

Matthew Farber  
Professional Growth Plan

My leadership approach is that of an “authentic leader.” I am honest, self-aware, and clear in direction. I envision my career to follow a similar path as Jane McGonigal. Following her dissertation, she became an expert in her field. She inspired people with her TED Talk and her book about video games and changing the world. For me, there is no greater thrill than to see how technology empowers today’s youth.

As an authentic leader, I “exhibit genuine leadership and lead from conviction” (Northouse, 2013). One of the best examples of an authentic leader was Steve Jobs. Addressing the graduating class of Stanford University in 2005, Jobs said, “You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. You have to trust in something — your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. (Stanford University, 2005). Jobs’s triumphant return to Apple can be attributed to his qualities as an authentic leader; he was self-aware and he held to his strong moral perspective.

Vision is fundamental to being an authentic leader. A recent example is how I envisioned a better learning experience implementing multi-touch, electronic textbooks (e-books). In late 2012, I led my students to author and publish their own iPad book. I shared my insights with peers by writing a feature article for the NJEA Review magazine and I will be teaching others at High Tech Hall during the 2013 NJEA Convention.

My passion for educational technology guides my leadership style. As an educational technology adjunct instructor for New Jersey City University (NJCU), and as a doctoral student, I lead by example. Following my master’s thesis topic on virtual worlds, I write a column advocating the virtues of game-based learning (GBL) for Edutopia. In 2013, I co-presented a workshop on GBL and the Common Core at an Atlantic City conference. My academic accomplishments earned an invitation to join to the Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education. In the spring of 2012, New Jersey City University nominated me for the New Jersey Department of Higher Education’s Showcase of Exemplary Practices.

As one of the North Jersey Directors of the New Jersey Council of Social Studies (NJCSS), I am a leader in the social studies community. In the community, I co-advise the Kiwanis Builder’s Club, which “provides students with opportunities to develop leadership, improve self-esteem, increase civic engagement and learn life skills through service” (“Kiwanis International,” 2013).

In my school district I am viewed as a leader of educational technology. I have led several workshops and I am a member of several committees. I served on the district social studies curriculum revision committee, the technology Committee, and I am the vice chairman of the school-based professional development committee, and I advise the Student Technology Club. I was one of twelve teachers around the world invited become a “Ambassador” for the Web 2.0 tool, Voki. As a member of the Discovery Educator Network (DEN), I have led teacher training “STAR” events.

I have applied my authentic leadership style to grant writing. In the summer of 2009, I won an educator fellowship grant from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation to join an Earthwatch Institute expedition in central Costa Rica. The Foundation of Denville awarded me a classroom grant every year that I have taught in my school district. As an authentic leader, I have furthered these experiences by teaching grant writing workshops to other like-minded educators.

My accomplishments in graduate school and in my professional life demonstrate my ability to authentically lead. I am passionate about the direction that my professional life has taken. I still

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have much to learn as an educator. I am very enthusiastic about embracing the challenges that lay ahead.

#### References

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