*AUTOMATICITY*

*Automaticity is the ability to do things without occupying the mind with the low-level details required, allowing it to become an automatic response pattern or habit. It is usually the result of learning, repetition, and practice.*

I have chosen the word *automaticity* as my EDUC 491 practicum one word for 2020 because it will be important to my teaching practice as I seek to achieve flow within the planning/teaching/learning/reflection process. I wish to continue building my teaching toolkit in support of increased automaticity. Having access to proven and familiar materials will assist me in achieving better automaticity in my teaching. Constructive pacing for me as a teacher and for my students as learners will be a focus during this winter term as I further current teaching abilities through ongoing learning, repetition and practice.

The need for increased automaticity became apparent as I reflected on my EDUC 490 Practicum where I became aware of how much intensive planning was involved when creating truly inclusive, highly engaging, and effective instructional and assessment practices. As a beginning teacher, it felt like five hours of preparation for one hour of instruction. Likely this was pretty close to the actual time involved when I was creating detailed lesson plans in preparation for being formally observed. I had great success with being able to engage each student, provide extended challenges and effectively determine using formative assessment the next steps for learning. Again, this was an extremely time-consuming process, because as a teacher, I needed to use my reflections from one day/lesson to help me determine what I needed to prepare next. The idea that I could make lots of detailed lesson plans well in advance of delivering the instruction was flawed. I’m really hoping to develop more automaticity in my teaching practices, especially planning. This will free up time and energy to be used while engaged with students in the classroom.

Although specific decisions about where to take instruction next are necessary, part of developing better automaticity is having a rich teacher tool kit available. I will be working to build this resource throughout EDUC 491 and as I move through my teaching career. I learned during my placement in Beaverley that when very successful lessons take place on a specific learning intention(s), I can file the teaching package as a good reference. Also, the more I use the UNBC lesson plan template, the more automatic the process will become. Collection of highly effective lesson plans, resources, specific pieces of literature, teaching props, assessment strategies and tools etc. throughout 491 will build upon what I began to accumulate during 490.

I received feedback from my Coaching Teacher, Mrs. Doyle, that I had “pulled out all the stops” during my practicum observation and evaluation lessons. She commented that this was great but perhaps not sustainable – back to the “five hours of planning for one hour of instruction” piece. This feedback led me to two important observations. The first being that as a teacher, I need to pace my work and achieve more automaticity as I plan, teach, assess and reflect. The second was that my students also needed a pacing of instruction, review, consolidation and creative opportunities. The nature of the fall 2019 EDUC 490 Practicum scheduling required that a number of intensive lessons where new learning on the part of students were delivered in a short period of time. I noticed that although we were successful as teacher and students, the process was also taxing for my Grade 1 learners.

My specific goal to increase automaticity in my teaching practice will be supported through pacing my work, which includes increasingly efficient planning, further expanding my teaching toolkit and greater comfort and confidence as I move through instruction using the UNBC template. Interaction between teacher and student(s) is the most significant factor affecting student learning. I wish to develop stronger automaticity so as to free time and energy for my practice in the classroom. I will also focus on pacing learning experiences for students so as to allow learners time for inquiry and acquisition of big new learnings while respecting time for review, consolidation and creative opportunities. The length of the 491 Practicum will lend itself to me being able to learn how to pace student experiences.

I wish to make a particular effort to facilitate appropriate play within the instructional context. This dynamic process allows for creative regeneration withing the instructional setting. When we truly “play” the brain fires differently. Students can apply new learning to this creative and productive experience. I have observed that primary classroom programs often allow for student-led play to take place when assigned tasks are completed. Sadly, this sometimes inadvertently prevents “late-finishers” from participating where they may be the children who would benefit the most. Creative and regenerative play is contextually specific. To be rejuvenated in the classroom setting, students need to within the classroom for the creative and regenerative process. This is needed by all learners. Creating opportunities for inclusive regenerative and creative play to accompany learning of new and cognitively taxing concepts is included in my 491 goal of automaticity.

During the 491 Practicum, I hope to achieve success in building upon the experiences gained during 490 so as to further my pedagogical automaticity in the planning, teaching, learning and reflecting process. I plan to continue with effective, inclusive instruction that leads students to achieve the learning intentions covered and personal learning potential. I hope to engage even more fully in the joy of learning and teaching.