

Future Learning Goals Essay

Travis E. Bohon

Michigan State University

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What I Want to be When I Grow Up...

As a graduate student at Michigan State University in the educational technology program I have had exposure to a wide range of experiences and challenges that have molded my perspective on education and the use of technology therein. As a result of this exposure I have gone from a teacher looking to earn a pay raise for the first time in five years to a passionate student of teaching. As I look toward my future it is much clearer though still uncertain. In order to press into that future I will first of all need to develop my leadership ability. Secondly, I will need to broaden my knowledge base. Finally, I need to stay connected to the educational technology community. These three steps are going to add a depth to my development as an educator that will prepare me for the path I find myself on now and in the future.

Leadership

I have always been on multiple intertwined paths in my life. I have worked in Christian non-profit organizations while working for public schools for my entire adult life. It is rewarding, and I wouldn't change it. As I have worked through the master of educational technology degree a large percentage of the content has been applicable to both my teaching career and my volunteer work. I have steadily taken on more and more responsibility in both roles. Because of that, I have been stretched as a leader and forced to grow. After completing my degree that will only continue. With that in mind, I am looking to develop my ability to lead others and inspire them to succeed. I'm convinced that continued graduate studies in public administration will be equally valuable to any path I pursue going forward. In my searches, I have identified several programs that I would consider, but the most relevant continues to be an education specialist program. [The Education Specialist in Leadership through Oakland](#)

[University](#) would continue my development as an educator while supporting my other pursuits. Before I make the leap to another degree program I need to broaden my knowledge and invest some development into my other job though.

Broadening my Knowledge Base

Education is a passion. In every area of my life I find myself teaching and coaching others. I teach 4th graders that science is the most incredible adventure. I teach my colleagues how to setup and apply technology in their classroom. I teach my sons to be men and my daughter what it feels like to be loved and cherished. I teach a group of friends that there is more to life than buying stuff, raising kids, and retiring. It is with this last group in mind that I look to broaden my knowledge base. After over a decade of developing my mind and skills as an educator, I plan to take some time to develop my spiritual life. I have again sorted through a number of possibilities and decided on a program that will teach me how to study in depth without dictating my theology. [The Master of Arts in ministry and leadership through Western Seminary](#) is another program that will expand my leadership ability while also diversifying my skills and knowledge. While I invest in my spiritual life I need to remain connected to the world of education and technology. Next, I layout my plan to stay connected.

Staying Connected

Finally, the urgency to stay connected and continue my professional development has possibly been the most significant development during my studies at Michigan State University. The ability to connect with other educators and technologists has been invaluable to my growth. As a classroom teacher it is sometimes difficult to stay connected to other educators. I create

learning experiences for others all day long, and often don't have opportunity to collaborate or share with other teachers for days at a time. It can be lonely and overwhelming. I have found that by pursuing connections with other educators it helps me to be mindful to maintain the connections I have already established. The education technology program at Michigan State University has forced me to expand my use of social media and establish a web presence. Through those experiences I have gained confidence with technology like Twitter and web design that I previously had little motivation to explore. As a result, I have been able to develop a [PLN \(personal learning network\) through Twitter](#) that I can tap into for a range of needs. It is my connection to the world outside of my small sphere of influence. It diversifies and broadens my knowledge base while at the same time allowing me to identify specific weaknesses I have and target them. Moving forward my plan is to continue designing my own professional development using this PLN. I have made and continue to make connections with educators around the globe who serves as mentors whether one on one or in a more general second hand manner. This is the cutting edge of educational technology that I plan to remain connected to and growing with. At the same time, I need to also be a contributor to this knowledge base to be truly connected to it. So while gleaning and stealing all I can from others I plan to engage by contributing my own experiences and discoveries.

While I am still uncertain of the destination my path is taking me to, the experiences I have had in this program have helped me to become an inspired, connected leader. For that I am grateful. I look forward to the adventure that is my future.