

Professional Growth Plan 2017-2018

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As a science educator, I have worked to ensure that my practices have been at the forefront of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education. Throughout my career, I have seen myself as an enthusiastic and passionate educator with the perpetual goal to get students excited about science. Having spent seven years teaching middle school science followed by four years of high school Bioethics and Science Research, I was able to transfer and transform my experiences with middle school students to how I interact and teach at the high school level today. This has been priceless and I feel that I am a better educator because of it.

The current state of the field places high importance on STEM education and I aim to develop students that are well-versed in scientific methodology, technical literacy, and effective communication of complex ideas. We need more students to pursue STEM careers, especially girls; even President Obama has made STEM education a priority and wishes to support and improve this field for American students (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math: Education for Global Leadership, n.d.). This teaching philosophy easily integrates with my goals to become a leader in educational technology.

With experience in both middle and high school, I have acquired a background that I have combined with my current leadership skills. Through my current position leading our high school Science Research program, I feel that I have emerged as a transformational leader. Teaching Science Research has had me take on the roles of coach and facilitator in addition to being *just* a teacher. Being a strong role model, treating students as human beings, and empowering them to reach their fullest potential are characteristics of this leadership style

that I pride myself on and can see myself continuing to follow, whether it be with students or colleagues (Northouse, 2013).

Technology is a key component of STEM, and as an educational technology leader, I want to be sure that students and colleagues have access to appropriate and useful technology. Technology goes beyond STEM and I wish to empower people in all disciplines to accept, use, and embrace it so that they, too, may meet their goals for whatever their needs.

I do not necessarily have the desire to become an administrator or a professor of higher education, but rather build upon what I already do. Although I am proud to be a classroom teacher, I know that I can offer more beyond my teaching position. I have become the de facto “tech guru” in my department, and I find myself engaged and proud to provide support. I am excited to have been invited to share my experience and expertise in successively greater venues, from peer-to-peer interactions through to district-wide presentations. I am energized by the prospect of helping my colleagues reach their fullest potential to reach their students and provide the most effective learning environment. I want to be an expert and provide as many ideas and as much assistance as I am able. I am honored to be the go-to person for technology questions, but I am also resolutely open-minded to see what else lies in store for me.

Throughout my first year in NJCU’s Educational Technology Leadership program I have discovered a deep interest in Maker Education, Makerspaces, and Making. After completing several projects and papers about Makerspaces I enjoyed the idea of having students become creators rather than consumers. Piaget’s constructivism and Papert’s constructionism are key players in Making and allow children to learn from experiences and through creating artifacts. With our future needing creative problem-solvers and innovative thinkers to fill a growing

number of STEM-related job, Maker Education could be the key to help prepare current generations of students.

Completed Year One Goals (2016-2017):

- Continued as an active member of my school district's Technology Advisory Committee
- Presented Wearable Technology/e-Textiles at NJASL with NJCU Ed Tech Leadership cohorts
- Co-developed my high school's Makerspace
- Co-planned and ran my high school's first ever Maker event
- Ran Paper Circuits for K-5 elementary school students at annual Spring Fest at one of the elementary schools in my district
- Co-facilitated Technology Boot Camp for district-level professional development

I hope to accomplish the following goals in the coming years:

Year Two Goals (2017-2018):

- Grow school Maker event to a district-wide event
- Continue to create and offer district-level technology professional development
- Continue to serve on district Technology Advisory Committee
- Continue to attend and present at multiple conferences (NJ Maker Summit, ISTE 2018)
- Continue EdD coursework
- Develop potential ideas for dissertation
- Write dissertation proposal

Year Three Goals (2018-2019):

- Continue to create and offer district-level technology professional development
- Continue to serve on district Technology Advisory Committee
- Continue to attend and present at multiple conferences
- Complete dissertation
- Complete the NJCU EdD in Educational Technology Leadership program
- Publish in a peer-reviewed journal

My desire to become an educational technology leader is a journey that will evolve over time as I am exposed to many new experiences. As I work through the doctoral program, I will be sure to update and revisit my goals, and be flexible with new ideas and changing technology. I will continue to learn from my doctoral program's community of practice; my second family. Using my newfound knowledge and experiences, I look forward to the opportunity to guide and shape how technology is used in my school district and beyond.

References

Northouse, P. G. (2013). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math: Education for Global Leadership. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/stem>