategic action, and progress. Brittney annotated the poster continually and guided the students to be responsible for their learning. As a class, Brittney and her students co-constructed criteria, set goals and deadlines together and referred back to them. When working on their essay, students were consistently brought back to the criteria and the assessment expectations. Through a systematic peer feedback process, students began to notice areas of strengths and weaknesses in their peers' work. This exercise consequently allowed them to critically evaluate their own work and become better at self-correction. When Brittney assessed student work, she provided space for the students to write down exactly how they would improve for next time. They referred back to those notes before submitting the next assignment.

LANGUAGE, LITERACIES AND CULTURES

Language was emphasized across the curriculum. Brittney was adept at questioning techniques to prompt higher order thinking. She made a science questions wall for questions to promote further investigation into the topics at hand. Brittney created case studies and scenarios to help students better understand concepts. Written reflections were used in all subject areas. Brittney has a good command of both spoken and written French and conducted her French lessons with a mix of both French and English.

Brittney is very at ease with technology and was successfully able to integrate digital and technological literacy skills into her teaching by introducing students to a variety of technological platforms. To support and enhance learning objectives, Brittney developed engaging PowerPoint presentations. In her first placement, Brittney wrote a proposal to administration to conduct staff workshops and to collaborate with the art instructor to have an afterschool animation program. Although Brittney was unable to conduct these workshops due to the change in placement, the staff and administration supported her initiative.

CLASSROOM CLIMATE

Having a strong classroom community was important to Brittney. She aimed to build rapport with students, and have positive working relationships. Brittney noted that different classes have particular personalities and that teaching styles often have to be adapted according to the clientele. She reinforced classroom expectations by using effective wait time, gestures, and proximity and used verbal and non-verbal cues to get and sustain students' attention. Some of the students in Brittney's classes exhibited various attention seeking behaviors. Brittney worked closely with her school advisor to address the issues of behavior and applied strategies, including empathy essays, to resolve conflicts. She facilitated sharing circles and individual meetings to hear concerns of the students and aimed to promote positive behaviour reinforcement. Brittney also noted the significance of seating plans and how this affects group dynamics.


CLOSING COMMENTS

Brittney Merryweather has met the requirements of EDUC 419, the Extended Practicum.

Brittney strives to do well and will make an excellent teacher. Her hard work and dedication give rise to engaging learning activities for students. Brittney's personal attributes, commitments and convictions will ensure that her growth will continue as she enters the profession.

I have enjoyed working with Brittney and wish her much success as an educator.

Completed by:


Cynthia Clerc
Faculty Advisor
UBC, Middle Years/Self-Regulated Learning