

Growth Assessment: My Journey to Becoming a Teacher

L. Snow

Department of Advanced Studies, Azusa Pacific University

EDUC 549: Capstone Experience in Learning and Technology

Dr. Jennifer Courduff

November 30, 2020

Growth Assessment: My Journey to Becoming a Teacher

History of Coursework

Table 1

History of Coursework

Course	Term/Yr	Professor/Instructor	Key Learnings
TESP 501	Fall 1 2019	Drs. Freeman and Watkin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • classroom management and inclusivity • how to write a lesson plan
TESP 502	Fall 1 2019	Dr. Freeman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • differentiation for English Learners, students with Special needs • learning styles
TEP 521	Fall 2 2019	Dr. Freeman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategies for teaching reading • bulletin boards/interactive learning • RICA preparation
TESP 511	Fall 2 2019	Dr. Barsh/Instructor Fuehrer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and more differentiated instruction, equity and diversity • pedagogical models (Flipped Classroom, Socratic Seminar, 5 E's, etc.)
EDUC 540	Fall 2 2019	Instructor Stroup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing a safe online learning environment, digital citizenship

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how and why integrating technology into the classroom is important
TESP 512	Spring 1 2020	Dr. Barsh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what assessment do (diagnostic, formative, summative), their differences, and when to use them • making a unit plan
EDUC 546	Spring 1 2020	Instructor Bruzzese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • digital communication skills
TEP 522	Spring 2 2020	Dr. Kaiser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-8 mathematics teaching strategies
EDUC 547	Spring 2 2020	Dr. Courduff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assistive technology uses and rules • archiving AT that works for my students/grade level • collaboration with other educators
TESP 503	Summer 2020	Dr. Watkin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • important and relevant educational philosophies and how they apply to me as an educator • the history of educational philosophers • knowing my strengths
TESP 504	Summer 2020	Dr. Freeman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the do's and don'ts of K-12 education

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowing my students (who they are, where they come from, their backgrounds) • working together as a school community
TEP 523	Fall 1 2020	Dr. Kaiser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • science instruction practices • writing science lesson plans/integrating science into other subjects • Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)
TEP 551	Fall 1 2020	Dr. Hahs Brinkley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • getting to know my students • CalTPA Cycle 1
EDUC 548	Fall 1 2020	Dr. Brown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • researching relevant, emerging technology trends in K-12 education • using educational technology in the classroom
TEP 524	Fall 2 2020	Dr. Kaiser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaching strategies for humanities
TEP 552	Fall 2 2020	Dr. Hahs Brinkley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CalTPA Cycle 2
EDUC 549	Fall 2	Dr. Courduff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • my growth as an educator and

2020

student

- planning for my future career goals
-

Personal Growth

Since deciding to begin graduate school and embark on a career in education, I have believed the sentiment that graduate school is difficult, yet special. My personal experience at Azusa Pacific University (APU) in the Master of Arts in Education: Learning and Technology (LRNT) and Multiple Subject Credential program has been both of those things. However, my experience has been different than I imagined and planned for. This particular time in my life has been extremely influential to my career, but more importantly to my growth as an individual spiritually, cognitively, and affectively.

Spiritual Growth

In short, my time at APU has enriched my spiritual experience in the sense that I am more in tune with myself, my strengths, my learning styles, and really who I am as a person and an educator. I attribute this to the exposure to texts such as *StrengthsQuest* which helped me identify and analyze my strengths, such as intellection, futuristic, relator, activator, and empathy (Clifton, 2006). Along with this, I have been extremely grateful and humbled throughout these past eighteen months. Each time life has been tough, a pandemic occurs, or there is a hiccup in my personal life, my professors and peers at APU have been supportive and gracious. I am so thankful for the people who have contributed to my spiritual growth; my relationship with myself and with God is an ongoing and ever-growing journey.

Cognitive Growth

I have learned the ins and outs of how to be an effective teacher – from classroom management to teaching strategies to differentiation, this program has really prepared me for my future as a teacher. The time I have spent at APU has provided me with practical experience and

research-based educational skills and concepts. I am confident that I will complete this program with cognitive growth due to the influence of my professors' diligence, authenticity, expertise, and ample feedback.

Affective Growth

Affectively, I have grown more confident in my ability to be a teacher. Along with this, I have cultivated irreplaceable camaraderie amongst a number of peers. I have made incredible friends at APU who have unexpectedly become an incredible support system for me. I trust my peers to support me in my career and in my personal life. I feel lucky and blessed to have established such strong relationships. I am pleased to have met such great humans; moreover, I know we will all be going our separate ways, but will always have special connections and bonds that will translate into our lives and careers.

Professional Growth

Professionally, I have evolved greatly throughout my journey to become an educator. In the past year and a half, the key areas I have demonstrated growth in are: my educational philosophy, my understanding of teaching strategies – both technology integration and traditional instructional strategies, and my accomplishments as an educator.

Significant Elements of Growth

The LRNT program has shaped my career in significant ways. Most notably, I have gained vital experience as an online educator. I have had the chance to implement technology into my normal teaching routine due to the school closures, however, I feel this type of experience has positively impacted my efficiency as an educator. Along with this, I have a stronger grasp on my personal educational philosophy. My most significant growth at APU has been my ability to adapt to changes and learn by practicing and doing.

Growth as an Educator

As an educator, I feel I have made substantial growth in the areas of instructional strategies, classroom management, classroom culture and environment, and technology integration. I have created endless assignments that can be used practically when I become a first year teacher – one of my favorites being the Task Tools Matrix from EDUC 547 – Special Topics: Assistive Technology in the Classroom (Courduff, J.). My understanding of childhood development, child psychology, and research-based approaches to teaching has grown immensely. I feel well equipped to begin my career because of the content, tools, and strategies that have been shared with me from the professors at APU.

Professional Accomplishments

I have met many goals in my time at APU. Not only have I remained on track in my courses, I have shown achievement in all of my assessments thus far. While the studying has been difficult work, it is rewarding to know that I have worked diligently to reach my ultimate goal of being an educator. Lastly, it is important for me to note the networking and professional relationships that have led to all of my unique professional accomplishments. I decided to get a job in education three years ago; my plan was to dip my toes into the world of education. I am proud of myself for taking that risk because it has led me to know my passion of teaching.

Technical Growth

Growth in Technical Expertise

Beginning my journey in the LRNT program, I was confident in my ability to learn about and practice a variety of educational technologies. Though I felt proficient working with the technology in my personal and professional life, I was aware that educational technology is a

completely separate and ever-growing realm of technology. One of the most lasting and impactful things I have learned in this program is how quickly trends in educational technology advance or grow (Brown, J.). That said, I was determined to research, practice, and evolve as educator in the age of technology.

My technical expertise has grown from the basics of Google Workspace (formerly G Suite) to building a website. In between all of that, I have learned the importance of assistive technology, how to research and follow trends in educational technology, and most importantly, how technology enriches students' learning processes. While I am positive that I have gained substantial technical expertise throughout my educational journey at APU, I also know that in the technology world, products, software, and trends are constantly changing. Because of this, I would not call myself an all-knowing expert; in fact, I would go so far as to call myself a forever student. Teaching, whether it involves technology or not, should never be stagnate. I vow to continue to grow as an educator who embraces educational technology and urges others to do the same. The growth I have made in technical expertise will not end when I graduate, but instead, it will continue to blossom as does technology.

Specific Technology Resources Impacting my Teaching

Currently, the technology resources that are impacting my teaching the most are Google Classroom, engagement tools such as Nearpod, and the QIAT list. Teaching in the online world has been an amazing opportunity, especially as a student in the LRNT program. I have had a once in a lifetime opportunity to apply my knowledge in a way that might never have been possible pre-pandemic. Moreover, I have found the importance, effectiveness, and relevance of the three resources I mentioned in terms of my teaching experience and my third grade students' experiences.

Google Classroom is essential for giving student feedback, assessing students, and simply assigning lessons or assignments. While Google Classroom is perfect for an online environment, I also have seen it used successfully in face-to-face settings. I like the idea of having a central, online hub for assignments because it is a practical way to teach young students accountability and responsibility. Nearpod has been life-changing in terms of its effectiveness as an interactive engagement tool. Not only do my students love the program because of its gamified nature, it is the easiest way to check for understanding, while also recording evidence of student learning. Lastly, being in tune with fellow educators on the QIAT list has helped enlighten me regarding the way in which collaboration and educating go hand-in-hand. Being able to learn from others is so important; right now, it is crucial for fellow teachers to offer insight on what is working in the virtual classroom. Being able to read feedback or simple tips from educators all over the country sparks excitement and hope within me as a new teacher.

Another technology resource that I am interested in utilizing in my future classroom is immersive reality technology. The implementation of augmented and virtual reality technologies in the K-12 education setting is intriguing to me, and I hope to explore the topic more as I begin my career as an educator.

Life Long Learning Plan

In order to keep learning, there are many things I plan to do throughout my career. I say that because I never want to be complacent. I know that new knowledge, ideas, techniques, and technologies will circulate in education, and I believe it is my duty to be cognizant of the changes and how to best access these technologies in a way that meets the needs of all learners. Below is a list of commitments I plan to remain loyal to as I embark as a lifelong learner.

- establish a strong, reliable learning network of teachers near and far

- apply what I have learned as a virtual teacher in a way that can work both in the physical classroom and online
- create routines and procedures that reflect my students' interests, strengths, and needs
- attend trainings and professional development, particularly surrounding educational technology
- reflect daily, monthly, and yearly on my accomplishments, strengths, and areas for improvement
- appreciate constructive criticism
- always have my students best interest in mind and in heart
- learn by doing – reflection journals, portfolios, and experimentation
- try, fail, persevere, and succeed

Conclusion

In all, my unique learning experience in the LRNT program at APU has revealed that life is simultaneously full of blessings and consumed by the unknown. I may have a plan, a path, a journey, for my future as an educator, but that is not what my focus is on. The importance is not merely where the path leads, but rather the actions taken on that path; being able to adapt to change quickly, the ability to work diligently under pressure, and the burning passion of doing something for the greater good is what I have learned to embrace throughout this process. I am so grateful for the experiences I have had in this program, and I hope I never lose sight of why I am embarking on this journey. The destination is incomprehensible if the steps to get there are not meaningful.

References

Brown, J. *EDUC 548: Emerging Trends in Technology*. Azusa Pacific University.

<https://home.apu.edu/app/catalog/classsection/APU/2207/10065>

Clifton, D.O., Anderson, E., & Schreiner, L.A. (2006). *StrengthsQuest*. Gallup Press.

Courduff, J. *EDUC 547: Special Topics: Assistive Technology in the Classroom*. Azusa Pacific

University. <https://home.apu.edu/app/catalog/classsection/APU/2201/10619>