As an educator, there are a number of changes and processes we must go undergo in order to successfully maintain a positive learning environment. Change may pertain to materials, structure, role/behavior, knowledge and understanding and/or value internalization (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977). To facilitate these changes, the user must undergo three stages: planning/design, adoption, and implementation (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977). The most misunderstood phase is implementation. “It is not simply an extension of planning and adoption process. It is a phenomenon in its own right” (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977, page 336). Fullen and Pomfret (1977) define implementation as putting new ideas into practice. Prior to reading this article, my notion of what implementation is and what it looks like was different from Fullen and Promret’s definition.

During my undergraduate studies in Early Childhood Education, I had completed numerous long-plans, which consist of observing behavior, interpreting it, and creating activities to implement based on observation and interpretation. Thus, my idea of implementation was that it was only regarded towards carrying out a lesson or activity and that it was an extension of planning. After reading this article, I realized that implementation in the classroom is much more than simply teaching a lesson.

Throughout the article, Fullan and Pomfret state that change in role and/or behavior is the most toughest to implement. In addition, they explain how if one role changes the other is forced to change as well, “if one role in a role-relationship changes, the other will too, so if students are given more autonomy, the role of the teacher changes as well” (Fullan & Promfret, 1997, page 337). During one of my Bachelor of Education practicum, I found that the classroom teacher would constantly be hovering over this one child. She constantly pressured him to do his work and participate. As a teacher candidate, I did the same thing because that is what she wanted me to do. I saw no progress in the child completing his work or participating so I asked one of my professors for advice. Her advice was to focus our attention on other children and to leave that child alone. I told the classroom teacher this, and at first, she frowned upon implementing the idea. However, once she observed that when I was leaving the child alone he was independently completing his work, she implemented it as well. This changed the role of the student and teacher because the learner was now more independent and the teacher was able to focus her attention on the learning of all students. In addition, after analyzing the situation, she was able to determine why the change happened and why it was able to occur.

Change in knowledge and understanding is also very difficult to implement. I have been working at Oxford Learning Centre for almost two years. During my training, I was molded into teaching “the Oxford way”. Most of my prior knowledge from being and Early Childhood Educator (ECE) had to be altered. As an ECE, I believe that learning should be child-centered and that theme-based learning does not engage or motivate the child to learn. If I wanted to keep my job, I had to implement theme-based lessons and activities. In doing so, I found it very difficult to change my knowledge, understanding, and beliefs about how children should learn. Fullen and Pomfret (1977) argue that low explicitness leads to user confusion, lack of clarity and/or frustration that ultimately leads to low degree of implementation. During my fist couple of months in implementing theme-based activities, I found that I was held back in the degree of implementation because I was frustrated and confused on how it was to be implemented. This was due to the lack of detailed training. Ultimately, I had to approach my supervisor and ask her to re-train me.

To conclude, I believe that implementation is an integral step in education. It will allow educators to analyze if a change has occurred, if it was successful or unsuccessful. Implementation will allow educators to examine the change and alter the planning or adaptation process in order to successfully implement a change. I believe that I am just starting to understanding implementation and that I will need to further develop my understanding of it.

Reference:

Fullan, M., & Pomfret, A. (1977). Research on curriculum and instruction implementation. *Review of Educational Research*, *47*(1), 335-397.