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Looking to the Future

As an educator, I understand the importance of pushing yourself (and your students) to keep an open mind and better yourself. I also know that without specific goals, motivation, and drive, it is easy to fall into routines and strategies that are comfortable, but not necessarily good for you. So, as I reflect on my past education and progress as an educator, I can't help but look forward and set goals for where I want to be in the future. Technology will definitely be a focal point in my future, and after my time in the educational technology program at Michigan State University (MSU), I want to focus on incorporating effective technology into my future goals as an educator and teacher leader. I also know that in order to reach your goals, you need a good support system and inspiration. These reflections lead me to three main goals that I want to work towards in the near future; becoming a google educator, promoting global awareness in the classroom, and continuing to grow my professional learning community (PLC).

My current school district has just implemented a 1:1 technology initiative, which means that every student has access to a Chromebook laptop that they take with them to each class and take home with them at the end of each day. This is great for the classroom and levels the playing field for our students, but in order to use these Chromebooks to their full extent, I need to understand and use the technology provided in the most engaging and efficient ways. By becoming a Google Educator, I will learn ways that Google can be used in the classroom for my students and be able to share that information with my colleagues to build a better educational community. In order to reach my goal, I need to complete the training, practice, and pass the certification exam for the two levels through the Google for Education Teacher Center. Once I complete this step, I can go on to become a Google Trainer, and Innovator.

Now, more than ever, it is easier and more important to make connections in your classroom to global issues and events. By using technology, my goal is to provide rich learning experiences for my students that will help them develop as global citizens. In researching this important topic, I have found some resources that will help me get started with this goal citizen science projects seem like the perfect way to begin working toward this goal. The idea behind citizen science projects, are to involve average citizens (students included) in scientific research. They collect data from images, videos, or other formats, and the researchers use the data in their

studies. This would be a perfect fit for my 7th grade science classroom. I plan to use Zooniverse and SciStarter to get my students involved in citizen science projects. These sites have a wide range of projects that will appeal to my students and hopefully encourage them to be global citizens. Once I have implemented citizen science into my curriculum, I hope to add global communication with tools like Skype and global collaboration projects.

As I continue to grow and set goals for myself, my PLC will be an important source of support and inspiration. Throughout my time as an educator and my journey towards my Masters degree, I have been building a PLC based on science education, classroom management, and educational technology. A lot of the sources and educators that I have included in my PLC up until now have been colleagues, classmates, professors, and the resources they have recommended to me. Now that I am graduating, I will need to look to other sources to continue to build a community that is beneficial to my practice. One way that I plan on accomplishing this goal is through Twitter. An online platform is a great way to keep up with the changes in education and educational technology and Twitter is a easy platform follow amazing educators and education resources. A digital PLC is also very easy to share with others and being able to share resources with my colleagues is another aspect of community that I want to build.

Life is all about growth and continuing to better yourself. By setting goals I hope to constantly try to improve myself and to not get comfortable and complacent in my career. I am looking forward to continuing my education and working towards these professional goals. I know that accomplishing these goals will help me become a better and more confident educator.