**Teaching Metaphor**

Backpacking

Throughout my portfolio, you may notice a theme of the outdoors, mixed with pictures of me backpacking with a group of people. My metaphor for teaching is like a backpacking trip. When I’m about to go backpacking with a group, I have one final destination in mind. Just like in teaching, we have a curriculum and final goals to meet. However, for both, the journey is far more important than the destination.

When backpacking, it’s important to have a general idea of where you need to go, including markers for specific turns. With this, you must have the right gear. Clothes, food, safety gear, an understanding of the route with a map, hiking shoes, etc… The same goes for teaching. It’s important to know my markers to ensure success. This is done through informal and formal assessments. To be successful in these markers, I have a variety of supplies and resources at my disposal. The classroom technology, provided supplies, collaboration with teachers and administration, school curriculum and resources, and more. All of these things help ensure success in the journey in order to reach the final destination.

The most important part in reaching the final destination is the dynamic of the group though. No matter my resources and knowledge, it’s how the group works together that determines success on a backpacking trip and success in a classroom. When backpacking with a group, every person has specific strengths and weaknesses for the journey. One person might be able to carry a larger load for another, while another might be more knowledgeable in using a map. One might be able to cook great meals, while the other can cut wood and build a fire. Each person must work together in order to smoothly arrive at the final destination.

The same goes with the classroom. As the teacher, I do guide and make sure we are on the right path throughout the journey. However, some things don’t go as planned. And it’s not as simple as everyone carrying their own load and making the trek on their own. Some students are able to handle more of the work load than others. As an example, a student with an IEP might have a modified workload, but as long as they are still meeting the necessary markers, they can still be on the journey with the rest of the class. Other students may be able to handle more, and they can provide leadership in their abilities throughout the journey. Overall, in my classroom, the environment is meant to be collaborative. As long as everyone plays their part and works together, each student will reach the specific markers, and ultimately, the final destination. Some may be carrying more or less with them, but they all work together in pursuing the final outcome. Backpacking is about growth and being challenged. The same goes for my classroom. Everyone is supposed to grow and be challenged, and we will do this together.