

# GOAL REFLECTION ESSAY

## What Time Travel does to an Educator.

I wrote my academic goal statement in August 2009 in anticipation of a year long sabbatical that had just been granted me by my then **employer**. At the time, my family and I were living in the foothills of the **Indian Himalayan Mountains**. We were quite literally situated in a rain forest and, upon reflection, I can't really think of a place - both physically and mentally - more conducive to setting goals and figuring out what I wanted to make of this opportunity.

At that stage I had more than 18 years of experience as an educator and at least 15 of them in some form of school leadership. Over the previous few years I have developed an almost insatiable craving for the opportunity to engage in the pursuit of my own academic knowledge. What motivated me was the fact that experience of being for so long at the "coal face" of education had put me in good stead to apply this to my academic pursuits.

So, focusing on a goal of developing my leadership abilities seemed the most logical step. I had attended several seminars, meetings, conferences and ad hoc professional development opportunities but now the goal was to back this up with a solid, up to date and cutting edge academic advanced degree.

Beyond this, and in consultation with the **Master of Arts in Education** advisor, another goal was to focus on developing my knowledge of Special Needs and building towards an inclusive classroom. Much of my motivation was encouraged by living and working with a school community of over a thousand people from many different cultures and walks of life. Our remote location meant that we needed to be the first line of contact for students who needed to be referred to specialists many miles away and sometimes in a different country. In addition my son had just been diagnosed with **Sensory Processing Disorder** and mild **Dyslexia** and I imagined being able to understand more of what he was going through, if not be able to remediate.

With these goals backed by a clear academic focus and plan, I entered the course.

Clearly though, over the five years I have taken to complete this degree, I have had even more time to reflect in many quite different settings and this has helped, not so much to change my goals, as augment them by filtering them through eyes that have now seen so much more of the world. Again, physically and intellectually, I have been able to travel through both space and time (submitting work from upwards of eight different countries) while holding onto the goal of developing my leadership skills, and concurrently fulfilling a support role to school administrators and leaders.

Where the change has been most pronounced is that much of what I have pursued throughout the course has always been edged towards educational technology and its application. The goal therefore to understand better the Special Needs of my students has become a goal of understanding more of the

way that the tools (mostly digital tools) we now have at our disposal can better serve all students, regardless or sometimes because of, their specific needs.

Technology, I have come to understand, has potential beyond our present understanding and it has become a strong goal of mine to discover and uncover that potential so that as an educator, I can better facilitate my student's learning.

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