Professional Growth Plan

As an Educational Technology Leader, I want to demonstrate how much can be achieved with dedication and drive. 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's 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 30 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.

Northhouse'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 Aquendo, inspire me to reach these goals and I will dedicate my efforts to them.

My multi-year plan:

My plan begins with collaborating with our department at New Jersey City University along with becoming a part of my fellow Cohort IV team. Year 1

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. Through the first year of my growth plan, 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. Year 1, 2, 3

There have been countless other adults with autism out there who have similar goals such as my own. Several have pursued a doctoral degree. This distinguished group of professionals who I can call my friends today in Dr. Temple Grandin, Dr. Stephen Shore, and Dr. Lars Perner. I will ask for these experts guidance when it comes to brainstorming ideas for our dissertation topic.  Year 1, 2

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.'

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.

Through these experiences and education, I would like to consider myself 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.

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

In addition to continuing my knowledge, I will also spend a large portion of my time and effort towards research for my dissertation topic. Year 2

Part of my focus will also be on putting my new knowledge to implementation. Speaking on behalf of the department at an educational technology related conference would be one way of doing this. Year 2,3

Later on, in the timeline, I'll also take the time to assess options for a potential career move into disability support services in higher education focused on technology, education, and leadership. Year 3

Preparing my dissertation paper for final submittal and successfully defending it. Year 3

In my future travels after graduating with an Ed.D in Educational Technology, 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

What a wonderful time it will be.

***“You're off to Great Places!
Today is your day!
Your mountain is waiting,
so... get on your way!"***

***- [Dr. Seuss](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/61105.Dr_Seuss%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)***

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