

Becoming a Lifelong Learner

When I think about the role of an educator and my experience in the classroom, the word “dynamic” immediately comes to mind. Over the course of a school year, students are expected to grow intellectually and teachers adapt to meet the needs of their students, all while a multitude of unexpected challenges present themselves on a daily basis. To cope and ensure that students reach their fullest personal and academic potential, teachers must be adept at maneuvering through unpredictability and making strategic decisions that have a lasting impact. While my graduate studies have undoubtedly improved my confidence to make such decisions, my respect for maintaining a growth mindset and dedication to ongoing learning has never been more palpable.

As I look toward the future, I recognize key measures needed to continue on my journey as a lifelong learner, including participating in professional growth opportunities, expanding and connecting with my professional learning network (PLN), self-reflecting on my development as an educator, and leading other educators to effectively integrate technology.

In addition to the wealth of technological and pedagogical knowledge that my graduate studies have offered me, I especially value the learning resources I have collected to continue growing professionally. In my experience as an educator, I have made plenty of instructional decisions based on observing colleagues and receiving feedback from administrators; however, I look forward to reading and analyzing educational research to validate such implementation. The expansion of online learning via platforms, such as [EdTechteam](#), [Common Sense Education](#) and [ISTE Professional Learning](#), has made attending webinars and consuming valuable content widely accessible; I anticipate utilizing these offerings to continue learning about educational technology tools, digital citizenship, pedagogical strategies, classroom management tactics, assessments and STEM-related education. I also look forward to maintaining my status as a [Level Two Google Certified Educator](#) and working toward becoming a [Google Certified Trainer](#).

The world is filled with passionate, forward-thinking educators and thought leaders — many of whom I have had the pleasure of getting to know through my graduate studies. That said, I plan to expand my PLN by attending professional development conferences (e.g., [ISTE Ed Tech Conference](#) and [New Tech Annual Conference](#)), workshops and remaining active as a

consumer and participant on social media properties. Schools are no longer confined to the walls that surround them and, as today's virtual world makes connecting with individuals on a global scale feasible, I am excited to engage in meaningful discussions and collaborate with others who offer new and varying perspectives to create memorable experiences for my students.

While teaching is an iterative process that requires outlining objectives, planning, designing, executing and reflecting, I value the opportunity to self-assess and make necessary changes to improve student learning. Aligning curriculum and instruction with educational standards and frameworks, such as [ISTE Standards for Educators](#), [Mozilla Web Literacy Wheel](#), [TPACK](#) and [SAMR](#), will help provide a strong foundation for success. Further, I plan to consistently identify and assess my knowledge of relevant subject-matter, enthusiasm, communication, empathy, adaptability and aptness of student learning development. In addition to the feedback from my supervisor's observations, I will keep a daily digital journal of my progress, pay close attention to student engagement and participation, survey my students for essential feedback and remain attuned to my own well-being.

Supporting my own professional development, expanding my PLN and reflecting on my practice should have a positive impact on my students; however, serving as a leader for technology integration in my district will have implications far beyond the classroom. Starting within my school, I plan to host discussions with fellow colleagues and administrators to outline technology integration to align with our [district's goals](#). I plan to design and facilitate professional development workshops on frameworks for technology education (e.g., TPACK and SAMR), pedagogical strategies, technology tools and best-practices for implementation, helping support my colleagues in their efforts to effectively utilize technology to enhance student learning. Additionally, I plan to actively share my students' learning experiences at school and via social media, motivating and inspiring colleagues within and across departments to do the same. Lastly, I plan to keep my doors open for fellow educators to encourage ongoing communication and support and discussion of lesson ideas, student progress and challenges, and constructive feedback.

I believe it is my responsibility as an educator to consistently seek opportunities for professional growth and share my learning with others. By networking with fellow educators, enhancing my

ability to teach effectively and creating a collaborative and inspirational atmosphere among colleagues, I believe my efforts will reach beyond my classroom and transcend any given school year. While the path has been laid out, it is time to embark on my journey — knowing there will be opportunities to assess and adjust my goals as needed along the way — and I look forward to doing so.