**3500 Practicum Reflections- log book**

\* + means positives or things that went well in the lesson

\*\* - means negatives or things that need to be considered or changed

**November 8th – gym lesson**

This lesson was sprung upon me before I had time to make a formal lesson plan. At lunchtime I made a rough outline that I would follow so that the class had somewhat of a vision and I would not go off track. The lesson went very well. We did a warm up and played two different games; both involving running and split second decisions. I wanted two related games that would push the students to make decisions on the fly. Rock, paper, scissors tag as well as four corners, were both variations of games the students had played before which made the lesson flow nicely.

+ games the students had an idea on how to play, not totally new

- If I were to do this lesson again I would spend a few more minutes discussing the rules of the gym, and not just the rules of the games. The students had a momentary lapse in judgment and began screaming and sliding on the floor; both things that are not safe, nor tolerated in the gymnasium.

**November 14th- scientific method (making foldables+ smarties lab)**

I thought this lesson went fairly well. I love science and am passionate it about it, so I was thrilled to be doing a science lesson. I had premade the foldables so that the lesson would go faster (I would anticipate a minimum of an hour just to make the foldables in class). I had presented the lesson in a way that was easy to follow for the students however I did not take into account the differentiation; this is something to think about for next lesson.

+ organization, premade and video loaded prior

- differentiation; I could have done it in a way that would allow students to work at their own pace, and then pull it together at the end.

After making the foldables, the students participated in a science ‘lab’ which involved smarties! They had to use their science foldables to get through this. Students had to make a hypothesis, make observations, record in a graph, form conclusions etc. The learning was a tad above their level as they were just introduced to the scientific method however they worked wonderfully. We address the scientific method in all of our science lessons so the students can become more familiar with this.

+ taking chances

+ listening to the rules (no eating the smarties till the end)

- students had some trouble grasping the concept

**November 15th- math patterns (gameish)**

I did this in a ‘game’ setting. The students had to come up with their own patterns in a group, and then we went around and the groups had to identify the pattern rule, extend the pattern as well as put the pattern in a table. This is the perfect lesson to formatively assess the students, as I had to look at their notebooks for answers, and they knew of this.

+ students understanding!! Can move to summative assessment

+ students VERY engaged!

* little rushed
* little closure

**November 16th- pH and pancakes (all Friday morning)**

Today was a whorl wind of science. The 65 grade 4/5 students made pancakes to kick of the chemistry unit. Students had a solids station, liquids station, as well as a pH station. The students made the batter in three different groups, then we gathered for cooking and eating. I was in charge of explaining the purpose of baking powder (we did an experiment by making half with and half with out bp) I was also in charge of the pH station. Students used litmus paper to test for acids and bases and recorded their results. I had three groups; the first went really well, I had the time to explain and close, group 2 went well, explanation was there, group three was rushed and did not get time to fully explain

+ engaged students🡪 new topic

+ students had never tested substances before🡪 students felt they were doing ‘real’ science

- TIME, TIME, TIME

- Wish we had stronger acids and bases to test

**November 19th- introduction to measurement (area and perimeter)**

This lesson went well, I was extremely surprised by the amount of information the students already knew and wanted to learn. The students were engaged in the discussion and the students love using the whiteboards.

+ understanding of a difficult topic

+ amount of students on task

- Closure 🡪 was none…

- Circling to ALL tables🡪 Noella’s thoughts

Upon talking to Noella after my lesson, she said that I almost ignored the back table. I did this because Mrs. Parkhill was there however I need to realize that she is not the teacher, and not all the students were interacting with her. I need to really consider this, and CHANGE this for the next lesson. It is important to interact with all students, no matter their location in the classroom. Also Noella suggested that I consider a closure with the students doing the discussion. Because of this, I have added a portion to the closure section of the lesson plan which is ‘closure activity.’ This way I will not skip it in the lesson and will ALWAYS have a closure, even if time is squishing together it is VITAL to have a closure!

**November 20th- measurement (using rulers)**

Today’s lesson went extremely well. Introducing the students to measurement is something I thought would be easy. I keep saying to myself ‘ how hard is it to measure something with a ruler?’ And I was surprised at how few of the students knew how to measure. Many of the students did not which side of the ruler had cm on it, and many began measuring with the end of the ruler and not the 0cm mark. The ‘game’ was a great way for the students to be introduced into the correct units to use for the size of an object. By using relevant pictures such as Pokemon cards, the students connected more to it, and they had a reference of how big something was.

+ relating to real life

+ students listening to instructions ( there was many and they did great)

+ added a closure activity- have students discuss what they chose to measure and what they estimated, it was quick and effective

- many students thought mm was the best way to measure most of the items, even the larger one (need to introduce referents in order to clarify this)

**November 21st- measurement (using worksheet)**

I began by reminding students what we have been learning, and a quick discussion of previous knowledge. I then gave students a worksheet, that another 4/5 teacher had made up. Some students finished extremely quick, and for those students I had them do two more questions involving the information they already had on the worksheet. This kept them busy as most could not remember how to calculate area and perimeter without the 1cm squares. For those two students who completed the extra questions as well, I asked them to read or doodle, as I knew those two girls would enjoy those options.

+ concrete formative assessment worksheet

+ Students are understanding!!!

+ Some students used their knowledge of those squares and drew their own in… this was an excellent strategy for estimation and I let the class know this

- Some students were extremely slow, while others were whipping through it, thank goodness I had an extra activity

**November 23rd- measurement (gingerbread)**

This lesson kind of tanked, the engagement was extremely high, however the students did not really do as I was asking, which was totally my fault. I did not explain the measuring as I should have, and I spent to much time on a question that would have been better suited as an entrance slip students filled in. I did not have the time I wanted, and did not have the worksheets I wanted printed off.

+ Engagement

- No worksheets

- Poor communication on my part

When we go back to the gingerbread houses I will have instructions on the boards and will have the students fill in the worksheets with the information they wrote in their books. I will ensure that the instructions are clear and students are recording what is asked of them. On Tuesday (27th) we will be revisting this lesson again. I will have the work sheets printed out and have them record their data on the work sheet. This way it will be concrete in knowing whether or not the students are understanding. After this we can move on to another lesson in math in the same time slot.

**November 26th- The works (goal setting, social studies, science) All day**

Today was one heck of a day. The substitute did not show up in the morning so I took over the morning until recess, which consisted of goal setting. Students set goals for computer time (raz kids or spelling city) based on progress reports. We got another substitute after recess, but he was unfamiliar with our school as well as our class. Since I have been here the past few weeks, I knew what was expected of the students both behavior wise as well as what projects and assignments were outlined on the sub plans. After recess I read a story to the students (Diary of a fly), as an option for those students who are not very interested in the Dear Canada story we are reading to learn about diary entry’s. After the stories, we watched IKWE- a movie about a young first nations girl for the second time. This time the students took notes, and we paused the movie numerous time so that the students could get the information they will need. After lunch we finished the movie as well as worked on art as a sponge activity. Once afternoon recess was over I taught the beginning of the chemistry unit (other than the pancake day).

And to top this day off, the SMART board would not work… BUT I FIXED IT!! I spent the majority of my lunch trying to figure out what was wrong. The green light was not on, therefore the projector worked fine for the movie but you could not click or write on the board. I ended up unplugging the SMART board and re programming it.. SUCCESS!

Goal setting

+ students knew what goals they needs to work on and what were appropriate

+ it was fairly quiet as the students worked

- many students did take a wee bit of advantage of me as their was no teacher there, and they did not take the goals very seriously as they did the week previous. It may have just been a mixture of the commotion of no teacher, and being just after gym time, but the students were a tad squirrely

Stories + movie

+ loved the *Diary of a Fly* story

+ kids enjoy the movie

- many students had difficulties writing notes and watching the movie, as it was a first for many of the students. We spent a considerable amount of time organizing their pages before even watching the movie, so note taking would be easier.

Science

+ the kids love the chemistry unit

+ engaged the whole time, as it was them leading the discussion and providing examples

- did not take as long as planned, so the students played a game at the end of the day, which worked great as it was a silent game and it calmed them down before heading out the door

**November 27th- gingerbread math AGAIN… (worksheet)**

Today I decided to attempt the gingerbread math again, as Friday the 23rd did not go as well as I hoped. This time I had worksheets for the students to fill out and went over them diligently so the students knew this time what I wanted. The students did much, much better this time around and many of them had better measurements. After the measurements we played ‘*around the world*.’ Which is a game using playing cards; the top two cards are multiplied together and two students answer. The first student to answer moves on to the next student. If the same students gets the corrects they move on, if a different one gets it right, they move on and the defender sits in their desk.

+ went much smoother than last time

+ excellent, engaging sponge activity (around the world)

+ differentiation for those students who were excelling (area of triangle b\*h/2)

- still having trouble with area…

**November 28th- separating mixtures**

Today was SO MUCH FUN! Mrs. Frizzle would have been proud of today’s lesson ‘ take chances, make mistakes and get messy!’ and we did just that. Today’s lesson I wanted to step outside my comfort zone and do a highly interactive SMART board lesson. It took me many hours to put it together, and it took several attempts to get it working the way I wanted it to. But it went really well; students were excited to pop the balloons, and show their knowledge by dragging objects into appropriate columns. Students had notes to fill in as we went through the lesson.

After the SMART board lesson, students gathered around the table and I did the separation in front of the students. Their job was to record the mixture as well as their prediction of how best to separate them. Students LOVED this! They were engaged, and mesmerized by the simple separation procedures. We went about 3 or so minutes into their lunch hour and they did not even care; they could have done that for another hour and would have been just as happy.

+ ENGAGEMENT

+SMART board lesson

- long lesson before the procedure (maybe break it up as it was 30 min of ‘lecture’)

**November 28th- gingerbread math (teaching Mr. Fitchett’s class)**

Aaron asked me today if I would teach the gingerbread math lesson to his class while my class was doing Christmas concert preparation with him. I was excited to try my luck with a different class. After leaving the classroom, I was excited to say I LOVE MY CLASS. His class was much more work; the class is dominated by very active, loud boys, much different than the classroom I spend my time in. I am thankful for the class I have, and the students I work so close with. A great learning experience for sure!!!

+ completion of worksheet

- very loud classroom

- students did take advantage of my at times, as I was new and not their normal teacher. Not to mention there was no teacher in the room. They thought they could get away with it

**November 29th- lines, faces of 2D objects (game, worksheet)**

Lets begin by saying, my class amazed me today! This is a really tricky concept and I was shocked with the amount of students who got it right away and was able to do more complex problems. We learned about parallel lines, intersecting lines, perpendicular lines and horizontal/vertical lines. The students did a game to test their knowledge of drawing these lines and then we did an example of what they will need to do in our Fort Edmonton project.

+ understanding!

+ kids loved the simple dice game

- took longer than anticipated for the discussion and game

**November 30th- Crystallization+ making sugar crystals (all Friday morning)**

Today was awesome and filled with learning at every turn. We began by watching a video on how to make rock candy; the students were taking notes on the procedure as they were watching. We then made foldables for the procedure and together as a class finalized the procedure we would be using a little later. We took a brain break to do a repeat after me song and got back to work to have a mini lesson on crystallization. After recess we went to the staff room and made the sugar crystals. Students had word searches and pictures to color for their lapbooks as we were waiting for the water to boil. The crystals were green as we are using them trees for Fort Edmonton.

+sugar crystals!

+engagement

+brain breaks

- took all morning

- very loud

**December 3rd- Crystallization follow up**

For a quick science lesson in the midst’s of Christmas concert preparations we did a follow up to Fridays crystals lesson. Students made observations of our crystals, made predictions and explained what it was like to make the crystals. Students did drawings and explanations to show case their understanding.

+ students loved observing the crystals

+ used describing words learned in English

- students were a tad rushed

**December 4th- Fort Edmonton day 1**

Today we began our LARGE Fort Edmonton project. Students were given their performance task and the building they are responsible for creating out of gingerbread. Students had laptops to look up their building (a folder was created with links for the students), and to find information on their buildings. Students drew what they saw and began thinking about measurements they wanted to use. I was absolutely floored with the learning taking place in the classroom. The students were taking math, I could not believe the thinking and learning taking place.

+ engagement

+ students learning and talk!

- NONE

**December 5th- Fort Edmonton day 2 + Science ( surface tension of water)**

Students were now responsible for creating their pieces. They were given the guide lines of 6 pieces for those buildings that looked like a house (2 sides, 2 roof pieces, front, back). We simplified it for the students who were having trouble wrapping their heads around the ideas. For the students who are comfortable in math, and are capable of higher level thinking, they were given buildings that do not resemble a house (windmill for example). These students were not given these guidelines, they had free range to create what they could. Students were given the gingerbread houses we were working on before so they could have a 3D visual to help them.

+ engagement

+ MATH TALK

- some were getting stuck, just needed promting

In the science lesson today, students LOVED the demonstration of waters surface tension by inserting pennies into a glass already filled to the rim with water. The water bubbles on the top of the glass showing the students water has a very high surface tension. The students then were given the opportunity to try them selves on a smaller scale with an eye dropper and a penny.

+engagement… students did not want to leave for music practice half way through

- little out of hand they were having to much fun with the eye droppers

- questioning

For the lesson today I had asked Noella to look for my questioning techniques. I felt I was asking repetitive questions, so I asked if she could look for this and let me know. She told me I kept all the questions at that knowledge based level. This was disappointing to hear but it was what I needed to hear. For the remaining days I will be focusing on this, and will build a variety of blooms questions into my lessons.

**December 6th- Fort Edmonton Day 3**

During today’s construction day we simplified the process a little more and had the students focus on measuring rather than area and perimeter right now. The students could do this after the gingerbread was put together and we can look back on it and do these measurements. Students were still very engaged and kept asking when we were going to be working on our forts.

+ engagement

+ measurements (length and width)

- some students were have difficulties wrapping their head around some of the measurements (but had good group mates who helped them out).

**December 3rd- 6th Teaching Tango**

Myself and Wendy (educational assistant), began teaching a few kids to tango for one of the Christmas pieces. Neither of us dance, nor tango… You-tube was our best friend. We put together roughly a 2 minute dance piece and the kids love it! They are basic steps with cliché tango moves such as the head shake and top taps. The students are having a lot of fun and keep telling their friends they are learning to tango.

+ FUN

+ collaboration on a task that we know nothing about

- not very technical…

**December 10th and 11th- Fort Edmonton Construction**

For the past two days, the students have been constructing their buildings. Students were given their gingerbread that was made based on their measurements. Students used royal icing to hold the pieces together and worked as a team to assemble the buildings. On the first day, most groups accomplished all of their walls, so that the next day could be spent adding the roof and decorating.

I was amazed at the team work going on, and the conversations the students were having. They were not off task and rambling about the weekend, they were talking area, and measurements… it was amazing.

+ completion of buildings

+ cooperation

* honestly cannot think of any other than a limited amount of icing

**December 12th and 13th – Christmas concert**

For the past two evenings, students at Buchanan put on an amazing Christmas concert for family and friends. I went to both concerts so I could support my students and cheer them on. They did amazing!! I was amazed with their singing, speaking roles and of course their tangoing!! It was like I was a proud parent, just beaming at the end of both concerts.

**Overall Reflection from my first professional semester practicum**

These past five or so weeks, have been the best experience of my university career thus far. I have learned more about who I am as a teacher, and who I want to be, than I have in my life before. It was eye opening, and an absolutely wonderful experience.

My first impression of Senator Buchanan was that the school was one big family; by the time I left, I felt like I was a part of the family. The school is so warm and welcoming to students, and accommodates them in every way they can. The school may not be in the best part of town, but those kids are the best in town. I would without hesitation, go back to Buchanan. The love they have for their students and love they have for learning is amazing. If I were to sum up my time at Buchanan in three words it would be ‘well worth it.’ It was an eye opening experience to be placed at a school far from the way I grew up. The needs of the students, and the stories the students have will break your heart, but it will also bring you back to reality. That what I loved the most; diversity. I learned more about diversity, and the needs of individual students, than I ever thought I would. Knowing the background of your students, knowing their home life, their school life and who they are, allows you to teach them in a way that is successful to them. Asking a student to write a unit test on Wednesday, may not work for all students, if perhaps one of your students was up all night Tuesday baby sitting because their parents were out partying. You need to know your students, if you want them to be successful.

My teacher advisor was extraordinary. She may have been away a lot, (at different conferences), but even though she was away she made sure I had everything I would need, and the same substitute came every time which was wonderful. I learned so much from her, no just about teaching, but about life in general. I would not hesitate in working with her in the future.

My time at the school flew by, and it felt only a couple weeks long. I did many, many lessons, yet it felt like only a handful. The students absolutely loved the science experiments, and we amazed at every turn. They were so happy with their Fort Edmonton creation, as were their parents. My time at Buchanan was well worth it, and I would not change it for all the money in the world.