

Professional Growth Plan 2017

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Life is a series of journeys. These journeys, with their numerous paths, shape who we are and whom we become. My journey began with a love of children and the desire to make a difference in their lives. Working with children with special needs is the part of my journey that has led me to my current path as an educational technology doctoral candidate.

Hall (2008) describes educational technology leaders as decisive and directive supervisors who should be prepared to train, model and mentor. In my current role as school technology coordinator, I will apply the educational technology leadership skills that I have learned to ensure that not only my staff but future special education teachers strive to make technology and content accessible for all students.

Through my readings and research, I perceive myself as an Authentic Leader. Authentic leaders are characterized as individuals who are conscious of their strengths, limitations, and emotions. We lead with our hearts, not just our minds, and we are not afraid to show our feelings and vulnerabilities to connect with our employees (Kruse, 2013). To become an authentic leader we need to develop the qualities which will allow us to be perceived as dependable and believable by our followers (Northouse, 2013). This program has afforded me the opportunity to develop these qualities and apply them to my future as a leader.

My educational technology leadership philosophy comes from reading the 2011, and 2012 State Educational Technology Directors Association's (SETDA) National Technology Trends reports. Research has shown that to improve teacher effectiveness and increase engagement and achievement in students, we need to provide technology-rich environments with high-quality professional development (Jones, Fox, and Levin, 2011). I believe that supporting educator effectiveness is an essential tool for an educational leader. Providing support for and access to effective professional development ensures that teachers have the tools to provide innovative

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teaching approaches that meet the needs of individual students and that impact student achievement. If we are to change our pedagogical practices, understanding the varied uses and implications of technology is imperative (Duffey & Fox, 2012). It will be my responsibility as a technology leader to explore, cultivate, and promote these professional development opportunities.

As I enter my final year as a doctoral candidate, I would like to reflect on the past and set future goals towards the completion of this program.

Year One (2015-2016) Goals Achieved:

- Infusing technology into the Common Core Standards and assisting the faculty and staff of A. Harry Moore in becoming more aware of technological methods and confident in their ability to integrate technology into their classrooms and lesson plans.
- Co-presenting at TeachMeetNJ 2015
- Representing NJCU's Doctoral Program and co-presenting at NJEA.
- Presenting at EdCampAccess 2016
- Representing Cohort 3 at the Girls in Technology Symposium, March 2016.
- Presenting at ISTE 2016
- Collaborating with Cohort 2 on an iBeacon project and presenting an award-winning poster at NJEdge

My first year as a doctoral student was marked by many exciting opportunities and discoveries. I was honored to present at NJEA with Dr. Carnahan and members of cohort two and three on the various tech tools for social studies instruction and Dr. Zieger on the use of

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robotics across the content areas. This was my first opportunity to present at a large conference in a room of over 200 people. While I may have been overwhelmed, I am grateful for the experience and opportunity. It was during this first year that I realized there was a need to inform people about the educational benefits of robotics and students with disabilities.

It was also during my first year as a doctoral student that I procured a leadership role as the project manager for the Technology Trends for Teachers Colloquium and a member of the planning committee for the Girls in Technology Symposium. These roles afforded me the opportunity to learn time management skills, planning skills, and the importance of knowing how to deal with different personalities. Additionally, I was a member of a dynamic team who presented an award-winning poster on iBeacon technology at NJEdge and ISTE.

Year Two (2016-2017) Goals Achieved:

- Implemented Google Apps for Education (GAFE) and Chromebooks at A. Harry Moore School.
- Published in an online journal.
- Served on the planning committee for the Girls in Technology Symposium 2017.
- Continued to present at conferences

My second doctoral year was both academically and professionally rewarding. Using strategies and techniques learned during coursework, I was able to implement Google Apps for Education and Chromebooks at A. Harry Moore. Knowing my learner, as suggested by Dirksen (2015), was one of my strengths for successful implementation. I was also fortunate enough to publish two articles on technology integration for students with low incidence disabilities in Ed

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Tech Magazine online. These articles focused on robotics and wearable technology as tools for learning, engagement, expression, and motivation. As the year progressed, I continued to present at conferences and EdCamps on iBeacon technology and robotics implementation for students with disabilities. Working with Dr. Shamburg and presenting at the New Jersey Association of School Librarians on Universal Design for learning led me to the framework that will be the basis for my dissertation research and study.

Year Three (2017-2018) Goals and beyond:

- Completing my doctoral journey.
- Continue to present at national conferences on my dissertation research.
- Begin the search for a position at an institute of higher learning.
- Write a book or book chapter on the best practices for the use of robotics and students with special needs.
- Become a Google Certified educator and trainer.
- Skydive

The culmination of my journey will hopefully lead me down my final path as a professor at an institution of higher learning. This position would afford me the opportunity to impart my knowledge of assistive technology, robotics, and technology integration for students with disabilities to future special education teachers and lead to research on the effective implementation of assistive technology in teacher preparation programs.

I feel that my research topic, and the information that I will be collecting from interviewing and observing the teachers at an inclusive institution for students with disabilities, would lead to

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an informative book or book chapter on robotics implementation. While presenting at conferences, I was continually surprised by the number of special education teachers who have not been introduced to small robotics and how they can be utilized within their classrooms.

Implementing Google Apps for Education at A. Harry Moore was both a rewarding and challenging process. Becoming a Google certified educator and trainer have been two goals that I have had on my radar for the past two years. It is my goal to complete this training by June 2018. I would also like to present my research findings at ISTE 2018 in Chicago either in a poster format or preferably at a breakout session.

Keeping up with the latest technology trends is an important part of my job as a school technology coordinator. In the future, I will continue to read relevant blogs, online journals and twitter feeds as part of my professional learning network. In addition to these sources, I would like to read the following books:

- *Women's Voices in the Field of Educational Technology: Our Journeys* by J. Ana Donaldson (2016).
- *Robotic Assistive Technologies: Principles and Practice* by Pedro Encarnação and Albert Cook (2017).
- *Thank You for Being Late: An Optimist's Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations* by Thomas Friedman (2016) as suggested by President Sue Henderson.

The final two items on my professional growth plan encompass innovation and the beginning of the ever changing “Bucket List.” I would like to be a pioneer in the area of assistive technology, designing and implementing a new and innovative tool to help students achieve both their academic and personal goals. And finally, I would like to jump out of an airplane!

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