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Inclusion Statement

Creating a classroom environment where students feel safe, valued, and respected is one of my top priorities as an educator whose goal is to be fully inclusive. The concept of inclusion is one that is deeply rooted in equity, recognizing that each student has different circumstances and needs, in diversity, recognizing and valuing differences among students, and in a standing commitment to providing meaningful learning experiences for all students. I believe that if I am to achieve my goal of creating a fully inclusive space, I will need to work on decolonizing my classroom. This will entail constant critical reflection and challenging of colonial structures and ideologies, such as having one single project, style, or assessment available for all students, incorporating Indigenous pedagogies and diverse cultural knowledge, to elevate marginalized voices and discover new ideas of how to learn, and constant reflection of my own biases and practices to create a more trusting and safe learning environment for all.

My commitment to being an inclusive educator can be seen in the ways I incorporate Indigenous pedagogies, such as place-based and land-based learning experiences, into my unit plans. For instance, I have created a grade 3 social studies unit that incorporates a field trip to a local park where students will connect with the land and create soundscapes to gain an understanding of the importance of Indigenous knowledge being passed down through oral traditions and storytelling. These holistic experiences remove students from the classroom and connect them to the real world which can help them develop critical problem-solving skills and enhance the relevance and impact of their learning. Another example of my commitment to

inclusion can be seen in the UDL and DI planning that has gone into my lessons and assessments. In my first practicum I was in a grade 6/7 classroom and there was student whose primary language was Spanish, with very little English comprehension. To ensure he was not left out of the learning I provided this student with the same worksheet as his peers but translated into Spanish. In doing this, with the help of translation devices, he was able to connect with his peers and gain a shared understanding of the learning goal that was being worked towards, and I was able to assess his level of understanding. While I planned my lessons and assessments to be flexible to accommodate individual learning differences, I understand that some students require additional support to bring them into the learning and it is my responsibility to provide them with such access points.

I strive to be an educator that creates equitable, rich, and accessible learning opportunities for each of my students, but I understand that doing so requires ongoing education, critical reflection, and collaboration. I still have much to learn, but I am dedicated to growing personally and professionally and will take any opportunity available to expand my knowledge on what it means to decolonize my practice and be an inclusive educator.