

Professional Growth Plan

Veronica O'Neill

New Jersey City University

Professional Growth Plan

As an educator in the fields of Business Management and Leadership, my goal is to introduce my students to the complex world of business in the 21st century and prepare them to succeed in this world. With over 25 years of business experience prior to beginning my career in higher education, I am well aware of the skillset that is required to thrive in the modern business environment. Critical thinking is key to success in today's world. Business education helps students prepare to take on roles as employees, consumers, investors, and business owners.

I am fortunate to work in a brand-new facility, with extensive technology resources. My vision is to establish a collaborative group of educators at the University, who want to expand the use of this technology and gather regularly to share ideas and techniques. My goal is to make my own classroom an open lab for experimenting with new techniques and technologies which will engage students and lead them to deeper understanding.

Of all of the leadership theories we studied, I identify most closely with authentic leadership. Northouse (2013) states that "Authentic leadership describes leadership that is transparent, morally grounded, and responsive to people's needs and values (Northouse, 2013, p. 282). One of the pioneers in the study of authentic leadership, Bill George, uses the analogy of knowing your "True North", staying true to your beliefs no matter what the situation (George, 2007). My upbringing and beliefs have given me a strong sense of my own "True North", and I strive every day to align my actions with those values. I believe that by holding firm to my values, I am a more effective student, teacher and leader.

My own career path has been unique and unpredictable. I have worked for the Federal government, in corporate America, and in higher education. My experience ranges from working as a Park Ranger, to Vice President of a major brokerage firm, to college professor. I

have thoroughly enjoyed each of these periods of my life. I was surprised to love teaching as much as I do. I know this is what I was meant to do. I see tremendous potential in each of my students. I want to give them tools and experiences that will help them be successful in their own lives, no matter where their own road to success takes them.

In my undergraduate years, the PC had not yet been invented and huge mainframe computers processed punched cards. Today, our telephones and watches are far more powerful than any of this technology. I hope that I will continue to be open to new ideas and will find a passion for an aspect of this technology and will become an expert in that field. I am taking the first steps in this direction now, working with faculty and my cohort members who all have varied experience and interests.

In his book *Digital Leadership: Changing Paradigms for Changing Times*, Eric Sheninger (2014) encourages educators to find one word that represents their brand as a teacher. I selected the word “Opportunity” to represent my personal brand of teaching. I want my students to take full advantage of the wonderful opportunity they have to study at the college level, an opportunity that many of their family members and friends did not have. I want to inspire my students to see the opportunities all around them and help them find the courage to follow their dreams. Lastly, I want to seize the opportunity to personally grow and learn, to continuously improve my teaching abilities, and embrace the new technology that is available to educators and business people.

There are many paths to learning, and I have experienced several outstanding programs in the past year. I was fortunate to attend seminars given by Dr. John Creswell and Dr. Etienne Wenger-Trayner at NJCU. Both of these were informative and allowed time for personal

interaction with these noted researchers. I look forward to attending more of these seminars when they are offered by the EdTech Department in the future.

I attended two events sponsored by New Jersey Educational Computing Cooperative this year. In addition to presenting at both events, I was able to attend several seminars. One notable workshop at their Annual Conference was “Integrating Social Media in the Classroom” presented by NJCU Alumna Dr. Amy Arsiwala and Ted Samaras. I have been able to integrate several of their suggestions into my classroom. I was also a presenter with a group of NJCU EdTech students at the “What the Research Shows...” event. Listening to my colleagues present the results of their research was inspiring, and I hope to be able to participate in a similar event if offered this year.

My presentation at the NJECC Annual Conference resulted in another opportunity for me. A member of my audience passed my name on to the New Jersey Association for Gifted Children. The chair of their annual conference invited me to present the same material for their membership. I hope to continue this relationship in the future, and to recruit other members of our program to present at this event.

Last year, I was honored to be accepted to present a poster at ISTE in San Antonio. Unfortunately, travel costs made that trip impossible. I look forward to applying again, especially because the conference returns to Philadelphia in 2019. I attended this event in 2015 in Philadelphia, before I even applied to the doctoral program, and found it to be an invaluable experience. I learned how broad the field of educational technology can be and started to pursue my own application to our doctoral program.

Most of the past two years have been devoted to reading materials for courses in the doctoral program, and after graduation, I look forward to expanding my reading opportunities. A

few selections are already in my Kindle library waiting for me. Dr. Wenger-Trayner's latest book, *Learning in Landscapes of Practice* is at the top of the list. I think his imagery of one's educational life consisting of a series of paths and hills is appropriate for my own life experience, and I look forward to exploring his work further. I also want to read Dr. Matthew Farber's latest book, *Game-Based Learning in Action*, because I enjoyed his last work, *Gamify Your Classroom*. I recently added works by Ram Dass, Charles Duhigg and Timothy Ferriss to my reading list as well.

I also have some personal growth goals, including taking more time to be reflective and to renew my spirit through travel. I am anxious to spend more time with my family. My daughter lives in California, and I have not been able to visit her since she moved last summer. I see a trip to Disneyland in my future! On a more serious note, I plan to continue to meditate using my Muse device. I was introduced to the device by one of my colleagues in our cohort, and it has helped me deal with the stress of the past few months. I look forward to having more time for creative tasks like needlework, as well as spending more time outdoors. I will also allocate more time to my community service projects including serving as a trainer for the Girl Scouts and working with our local Lions Club.

I can't imagine my life without my fellow EdTech Giants and I am grateful that we were brought together in this program. I hope we will be able to remain close and share our work in the future. We have a long road ahead of us to graduation, which will be a new beginning for each of us.

Goals achieved on this journey so far

Year 1:

- Developed positive and supportive relationships with each of the members of my Cohort, which will last throughout the program and endure into our future careers
- Participated in the NJCU Day Wearable Technology demonstration
- Participated in the Girls in Technology Symposium
- Attended the New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL) and New Jersey Educational Computing Consortium (NJECC) conferences and presented at each
- Co-presented a conference session at NJASL with Dr. Shamburg and other doctoral students
- Worked with members of Cohort 3 on projects supporting their doctoral research

Year 2:

- Served as an ambassador for the Educational Technology Leadership program at the annual Doctoral Program Open House event, assisting potential members of the new cohort as they consider joining the program, and participating in recruiting efforts for future cohorts.
- Continued my participation in the NJCU Day Wearable Technology demonstration
- Facilitated two formal professional development sessions at the School of Business
- Presented my work at the New Jersey Educational Computing Consortium (NJECC) and the New Jersey Association for Gifted Children (NJAGC) conferences.
- Co-presented a session at the NJECC “What the Research Shows...” event with members of my cohort.

- Assumed a greater role in the Gamified Orientation project for the STEM Success Academy at NJCU, creating challenges and moderating the game at the Summer Orientation Program

Goals still to be achieved on this journey:

Year 3:

- Successfully complete all coursework for the program
- Develop, write and defend a dissertation
- Achieve a doctoral degree
- Present my work at a regional or national conference
- I will continue to develop my online Professional Learning Network to keep abreast of new ideas and technology

Beyond the doctoral degree:

- Attain a full-time faculty position at a university
- Have an article published in a peer-reviewed journal
- Continue to participate in professional development to practice lifelong learning

References

George, B. (2007). Authentic leaders. *Leadership excellence*. 24 (7) p.4. Retrieved from

<http://draweb.njcu.edu:2076/docview/204515103?accountid=12793>

Northouse, P. G. (2013). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sheninger, E. C. (2014) *Digital leadership: Changing paradigms for changing times*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Appendix 1

Service and Leadership

- Served as a member of the NJCU Gen Ed Assessment Team (2016 – 2017).
- Volunteered at NJCU Day 2016 and 2017, with the E-Textile Working Group
- Volunteered at Edcamp Urban 2016, Hudson County's first Edcamp
- Consulted with faculty at NJCU School of Business regarding technology tools available to solve specific problems. Worked with adjunct faculty members to develop their initial course shells in Blackboard.
- Volunteered as a Beta Tester for Apple, testing Hotmath, Inc.'s CatchUp Math app
- Activity Leader at the Girls in Technology Symposium 2017 at Hudson County Community College, teaching girls about binary coding
- Volunteered at EdCamp Urban 2017, West New York, NJ.
- Project Manager for Ed Tech Leadership Innovation Playground at the NJCU School of Business Entrepreneurship Day 2017, presenting small robots and drones for hands-on interaction
- CODiE judge for Best Higher Education Learning Management System or Learning Platform category, 2017 and 2018
- Orientation Assistant at the NJCU STEM Success Academy orientation 2017, developing challenges for a gamified orientation experience and moderating the game live

Select Community Service:

- Designed a website for Christ Our Saviour Lutheran Church in Jersey City, NJ (2017)
- Girl Scouts of Northern New Jersey

Troop Leader (2000 – 2013)

Outstanding Volunteer Award 2002

Outstanding Leader Award 2012

Volunteer Trainer (2001 – Present)

Revised curriculum for outdoor training

Grants for Girls Committee Member (2007 – Present)

Awarded scholarships and financial assistance to girls in need

- Rockaway Township Lions Club (2015 – Present). Director (2016 – Present), Social

Media Coordinator (2016 – Present)

Outstanding Service Award 2016

Appendix 2

Presentations

"Break Out! Create and Run Your Own Digital Breakout Game". Presented at Edcamp Urban, Union City High School, 10/15/16

"Universal Design for Learning: The Quest for Inclusive Spaces". Co-presenter with Anna Boscarino, Patricia Holzman, Deborah Nagler, Christopher Shamburg and Stephanie Talalai at New Jersey Association of School Librarians (NJASL), Long Branch, NJ

"Breakout! Create and Run Your Own Digital Breakout Game!" Presented at New Jersey Educational Computing Consortium (NJECC), Montclair State University,

"Word Clouds: Start a Discussion with Word Art!" Presented at the NJCU School of Business Adjunct Faculty Workshop, April 8, 2017.

"Create a Kahoot!" Presented at the NJCU School of Business Adjunct Faculty Workshop, October 14, 2017.

"What the Research says about Professional Development." Co-presented with Susan Marie Terra, Alex Kuziola, Rachael Sedeyn and Laszlo Porkorny at New Jersey Educational Computing Consortium (NJECC), Montclair State University, December 15, 2017.

“Create a Kahoot!” Presented at New Jersey Educational Computing Consortium (NJECC), Montclair State University, January 9, 2018.

"Break Out! Create and Run Your Own Digital Breakout Game". Invited Presenter at New Jersey Association for Gifted Children, Conference Center at Mercer, March 23, 2018.

“Create a Kahoot!” Presented at the NJCU School of Business Adjunct Faculty Workshop, April 14, 2018.