

### Personal Growth Plan: Final Phase

My first course in the Certificate in Educational Technology program is quickly coming to an end. The past eight weeks have flown by fast and I have learned and grown so much over the course of that time. I feel as though a new world has been opened to me that will carry over into my everyday life and in my teaching and classroom. I can honestly say that I am a different person and educator as a result of the skills and knowledge that I gained this semester.

I have started to adjust and modify my current teaching strategies and techniques to allow for an added technological presence in my classroom. I found that there are many technology related teaching strategies that are easy to implement and use in my classroom. The biggest barrier to my use of technology prior to this course was that I was not aware of the wealth of resources that are at my disposal and available for use. This course has opened my eyes to some of the wonderful opportunities that technology can offer my students, school, and district.

I have made an effort to incorporate technology into every lesson that I teach with both my social studies and technology classes. In social studies, I have used the SMART board to make map activities interactive and the students have loved this! I incorporate short video clips often and most recently created a lesson using QR codes that was a big hit with students and an overall success. In addition to teaching the programs included in Microsoft Office, I have taught my technology students Prezi and how to use online bookmarking sites. My students are currently really enjoying Prezi and I am amazed at some of the wonderfully creative and visually appealing presentations that they have created.

I truly believe that the successful use of technology in the classroom is one of the most useful and effective teaching strategies that can be used with today's 21<sup>st</sup> century students. Technology helps to make lessons exciting, interesting, and most importantly relevant to the learners who are being targeted. Educational technology helps to create an interactive dynamic in the classroom that brings 21<sup>st</sup> century learning to the heart of every subject, grade level, and lesson that is taught. The thing that I love the most is that there are so many different ways that technology can be incorporated into the classroom so I can try something new almost every day.

Technology is a great way to differentiate instruction and provide opportunities for learners of all different abilities and with different learning styles. More recently, I have used the online version of our textbook as a strategy to help students with reading difficulties. Once students access the online textbook, they can go through the assigned section on the computer. The online textbook has audio and will read the information to students. Students can pause, rewind, or fast forward as necessary as they work through the material. There is also a feature in the online textbook where they can highlight the information as they read through and pin important information so that it can be easily accessed later. The online textbook has been a big hit with many of my students and the best thing about it is that they can access their textbook anywhere they have internet access.

The internet contains a wealth of knowledge and resources that help me teach and my students learn. I use the internet every day as a way to support instruction and create learning opportunities for students. Some examples include the use of YouTube videos, news articles, online learning games, Prezi, bookmarking sites, and most recently an online version of our class textbook. Even though I use the internet daily in my current classroom, there are many new ways that I would like to use the internet next year to support student learning, growth and success. I plan to use Edmodo with my classes as a way to create a virtual classroom and it is my hope that this will carry over into creating a flipped classroom for some lessons. I would also like to incorporate Twitter as an added resource to send announcements and reminders to students and parents.

Incorporating an iPad and educational apps into the classroom is an assignment that I feel really exemplifies good teaching with technology. Incorporating an iPad into my classroom and daily instruction has been a goal of mine and my hope is to make it a true reality. Working with this SIG has given me a prime opportunity to really explore some of the apps that are available for teachers and students to use in various grade levels and subject areas. I now have a good understanding of some of the many apps that are out there and how they can be used to support student learning, growth, and success. I have already stated to use my personal iPad and some carefully selected apps in my classroom and hope to do more of this next school year.

As technology is always changing, I will be continually working to meet the goals that I have set for myself in my personal growth plan. I have made a commitment to stay current and up-to-date with educational technology resources and applications and intend to do just that as I continue to use education in my classroom to support student learning and growth. I have already increased my use of technology in my classroom and have lots of ideas for ways that I will continue to do this in future school years. I am much more comfortable using technology in my classroom and am more confident in my ability to do this successfully.

One of my goals was to make a difference in my district and become a leader in the area of technology. While I will continue to strive to meet this goal, in many ways, I have taken some significant steps forward as I challenge myself to try new things and learn new technologies. I have started to collaborate with other teachers who are incorporating technology into their lessons and classrooms and together, we have created some wonderful lessons that have been very successful. Most recently, the technology department in my district added more administrative rights to my account and provided me with additional training so that I can help to trouble shoot technology problems in my specific building.

A new goal that I have set for myself is to incorporate the NET-S standards into my classroom and lessons. I have a printed copy of the standards that I have started to reference often as I plan and create lessons and activities for my students. It is my hope that the NET-S standards will help to guide my instruction as I plan to create exciting and innovative lessons that will appeal to a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment. I plan to meet this goal by making a conscious effort to review the NET-S standards each time I begin to plan and prepare a lesson or unit. My short term goal is to continue to on the path to successfully completing the Certificate of Educational Technology program. I am taking CEP 811 and CEP 812 in the upcoming semester and will have completed the program in June 2013. My current long-term goal remains the same, to complete the Masters of Educational Technology Program at Michigan State University. It is

my hope that I will be accepted and able to continue this journey in the fall. Additionally, I aim to research and practice ways that I can incorporate technology into my teaching this summer as I hope to transform my classroom and teaching to continually promote 21<sup>st</sup> century learning and readiness in each and every student that I teach.

This course has introduced me to a world of technology that I did not know even existed just eight short weeks ago. I have grown and transformed into a more technologically savvy person and educator and I am really excited about the growth that I have made and will continue to make as I continue on this journey. My only regret is that I did not start this program sooner! It has been a pleasure to be a part of CEP 810 this semester and I am excited to see what my future holds as I work to become a leader in the area of educational technology in my classroom and school district.