



## **Part A: School and Community Understanding and Engagements**

### Comments:

Caitlin is a caring, dedicated, and extra hard-working teacher candidate (TC). She has a strong presence in her grade 5/6 classroom at Montrose School, earning respect from the children, her Mentor Teacher (MT) Joelle Brown, her Practicum Advisor (PA), and her fellow cohort members. Caitlin found support and guidance from her constant debriefs with her MT, PA, fellow grade 5/6 team, itinerant teaching staff, and the other TCs placed at Montrose School. She wrote of her own involvement saying, "I did my best to become a part of the school community although I wasn't in the building full-time."

Caitlin has quickly taken on far more responsibility than the 25% requirement for a Practicum One student. From the beginning of the term, she aimed to get to know all the children, develop mutually respectful and strong relationships with her students, coworkers, and all her mentors. Joelle noted that "Caitlin is a very capable student teacher who easily meets and often exceeds the expectations outlined." Caitlin challenged herself to grow with every lesson and shows great promise as a future educator. She planned, dialogued, wondered, and worked as part of a professional team throughout this placement to understand the philosophical beliefs of her inquiry based and student-centered classroom. Caitlin reflected often in her personal journal, read articles, and looked for advice from others to truly understand the workings of Montrose School. She wrote one day in her journal about her gratitude for the enjoyment she felt working in this type of school environment in which she was placed saying, "I am drawn to the collaboration, the hands-on learning, and to the outdoor education". Likewise, Joelle mentioned Caitlin's ability to absorb and participate readily in the classroom and spoke of Caitlin's willingness to be involved in all discussions and procedures, even to help "prepare the classroom to pivot to the orange pandemic response level...her input was invaluable!"

Due to the many Covid restrictions within the Montrose School and the university strike, Caitlin was not able to participate with children as she wanted throughout the term. It was also difficult to participate in extra-curricular activities due to the shift in the middle of her practicum block to code orange protocols. However, Caitlin embraced these challenges and made the situation work. She said, "I was lucky to have the ability to volunteer every day through the strike period, so I really had the time to connect with my students...I made opportunities and travelled with my students to their French, Phys.Ed, STEAM and Performing Arts classes". Caitlin should be proud of how she found ways to there for the children and earn their trust. She is admired as another teacher in their class. Caitlin found joy in the little things during this practicum block and highlighted a comment made by one of the office staff who "confirmed that her presence made a difference when she said, we're so glad you are here!". She also spoke of a desire next term to find and interact in school clubs where she could interact with the students once Covid allowed.



## **Part B: Professional Engagements and Teacher Identity**

Comments:

Caitlin was professional, dedicated, and extremely hard-working throughout her placement. As discussed above there was a strike, covid restrictions, remote learning, and code orange regulations to contend with in this block. Still, even with the awkward timing of her first practicum, Caitlin can be proud of her efforts to continuously learn and grow as an educator. Joelle noted that “she engages in reflective practices on teaching performance and student engagement.” She seeks constant feedback from her MT or PA to guide her forward in the work she does with the students.

Caitlin’s journal is full of self-reflection where she questions and analyzes her teaching and beliefs about children, education, learning, and best practices. She writes of her careful observation of Joelle and with intention and how she helped her gain confidence and clarity. She wrote, I learned, “what Ms. Brown’s expectations were...then I could echo them more confidently and both the students and I benefitted from the feeling that I knew what I was doing.” It is very admirable that Caitlin recognizes the need to provide consistency during her practicum while still ensuring growth for all learners, including herself. Caitlin pushed herself to research and then challenges herself to get out of her comfort zone. She regularly shared with her PA how she struggled to accept mistakes and grow from the errors she felt she made in her teaching. Caitlin wanted to share these struggles with her students as well, informing them that “slip-ups are how we learn, and from these we can move forward and improve.”. Her desire to develop as an educator was apparent in all journal entries and in her discussions with her cohort and PA. She was driven and always changing her practices within the classroom, transparent in her desire throughout her journal. She wanted to understand her own learning and the children’s learning and behaviour.

Caitlin was fortunate to be part of numerous professional development opportunities within Montrose School and at the MTS PD day. She chose her MTS workshops because “Reconciliation is important”. She worked on continuous knowledge of inclusion and will be attending another session on trauma later this month. She has done a webinar on Indigenous storytelling, various PLC meetings with her grade 5/6 team, staff meetings, and workshops to improve teaching methods for remote learning. She is reader, reflector, analyzer, learner, and collaborator. She is a constant learner and welcomes any opportunity to grow as a professional.

Caitlin must also be recognized for her constant sharing of materials and learning in the cohort. She sent regular emails or links to the other members to enlighten them on anything she found interesting during the term. She also read every article and research paper shared by her PA, making an effort to dialogue with the group or one to one with her advisor. Caitlin engaged in continuous professional conversations throughout this practicum to improve her teaching. She is aware of her strengths, open about her need to improve, and always has clear, attainable goals to improve.



**Part C: Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning**

Comments:

As already mentioned, Caitlin was an introspective TC, constantly rethinking her practices, observing, asking questions, researching, and dialoguing with her Mentor Teacher, Practicum Advisor and coworkers to be the best teacher she could this term. She was shifting her ways, trying new methods, and always adventurous in using a variety of instructional approaches to best meet the needs of her students while completing curricular goals. She must also be recognized for the way she tried to incorporate Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing into the work she did in her classroom.

Caitlin was so fortunate to be part of an inquiry based multiage classroom. She learned a great deal from Joelle and the philosophical stance that is so much a part of this grade 5/6 community. Together they discussed curriculum, beliefs about learning, classroom management, project-based learning practices, technology and more. Joelle commented on their collaboration and discussions saying, "I am always challenging Caitlin to think about how she handles certain tasks/situations/problems as a classroom teacher...the discussions and deliberations we have on this topic speak to good insight on her part."

Caitlin wrote so eloquently of her experience with Joelle and how she is developing as an educator. In her words, "I was embracing the teaching of my fabulous mentor teacher and I did a lot of mirroring and mimicking... I adore her inquiry-based approach. Leading the students through productive struggle creates powerful learning opportunities... I find myself considering and exploring the teacher I want to be...I want to be clear and transparent and create a wonderful and supportive and safe classroom... I want to integrate ELA into Math and Math into Science lessons or Art into Social Studies... I love recursive and reflective practices... I want to emphasize genuine connection with the students and use the techniques of collecting and bridging written about in Reclaiming our Students, (Beach and Neufeld Strijack, 2022).". Caitlin continues by saying, "I am drawn to collaboration, to hands on learning, and to outdoor education... I have seen how much better students learn when they are in the inquiry process, especially when the inquiry is self-directed... I am beginning to employ the Triple A in science (acquire, activate and anticipation)".

Caitlin has found her true calling. She is meant to teach, and she will not allow herself to stop growing as she continues on in this profession. For a first-year teacher candidate in her first practicum block, Caitlin has succeeded in reaching most of the goals she has set for herself. She is already planning future lessons and anticipating all that she hopes to accomplish in practicum two. She has fulfilled more than her required responsibilities and is very capable of attempting more in the term to come.



### **Part D: Summative Comments and Suggestions for Future Growth**

Comments:

Caitlin's efforts this term have been remarkable. With the numerous interruptions in the block, she still managed to be a motivating, consistent, and dependable educator for her active group of grade 5/6 learners. Caitlin is very hard-working and pushes herself to be the best she can be always. She has really proven herself to be a dedicated, hardworking teacher candidate and at times has been reminded by her PA to slow down and take care of herself as well in this practicum block. She is a thinker, a planner, and a true professional. She is meant to be an educator and proved that in the way she related to her students, conducted herself within the school, and engaged in constant dialogue with her PA, MT, staff members and university cohort.

I look forward to the continued conversation and reflection with Caitlin. Her discussions one to one with her PA on articles and her own understandings have been enjoyable and a shared learning experience. Caitlin is bound to show so much growth in the months to come. She is wanting to take risks and constantly adding to her journal and collection of ideas for the future. There is no doubt that Caitlin can handle the increased workload to come as a Practicum Two student. She is meeting those expectations already in many ways and will do well with more responsibility in the classroom. Her eagerness to experience all that is possible at Montrose School will benefit her in the months ahead and throughout her career.

In the term ahead Caitlin can work to find balance in her devotion to the students. She does work extremely hard and must be aware of her own needs as she attempts to reach each child in her classroom. She can also begin to experiment with a variety of strategies to teach, continuing her understanding of the 3 A's and the importance of scaffolding her lessons and managing curriculum with students' understanding. She is placed in an exceptional school with a Mentor Teacher with great skills. Continue to grab all this learning Caitlin and you will again have an amazing learning experience in the next term.