



Hillcrest Middle School

2161 Regan Avenue, Coquitlam, B.C., V3J 3C5 • Phone 604-936-4237
Nadine Tambellini, Principal
Ray Appel, Vice Principal

EDUC 419 –Middle School Program Option FINAL REPORT

**Teacher Candidate: Brittney Merryweather
District: Coquitlam, District #43**

School: Hillcrest Middle School

School Advisor(s): Rose Ngo

General Description of Responsibilities

Brittney's EDUC 419 practicum placement was within a Grade 8 classroom consisting of 30 energetic students, including 12 girls and 18 boys. Of these students, two were identified as gifted and one with a learning disability mainly for written output. There were other students who struggled with course content and/or anxiety which may have required adaptations in class and/or extra support outside of school. Brittney also taught an additional 29 students for Science and French, consisting of 11 girls and 18 boys. She has demonstrated great care and built rapport with all students.

From the onset of her practicum, Brittney has established a warm, safe and appropriately comfortable atmosphere. She is sensitive to the needs of students' emotional, as well as academic, needs and as such, ensures that children are in an environment where they can take risks or try something new or different, and still be respected by their peers for their efforts.

Brittney's planning and units have consisted of a breadth of subjects, including measurement and Pythagorean Theorem in Math; persuasive writing in Language Arts; light and optics in Science; a brief careers unit in Health and Career; and the teaching of ER verb conjugations and elements of French culture. Brittney has also developed evaluation systems for many subjects and is planning to contribute several comments to the final report cards. She taught at 100% course load for four consecutive weeks and chose to teach on the upper end of suggested teaching loads throughout her practicum.

Brittney's lesson plans were clearly articulated and well-structured with precise and detailed objectives. It was clear that she knew exactly what she wanted to accomplish in a lesson and planned for the logical development of ideas. As her practicum progressed, Brittney adapted her lessons to accommodate the time required to deal with classroom management issues and altered assignments to meet individual differences among children based on learning disabilities or giftedness.



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Outside of the classroom, Brittney has shown interest in the school community by co-sponsoring the Gardening Club, running Success Club afterschool twice a week, and attending several workshops and all staff meetings.

Professional Qualities

Brittney is an exceedingly professional practitioner. She has developed excellent skills for reflecting on her teaching. Often times she was able to identify areas in need of change or improvement before her school advisor was able to address the issues. Brittney readily sought ideas, suggestions and advice from her School and Faculty Advisor and made sincere efforts to put those ideas into practice and to incorporate them into her developing repertoire. Brittney made herself available to students at the beginning and end of each day by ushering students in and out of class and communicating with parents about the students' day and school events. She is as respectful of her students as she is of her teacher colleagues and is both punctual and dependable in all responsibilities and undertakings.

Inquiry and Reflective Practice

Reflective practice proved an inherent strength of Brittney's throughout her teaching practica. She was keen to discuss the successes and challenges of each day, and was always open to suggestions as to how she might improve her lesson designs and teaching. She took feedback in stride and worked consciously to address suggestions for improvement or change in her teaching. There was definite growth in dealing with behaviour management. In fact, Brittney recognized the need to change her teaching strategy partway through the practicum to both address poor classroom behaviour and to also ensure that all students felt confident about their learning.

With more practice in the field, Brittney's proficiency in managing end of the day clean-up activities will improve and develop. Brittney continues to self-reflect, evaluate her lessons and classroom management and is gaining confidence in herself as a teacher. Brittney spoke often of her strong belief in student centred learning, rather than teacher directed lessons. She enjoyed challenging students to think "outside the box" and discover solutions for themselves. For a short time, she integrated language arts, math and science to be delivered as one cohesive unit.



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Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

Brittney independently developed well thought-out lesson plans, units, teaching materials and resources throughout her practicum. She quickly and fully assumed the role of teacher. She is open to trying new ideas and taking risks in her teaching—an example being her integration of Language Arts, Science and Math into one seamless subject. Throughout her practicum, Brittney consistently outlined the goals and objectives of each lesson with regards to a particular PLO. Her planning and teaching demonstrates a growing understanding of this age group's need for diverse and meaningful learning by balancing hands-on, oral language, visual and pencil and paper learning.

As Brittney entered into a 100% teaching load, her units and lessons incorporated age- and subject-appropriate evaluation and assessment strategies and records such as rubrics, checklists in Language Arts, and observation-based comments on student effort and comprehension in Math, French and Science. To address the diverse learning abilities of students in the class from those who have difficulty with memory retention to those who need a challenge in her unit in Optics for Science, Brittney created 3 tests, each to suit to a particular type of student. She carefully documented detailed student marks which she shared with her school advisor and posted to Fresh Grade, an on-line student portfolio site, to be shared only with his/her parents.

Classroom Climate

From the outset of her time in the classroom, Brittney took care to build rapport with the students and encourage a positive learning environment. She was keen to have weekly class meetings and circle time. She always interacted warmly and enthusiastically with the students, greeting them by name at the start of the day and high-fiving students as they left after most blocks. Brittney consistently validated their ideas, fostered independent thinking, and allowed students opportunities to demonstrate their learning. Brittney enjoyed including open-ended and higher order questioning in her teaching.

Brittney was clear in her intentions when speaking with students. In addition to using her voice, Brittney used non-verbal cues to get students' attention. This included using a chime, clapping or raising her hand. Brittney makes effective use of her laptop, wireless presenter, white board and projector as teaching devices. She uses them to illustrate her lesson content and organize information so students can easily follow along.



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She routinely reinforced existing classroom expectations, and was increasingly successful in establishing a proactive behaviour management plan that focused on pre-empting undesirable behaviour and encouraged engagement through positive reinforcement and praise. This was one of the greatest areas of challenge and growth for Brittney within our busy classroom as there is not only a wide range of learner abilities, but also levels of maturity and thus, ranges in one's ability to self-regulate. As a result, Brittney has developed an extensive repertoire of management strategies, including where and how to best seat students to maximize their learning potential and minimize social distractions. At various times, she used proximity, direct comments, time outs, and variations in the tone of her voice to deal with disruptive behaviour.

Brittney was always quick to give up time lunch and afterschool to help students struggling with concepts or behind in assignments. She created a classroom display that included student artifacts for their French based class culture project. This was done to both support her teaching as well as acknowledge student efforts.

Language, Literacies and Cultures

Brittney's background in neuroscience and self-regulation has proved an asset to her understanding and teaching to this age group. Although her experience working at the middle school level were limited prior to her practicum placement, her teaching strategies showed growth and understanding of the needs and learning styles. Brittney is exceptionally well-spoken in her conversations with adults and children, and adapts the tone of her voice, volume, and language to the needs of the students. While her gestures, proximity and eye contact have been intuitive from the start, wait-time and addressing student created distractions are areas of growth. Brittney gives students the opportunity to arrive at thinking of their own accord and readily validates all students' thinking.

Diversity and Social Justice

Brittney is extremely perceptive in her observations of students' needs and teaches with care. Throughout the school day she is smiling and engaging with her students; their setbacks are her setbacks, their successes are her successes. Brittney treats each of her students, even those she finds most challenging, with care and respect. She patiently listens to the students, answers their questions, and mediates their frustrations. Her mindfulness of students' needs is apparent in how she is sensitive to the changing peer dynamics in her groupings and seating plans.



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Concluding Remarks

Brittney's enthusiasm, desire to inspire students and genuine love of learning make her a pleasure to teach with. She is a consummate professional, ever respectful and sensitive in her dealings with students, parents and colleagues. Brittney is well on her way to becoming an excellent teacher. She will be an asset to the teaching profession. Congratulations, Brittney, on a successful practicum!

Completed by: Rose Ngo



School Advisor

Date: June 4, 2015

Copies to: Student School Advisor UBC Teacher Education Office