My Professional Growth Plan

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August 19, 2017

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9071EDTC808 Summer Institute in ETL II

As an Educational Technology Leader, I want to demonstrate how much can be achieved with dedication and drive. My mentor Michael Reuter, Director of Seton Hall Leadership Program taught me to “Begin with the end in mind.” My motto is: there are no problems, just solutions. My life to date is a testimony to that fact. My communities, those dealing with autism face great challenges and tremendous opportunities thru the application of educational technology.

  During my three years here I want to research educational technology applications to different learning styles, new and enhanced ways to communicate for the nonverbal and how to solve the problem of wandering.  During my undergraduate work at Seton Hall University, I became passionate about the world of servant leadership.  At Seton Hall, I found out for myself the lack of preparedness for the needs of students with disabilities. Their transition to college life became a subject I learned first hand, both from the perspective of students and the teachers.

  Today, I am here representing the 500,000 individuals with autism who became adults in this decade, and to ask your help to answer the question “How can we be ready for them?”  My freshman year I started a campus organization, Student Disabilities Awareness (SDA) to help the issues facing college students with disabilities.  With Vincent Varrassi M.A., I set up session’s campus-wide explaining the need and use of assistive technology: smart pens, assignment calculators for executive function, and Kurzweil Dragon Naturally Speaking. Within a year my group SDA was asked to be an advisory group to disability services on campus.

  Why? - Because of our use of Educational Technology.

At college, I was in the Stillman School of Business Leadership Development program. We studied leadership styles; my leadership style was and is a servant leader. Northouse’s Leadership, Theory and Practice credits that term to Robert K. Greenleaf in The Servant as Leader, 1970. Ten attributes define this leadership type: Listening, Empathy, Healing, Awareness, Persuasion, Conceptualization, Foresight, Stewardship, Commitment to the Growth of People, and Building Community. In my years on campus and since I have done all of these. The Northouse Style approach I most relate to is Team Management. I value a high degree of participation from those committed to getting their work done and encourage participation and interaction.  I always follow through and encourage feedback.

Today I am considered a national leader in the Autism Advocacy Movement. I've turned my Servant leadership style into a career in service, working at a nonprofit organization Autism Speaks and starting my non- profit, KFM Making a Difference which has given out 45 scholarships for students attending college with autism. My passion remains to serve and deliver services effectively using the skills that I possess. Expanding those skills are essential, and this program is the next step.

Northouse's Leadership Theory and Practice also defines outcomes for Servant Leaders as followers performance and growth, organizational performance, and societal impact. Greenleaf's desires to see the servant leader create a more beneficial society. I can stand here today attesting that my scholarship program, my books, my TV show, my mentoring all contribute to the growth of my community and the world.

In 2011 Seton Hall Fall alumni magazine featured me in an article entitled “The Power of a Positive Attitude.” That title reflects my belief that a positive attitude is essential to deal with the future. My Educational Leadership Philosophy is aligned with an article written by Ami Albernaz" The Soothsayer.' Alan Kay, a pioneer in personal computing, says "the best way to predict the future is to invent it" This philosophy was carried out over and over by Ray Kurzweil who invented tools for the disabled student Kurzweil, and I share a passion "Every learner deserves tools that help them unlock their potential.”  The Giants in Cohort IV may invent that future! Abilities not disabilities and no problems just solutions are my mantras. My community faces many challenges.  However, I believe many of the solutions I seek are right here before me. For my Professional Growth Plan, the question is how do I commit myself to our course work, different technologies, and performance-based solutions?

As part of my growth in this program will involve learning more about technologies to help aid my development in the world of marketing and education. As a speaker, author, nonprofit founder and digital marketing strategist, being involved in this field and learning everything there is to know will be pivotal to my future successes.  My vision is to have all people on the Autism Spectrum succeed, and I am willing to invest everything in this effort. Three people Dr. Temple Grandin, Carly Fleischman and Avonte Oquendo, inspire me to reach these goals and I will dedicate my efforts to them.

  My hope is in the pursuit of a doctoral degree in Educational Technology Leadership I will be able to expand my knowledge of educational technology and its uses to help those with special needs. The disabled make up a large group in the United States. They are often one of the most underserved communities as well.

**My multi-year plan:**

**2016-2017 - Year 1**

My plan begins with collaborating with our department at New Jersey City University along with becoming a part of my fellow Cohort IV team.

  I hope to take that initial knowledge to start accessing how I can make a future impact towards helping those with disabilities progress both in Special Education classrooms and out.

  This year to further my knowledge and growth in this program I will be subscribing to journals and magazines focused on educational technology while also reading more on special education. In October I will be attending and speak at a conference at the Marriot Al Jadah Hotel in Dubai that will be focused on ‘Enabling through Technology.' <http://childeimc.com/autismconference/>

  This will hopefully motivate me to complete my goal of attending at least one educational technology conference per year both in and out-of-state.

  I will ask for these experts guidance when it comes to brainstorming ideas for our dissertation topic.

  I look forward to revising the Portfolio next summer and incorporating more of the ideas in How to Develop a Professional Portfolio (Campbell).

**2017-2018 - Year 2**

* Improve basic and advanced skills required in research and writing for Ed.d program.
* Continue to work with experts guidance when it comes to brainstorming ideas for our dissertation topic.
* Continue successful coursework for Ed.d
* Put my new knowledge to implementation. Speaking at an educational technology related conference. Attend and present on Educational Technology at Conference in Perth Australia, and one national conference,  Marin County, California
* Participate in local conferences: Montclair State University  -  Ed Camp,
* Facilitating a session at an Ed Camp session in 2017-2018
* Begin search for job opportunities in Disabled Services in Higher Education
* Continue to maintain my online blog <http://kerrymagro.com/blog/>

​**2018-2019 - Year 3**

* Begin dissertation with dissertation chair.
* Continue presentations at Conferences (2-a-year)
* Publish one article or contribute to book with fellow students or professor.
* Act as a resource for Cohort IV and the rest of the department when it comes to disability-related technology applications for those with special needs. Year 1, 2, 3 and beyond.
* Preparing my dissertation paper for final submittal and successfully defending it. Year 3

**2016-2019 and beyond**

I currently present to teachers, and administrators for Professional Development, and to middle school , high school and colleges students and community members all over the country . in each instance I represent the NJCU Educational Technology Department . In my future travels after graduating with an Ed.D in Educational Technology.

After graduation I'll look back at my time as part of the program and share through word of mouth about our degree to help the branding of the program even further. My future goals will be to remain in contact with my fellow peers where we can network as educational technology evolves over time in this ever-changing world. Year 3 and Beyond

Begin with the End in Mind…..2019  A role model for the disabled community able to implement educational technology strategies for the disabled community for the benefit of all to achieve their fullest abilities

**Year 1 Service Plan (July 2016-June 2017)**

* Serving the community around me as a disability advocate and educational technology advocate
* Produced A Special Community of Love and Acceptance Video Series- promoted online via Facebook
* Hosted a Autism-Sensory Friendly Santa Event for children with autism and other special needs at Barnabas Jersey City Medical center
* Received the New Jersey 37th Hero Award For Service to Community
* Presented at the International symposium on Cognitive Research disorders (ISCRD) on Special Education with slides dedicated to technology
* Presented at Autism Society of America Annual Conference., Milwaukee Wisconsin. Spoke on bullying prevention and cyber bullying of those with special needs
* Presented on autism, social media & digital marketing in Dubai at Enabling through Technology Conference
* Spoke at Stanford University on autism & post-secondary education
* McNair High School speaker on autism & entertainment
* Gave scholarships for students with autism to go to college
* Presented at New York City Town Hall encouraging families to provide services for special need families
* Presented at Wyndham Destination Network, Parsippany NJ encouraging employers to hire people with autism
* LearningSpring Gala Award Winner for serving the autism community
* Presented at Waterbury, Connecticut talk on helping individuals with special needs transition to adulthood
* National Autism Conference New Orleans talking on bullying prevention towards those with special needs
* Wired Differently Conference Las Vegas  talking on bullying prevention towards those with special needs

**Year 2 Service Plan (July 2017-June 2018)**

* Keynote speaker on special education and assistive technology in Perth, Australia
* Autism-Sensory Friendly Santa Event for children with autism and other special needs
* Hudson County Boys & Girls Club, Advisor on Setting up Educational & Tech Component of After-school Program for disabled students in program
* Gave scholarships for students with autism to go to college

**Professional Associations at National/International Level**

* National Speakers Association
* Autism Society of America, Panel of Advisors
* Autism on the Seas, Advisory Board
* IBCCES, Board Member, The International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES), was established in 2001 to meet the training credentialing needs of professionals who work with individuals with special needs and cognitive disorders. IBCCES has since expanded into over 40 different countries with training centers and members all across the globe. IBCCES established the industry standards for a the Certified Autism Specialist™ and the Board Certified Cognitive Specialist™.   I was invited to join their board is Spring of 2017
* Publications & Blogs (continue to promote)
* College with Disabilities, We Do Belong, contributor
* The Out of Sync Child Grows Up, contributor
* Love What Matters, contributor
* TEDxMorristown: What happens to children with autism, when they become adults?
* TEDxJerseyCity: The will of opportunity -- the path of autism to college

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