The 30 Goals Challenge

by Shelly Terrell
Teacher Reboot Camp

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Prologue

Instead of listing my goals for 2010, I would like to invite you to accomplish some short-term goals I am setting for myself. Each day this month, I will challenge you to accomplish a goal for the day. I will be accomplishing these tasks myself, then blogging about the experience. I welcome you to do the same! I am hoping this will inspire me to begin working towards my long-term goals.

Join the Challenge

To be part of the challenge, do the following:

- Accomplish the goal- Don't worry if you just began reading this, you can accomplish these goals whenever you read about them. This is set-up to be 30 goals in 30 days so you can do this at anytime of the year! If you don't accomplish all the goals, then just do what you can.
- Tweet the link, what you learned, a thought, or just kudos to yourself for accomplishing the task! Please use the hashtag #30Goals! You can subscribe to the hashtag to keep track of your accomplishments!
- Add a comment, so we can share your excitement or learn about a new resource, link, or website!

Join the community:

- Post with others using the Twitter hashtag #30Goals!
- Contribute a post, student project, images, or videos to the free e-book that will be distributed through blogs, webinars, and conferences.

Goal 1: Post Your 1st 2010 Diary Entry

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

For today's challenge, I encourage you to ***post your first diary entry of 2010***! Do this as a blog post online with several free sites, in a notebook, as a podcast, an audio diary or as a video diary.

Here are some websites to help you get started:
- [9 First Steps for New Bloggers](#)by Problogger
- [FuturistK](#)is a free video diary tool

This is one step to accomplishing my long-term goal of keeping a regular diary for 2010. I plan on using the [Dragon Dictation app](#) for this task on my IPhone and experimenting with [Penzu](#)! You can always keep the diary private for your eyes only. Keeping a diary was a suggestion made by my friend, [Ken Wilson](#)!

Challenge:
Write your first post of 2010 in your diary!

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the [hashtag #30Goals](#)!

What will your first diary post be about?

Goal 2: Contribute to a Blog Carnival

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

Many bloggers would like to expand their readership for the New Year! If you are proud of your work, then this is only natural. Moreover, as a new blogger you might have some posts you are proud of, but hardly received the traffic you would have liked. Unfortunately, many of your new readers will probably never read through your former readings. For this reason, I like to contribute to various blog carnivals. Each carnival is hosted on a blog. The host features various blogs from different bloggers that fit a category, topic, or theme. The host will highlight favorite parts of the post. Sometimes, only a few are selected.

How to Contribute

To accomplish this task do the following:

- Visit the [education category of the blog carnival](#). Browse through each to enter the ones you would like.
- Fill out the submission form with the necessary details. Here are links to submission forms of some of my favorite education blog carnivals:
  - [ESL/EFL/ELL Carnival-](#) the next one will be hosted here! Submit any post related to helping English language learners or closing the achievement gap for English language learners.
  - [The Edge of Education-](#) hosted by [We Teach, We Learn](#). Submit any post which features your edgy teaching methods!
- If you do not have a blog, then leave a comment instead on one of the carnivals. You may find some new blogs you like!

Challenge:

Contribute a post to a blog carnival! If you do not have a blog, then visit a blog carnival and leave a comment.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the [hashtag #30Goals](#)!

What is the best carnival you have read? Why did you enjoy it so much? Please leave a link!

Goal 3: Start an Adventure

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

One of my long-term goals is to create new adventures for myself! For the past six months, I have been through some amazing journeys and met some amazing people, because I said yes and participated! These include traveling to Paris, Berlin, and Poland for conferences and meeting my [Personal Learning Network (PLN)](#) face-to-face. Saying, "Yes!" has resulted in many opportunities I never knew existed and I have learned so much. Everyone has something to offer and the way social media works is you have to participate and volunteer. Many of my family members thought I was crazy to do this, but now they are extremely supportive and joke of living vicariously through me.

Start Your Adventure

Several projects, including this challenge have surfaced. To complete this task, just join one! The challenges are free. Here are a few I recently joined:

- [The #30Goals 2010 Challenge](#) on this blog
- The 365 photos a day challenge on Flickr- To join, create a Flickr account, search for one of the 365 groups, look at their rules, then take at least 1 picture a day and post it! I joined the [365 Second Life group](#). Read more about other members of our PLN completing this challenge:
  - [365 Project by Beth Still](#)
  - [365 Project by Hadley Ferguson](#)
- Find many more opportunities in Burcu Akyol's post [Opportunities for Becoming a Digitally Literate Teacher in 2010](#)
- You don't have to do anything that relates to social media. Instead, try training for a marathon, joining an exercise class, learning a new language, attending dance classes, or other adventure. Just sign-up for something to meet this goal. The small step is the sign-up, but the larger goal is to complete the adventure!

Challenge:
Start an adventure by signing-up for at least one course, marathon, challenge, and so forth!

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the [hashtag #30Goals](#)!

What other challenges have you read about?

Goal 4: Support a New Blogger

Part of the 30 Goals Challenge Series

One of my goals this year is to continue to support my Personal Learning Network (PLN), especially the new members! One way is to support new bloggers. Let's face it, we love when we read thoughtful responses to our posts even when people choose to disagree with us. Comments motivate most bloggers to continue blogging. Without my readers I do not know if I would have surpassed the six month mark. I am still aiming for this blog to reach a year young!

#NewEdBlog

Therefore, I started a hashtag for new education bloggers. If you are a new blogger (less than a year-old) or know of a new blog, please leave a link and possibly a Twitter handle with the hashtag #NewEdBlog. Jerry Blumengarten, @Cybraryman1, has worked diligently to help me collect the new blogs on his website. Starred blogs are new blogs. If you are not on Twitter, then just leave the link to the new blog in the comments below and I'll let Jerry know to add it to his collection!

Leave a Comment on a New Blog

For today's challenge, I encourage you to **leave a comment** on a new blog! You can be updated with new blogs added to the hashtag, #NewEdBlog, by subscribing to the list I update on Google Reader, New Education Blogs.

This is one step to accomplishing my long-term goal of commenting on more blogs and supporting new bloggers. In case you didn't know, several of the links I tweet everyday are blogs in my Google reader. I have added these blogs to my growing list!

Challenge:
Leave a comment for a new blogger! Take this a step further and tweet the blog post or subscribe to it!

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the hashtag #30Goals!

What new blog are you excited about and why?

Goal 5: Update Your Online Profiles

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

Think of the horror! I completed my Masters degree in September, but many of my online profiles I checked today listed this as incomplete! Not such a nightmare, but we probably do not realize how many of our online profiles are outdated. Therefore, I am challenging you today to update at least one of your profiles, with the long-term goal of maintaining a positive digital footprint. You never know who you will run into or the opportunities that await you. Often, as part of my position at [Parentella](#) I search for possible conference speakers. Also, I am trying to organize tweet-ups at places I will be traveling to. I browsed through Ning profiles to find educators in specific locations since I have yet to find an application that will help me find locations of educators I interact with on Twitter. Several of the profiles I sifted through lacked profile pictures, bios, activity, or links to blogs or other achievements. Just by having updated profiles that I feel positively reflect my attributes and mission, I have been invited to participate in conferences, offered various positions, and established relationships with new colleagues!

Updating Your Profile

To complete this task, update at least one of your profiles on any site, such as on a Ning, Google profile, Blogger (Commenting with your Google profile), Technorati, LinkedIn, or Twitter! If you do not have any online profiles, then I suggest creating one. You can start small by creating a ning or Twitter profile. These take less than 30 minutes to create a really fantastic profile. Here are a few guidelines for maintaining your online profile:

- Remember nearly every social website you sign-up for requires a profile!
  - The obvious ones are LinkedIn and Facebook. Keep track of the other social sites you signed up for such as Youtube, Vimeo, Twitter, Google Reader/Profile, Blogger, Delicious, Flickr, SlideShare, and so forth. On most of these accounts you may have no profile listed. My long-term goal is to get suitable profiles on most of social networking sites or get rid of them.
  - **Note:** Try clicking on your avatar when you make a comment on different blogs to see what comes up.
- Include an image, bio, and link to at least one portfolio item!
  - If possible the portfolio item should be a video, slide presentation with audio, wiki, or blog. If you really want to draw attention, then offer a lesson, hand-out, presentation, or other product you created for free. I often include the [PowerPoint templates](#) I created on the MicroSoft network for educators.
  - If you can add a reference letter to the website or a recommendation, then ask your friends if they will write one for you.
- It's okay to use the same items for each profile!
  - If you visit the several nings I participate in, then you will see the same information, look, and image. I developed one profile I liked. Each time I join a new ning, I copy and paste the same information. I usually copy and paste what I can from my ning networks for other networks as well. This saves me a lot of time! Here's [my profile in the Educator's PLN ning](#).

- You may notice that I include a recent picture, a short bio, my rss feeds, and places to contact me.

More Resources

If you haven't already created an online portfolio, resume, or CV then this should definitely be one of your long-term goals. The links below will help you accomplish this:

- My Visual CV- This free website is incredible for creating a professional and impressive portfolio.
- My Google Profile- Another free website that is frequented so you should definitely have a profile with Google.
- Creating Your Digital Self, 4 Parts by Ozge Karaoglu
- Alternative Ideas For Designing A Web Portfolio
- Electronic Portfolios with Google Apps
- What Makes A Digital Portfolio Effective? #Edchat Summary
- 7 Tips for Student Engagement with E-portfolios by Ray Tolley
- EFL Teachers LinkedIn – tech tip #9 by Kalinago English

Challenge:
Update one of your online profiles!

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the hashtag #30Goals!

What is your tip for updating a profile on LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.?

Goal 6: Set A Google Alert

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

You've created a digital footprint, but how do you keep track of it? My friend, Karenne Sylvester, shared a nice trick in her [Kalinago English blog](#) to set a [Google Alert](#) for your name and your blog url. For example, I have Google Alerts set for Shelly Terrell, shellterrell (my Twitter name), and http://teacherbootcamp.edublogs.org.

Setting alerts only takes a few minutes to do and you can determine if you want them sent to your email as they happen, daily, or weekly. Watch [this video](#) to see how easy it is to set an alert! You can even set an alert for your favorite subjects. I used to set an alert for education technology, ICT, and elearning. This led me to incredible content that I began subscribing to in my [Google reader](#). Recently, I narrowed down my alerts, because I was inundated with too much in my inbox. One of my long-term goals is keeping track of my digital footprint effectively, but limiting distractions. After all, time is valuable!

Challenge:
Set a Google Alert of yourself!

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the [hashtag #30Goals](#)!

Did you find anything interesting through your Google Alerts?

Goal 7: Step Out of Your Comfort Zone

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

Growing up my father pushed my sisters and me to step out of our comfort zones. Needless to say, I was pretty miserable being forced into doing things I didn't want to do. For example, when I moved to a new school my freshman year of high school my father forced me to run for class president. I didn't want to, because I was making new friends and I was embarrassed that I would lose. I surprisingly won due to the radical campaign my father set out for me which included plastering the walls with cartoons spouting silly slogans. My dad knew that as I got older I would need to be able to step out of my comfort zone to live life. I learned something very valuable that I would rather have a failure story to share than a story of regret. Stepping out of your comfort zone requires you to do something new that you are uncomfortable doing. My long-term goal is to force myself to try to accomplish tasks in new ways. This applies to my teaching and presenting. After a Twitter conversation with [@Aldtucker](#), [@Mccright](#), [@Asbella](#), and [@Edyoucation](#), I was convinced to chuck PowerPoint and try [Prezi](#) for presenting at my first conference this year. I'm nervous! I want to do well at these conferences, but I rather have a failure story than one of regret. Here are ideas for you to step out of your comfort zone:

- Present differently- try Prezi or doing a Pecha Kucha this year. These links will help.
  - [@Edyoucation](#) shared with me this link for tips on using http://prezi.com/manual/
  - [@Asbella](#) shared with me 3 of her Prezi presentations- VoiceThread – [http://bit.ly/7LDq70,](http://bit.ly/7LDq70) Top 5 uses of Tchnology for Young Learners- [http://bit.ly/5vqQXP,](http://bit.ly/5vqQXP) Computer Lab rules- http://bit.ly/5TW7Yv
  - Find out what Pecha Kuchas are by [reading this post](#).
- Rearrange your classroom- Try setting up learning stations.
  - Get rid of your teacher's desk. This [post by Russ Goerend](#) explains the task and was shared by .
- Trade in your uncomfortable shoes for comfortable ones and spend the majority of the class period walking around and facilitating in your classroom. This promotes your health and increases student learning.
- Change how and where you teach.
  - [Read this post](#) for more ideas about teaching outside the four walls of your classroom.
- Teach paperless every Friday- read about this initiative at the [Teach Paperless blog](#).

The long-term goal is the change and determining if it transitions into a permanent change. Therefore, to accomplish this task today I want you to think about what uncomfortable change you will make either in your professional or personal life and encourage yourself to be bold enough to make that step in the upcoming week. Try to at least create part of the plan of action for the long-term goal.

Challenge:
Plan to step out of your comfort zone!

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the [hashtag #30Goals](#)!

How will you step out of your comfort zone? Care to share?

Goal 8: What's Your Personal Theme Song?

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

Congratulations!

You just completed a week of goals. Can you believe how much you've accomplished in the New Year so far?! For the next goal, I want us to keep ourselves motivated for the week ahead. In the past, the best way I kept motivated was by feeling confident in myself. Personally, I think January is one of the toughest months. During this time we reflect on everything we did not accomplish the previous year, then we make goals and by the end of the month we might beat ourselves up for not making any progress towards these goals. I like to plan for this inevitable time that I know I will feel depressed. Many of us may be our own worse critics.

When I was in my 20s, I learned a trick from watching one of my favorite television series, Ally McBeal. In the show, Ally convinces her bestfriend John, who often stutters and lacks confidence, to get a personal theme song to sing to his reflection in the mirror. At first, John thinks it's a terrible idea. Then he chooses the Barry White song, *You're The First, The Last, My Everything*. In this [video clip](#) he's singing the song and his co-workers join him.

Accomplishing This Goal

Over the years, I have had several theme songs for different occasions. I had one song to motivate me to exercise, another to start the day, and those to deal with disappointment. Usually, I would sing these on the way to work in my car, hum them, or sing them to myself in my head. I had my theme song saved as my ring tone. Over the years, I stopped doing this. However, this year my long-term goal is to maintain this practice.

To accomplish today's task, think about what songs make you feel confident in various areas of your life. You can create lists in your mp3 player, Ipod, or Iphone. A friend, [@Annapires](#), introduced me to [Blip.fm](#), a music site where you can create music lists and post these selections on Twitter, Facebook, or Live Journal. This is a great site to post your personal theme songs and share them with your friends.

Your Students

This task can also be implemented as an activity with your students. Ask your students what personal theme song they would choose and why. They can create their own music videos using [Animoto](#), Windows Movie Maker, [Glogster](#), or other tools. Read [this post](#) and [this post](#) for more ideas of web 2.0 tools your students can use for this activity. Your students can also [take this quiz](#), which will tell them their personal theme song after they answer the questions. They can research the song lyrics and decide if they agree/disagree and why. The students can also make their own quizzes with more modern choices for their peers to take.

More Resources
- [Student music videos](#) at the Zarco English Blog

- [Project Peace,](#) the student collaborative video project
- A student's multimedia essay, [My Personal Theme Song](#)
- [Personal Theme Song and Why](#)

Challenge:
Think about your personal theme song or have your students determine their personal theme songs as a project!

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the [hashtag #30Goals](#)!

What is your personal theme song for 2010?

Goal 9: Be a Guest Blogger

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

One of my long-term goals is to post more guest pieces on other websites or blogs. I love having my writings published on other websites. Writing a guest post improves your writing in numerous ways, because naturally many of us hold ourselves to higher standards when we are guests. The wonderful part is you do not even have to be a blogger in order to write guest posts. Some of the most prominent members of our [Personal Learning Network (PLN)](#) do not have blogs, but guest blog regularly. Guest posts help you gain a positive web presence, help distinguish you as a subject matter expert (SME), help you gain exposure to a wider audience, and boost your portfolio.

Tips

Here are some useful tips, I learned from my experience:

- Have a short bio prepared- In your bio you may want to include your job position, related experience, a link to your portfolio or website, and a link to your Twitter or LinkedIn accounts.
- Have a nice profile picture prepared- Most people recommend having a picture of your likeness versus an avatar or logo.
- Write the best types of posts- Remember this will be your first impression on many new readers.
- Grammar check your posts!
- Ask the guest blogger for specific guidelines and keep to these guidelines- format, length, whether images are necessary, and what type of topics they are desired
- Reply to those who comment- at the end of all the comments you should be able to see a button that gives you the option to subscribe to comments so you are notified each time a person comments. Leaving comments is important for engaging readers in the discussion.
- Study the audience!

Where to Submit

Here are a few places that welcome posts from guest bloggers. Contact these websites through their contact pages or through Twitter. Introduce yourself, send them a bio, and your ideas for a guest piece.

- Guest series- contribute to a blog's guest posts focused on a theme
  - [Investigating Global Edtech Issues-](#) I am looking for contributors from various countries, please [check here](#) to make sure I do not have a post from your area.
  - [Cool Sites-](#) I accept posts that lists favorite education technologies with examples of how you used them with your students.
  - [What Did They Tweet?-](#) Choose your favorite tweets of the week and provide pics, video, and descriptions.
  - [Stories From the Front Lines of EFL-](#) Barbara Saka's series on teaching young learners English.
  - [52 Teachers, 52 Lessons-](#) Provide advice to new teachers

- Any ning site you are a part of has an area for blogging, but you can try these as well.
  - Second Life is Life ning- Are you a part of Second Life, we are always looking for posts.
  - Educator's PLN ning
- Prestwick House, @PrestwickHouse
- The Educators' Royal Treatment
- The Lesson Machine blogezine, @MyschaTheriault

To see some examples, you can visit the guest posts I have made.
- Should We Redefine Classroom Management
- Spread Your Knowledge: Join Twitter
- Step Outside of the Classroom
- EFL Teacher's Kit for Surviving Kids
- Fearing the Technology Monster
- Avoiding the Edtech Burnout
- Making Educational Broadband a Reality
- She in ELT: Sister Luz Moreno
- Advice to New Teachers

Challenge:
Choose a profile picture for your upcoming guest post. Write a short bio.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the hashtag #30Goals!

What are you passionate about writing?

Months after joining Twitter, I got the bug to meet my new friends face to face. After all, I had to see if this virtual relationship would extend to the physical world! Also, I had to prove to myself I was not nutty like many of my friends and family thought at the time. I attended conferences and met at least 20 folks from Twitter within a four-month time frame. I am happy to report that all relationships transpired nicely in person. I believe the reason is that through Twitter, I am able to have short conversations with friends on a consistent basis.

My family is scattered all over the world. Therefore, we rarely speak as much as I speak with my friends on Twitter. Communication is the foundation in any relationship; therefore, it makes sense to me that daily communication helps build tight-knit relationships. My long-term goal this year is to continue to meet many more friends I have connected with through social media. However, this series is about short-term goals or completing small steps to motivate you to complete your long-term goals. Therefore, the challenge today is to take the time to make a real connection with a person either on social media or in your surrounding community.

Friends, Followers, and Acquaintances

In our working environments, like our online environments we have many acquaintances. People laugh at social media when someone claims to have 10,000 followers or friends on their various profiles. However, many people can say the same about their physical environments. How many people have we shaken hands with at a conference, ball game, or other event? The amazing part about social media is that we have the potential of making acquaintances quickly.

Why? It is not about the follower count, but more about building a strong [Personal Learning Network (PLN)](#). The more you have participating with various backgrounds and skills, then the wider your library of knowledge. It is like the difference between having 1000 books versus 10 books in your personal library. In modern terms, it's like having 1000 bookmarks versus 10 bookmarks. Now, some wonder with search engines and Wikipedia why do we need people. I think of this as former arguments when people feared robots would replace all professions. Having a network of people for support really benefits you. Yes, I can sift through 1000s of links provided by a search engine, but why waste the time when I can ask a question on Twitter and have educated people provide me with resources they have already used? If I want to have a teacher group Skype my class at the last minute, then this is easily accomplished through having a variety of people you can choose from. Furthermore, the more people in your PLN, the more your message spreads. This is really helpful when you have a hashtag, event, survey, or collaboration project where you need contributions.

Connecting

At your school try introducing yourself to teachers you haven't connected with by asking them questions. You could also try meeting the parents of your students. Today, I receive a new batch of students so this goal is quite easy for me. However, the key is to connect. Therefore, I am preparing to

introduce myself to the parents, then communicate with them via a wiki page. If you want to connect through social media, here are some ideas.

- Blogs- Leave a well-thought out comment in a blog you never visited before and subscribe to the blog to continue the conversation. Recently, I have met some wonderful new bloggers by doing this and they have inspired me to keep up with this series and complete these goals. When someone leaves a comment on your blog, comment back and visit their blog. Jerry Blumengarten, @Cybraryman1, regularly updates his educational blogs website with new links. You can also check this list of new bloggers!
- Nings- Join a group, reply to a discussion, or leave a comment on someone's page. Did you know that many of the nings will show you people's birthdays. This feature should be on the right sidebar. Often, when I am visiting my ning page, I look and leave a happy birthday message for someone.
- Facebook and LinkedIn- Add a new recommended friend and introduce yourself or join a group and respond to a link or discussion.
- Twitter- Introduce yourself to a person who has connected with you. I have noticed Jerry does this often and shares a link related to their area of specialty. Genius! Some people have different ideas on this etiquette, but I like to thank people for retweets. Sometimes, I do this in a private dm and spark a conversation with the person. I see it as a way of communicating with people and have met many this way. However, this is only a suggestion. Above retweeting a post, try replying to that person about the link. You can ask the person a question about the link or respond with some information about the link.

These resources will help you on your journey to building your Personal Learning Network.

- PLNs, Where Do We Begin?
- Oh the Adventures You Will Have if Only
- PRESTO: How to Build a PLN Using Twitter
- How to Win Friends and Support People on Twitter by Neal Chambers

Challenge:
Make a connection with someone in either your local environment or through a social media network.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the hashtag #30Goals!

What are your tips for making connections online and offline?

Goal 11: Ask, Perhaps You'll Receive

Part of the 30 Goals Challenge Series

If I still bit my nails, I would be biting them, but this was a previous goal I did accomplish. The next goal in this series has my stomach in knots. What is this daunting task? I have to ask my director a question. That's it! I just have to ask a question. However, for many of us asking for a favor requires us to muster all our courage and strength. Why? Probably, we are afraid of being told no, being a bother, or how others perceive us for asking. When I think about it, this is silly. I am learning to get over the fear of asking by working closely with Tom Whitby. Tom is fearless. For example, when getting Alfie Kohn to be a guest on Edchat, I made the suggestion, but Tom actually was brave enough to ask. Tom has asked other guest speakers to be a part of Edchat as well. Tom's philosophy as he recently tweeted is *"If you never ask, your life becomes a world of what if's. Not a good way to live."*

Therefore, today's short-term goal is to ask. The long-term goal is to build up the courage to ask, especially if you think it is improbable. The answer might be no. Getting over the fear of being turned down is definitely one goal I hope to achieve.

On the same note, another goal is to learn to say no. This is one goal I have a difficult time with, but I am realizing that having too much on one's plate is not a healthy way of accomplishing tasks effectively. I think the same fears are mirrored, because if we fear people saying no to us, then we fear saying no as well.

Your Students

If you have neither of these problems then consider teaching your students to ask questions and learn to say no. Many of our students fear asking for help, because they fear what others might think. Never learning to ask for help hurts students. The student may have a learning disorder that is never discovered, may never receive a recommendation letter for a scholarship, or may fail a subject. Teaching your students not to fear the word no will also help them after they leave your class. This is a real world lesson.

Challenge:
Ask a question or say no to a task. You can also choose to help your students achieve these goals.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the hashtag #30Goals!

Care to share your experiences with asking for the improbable?

Goal 12: Reach Out

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

One of the best teacher trainings I attended had nothing to do with technology. Instead, the speaker related how much a smile and a gesture can make a difference in a student's life. He told an anecdote of how he was warned by his principal of his bad mood. He made a change. He stood at the door and began greeting every student who came in with a handshake and a smile. At first, he admitted it was insincere. The act itself was just in response to getting in trouble and there were some students he really didn't appreciate having in his classes, yet he told each one this as they walked out the door. You know which students, the misbehaved children that many teachers fear. One day, one of these students wrote the teacher a thank you note. This student was contemplating suicide and had told himself that if one person had wanted him around he wouldn't do it. After this, the handshakes became hi-fives and the smile sincere.

The Challenge

When I began this challenge, it was a way for me to jump start myself in accomplishing my own goals, some which I have been trying to accomplish for over a decade. When I first began using social media less than a year ago, I noticed that I was beginning to achieve my goals and set higher challenges for myself. This was at a time I was depressed. I had suddenly moved to a foreign country, did not know the language, and had given up my favorite job in the world. Life happens to us and having a support system makes the difference. Everyday, I look forward to a kind gesture from my [Personal Learning Network (PLN)](#). It can be a song on [Blip.FM](#), a comment on [Facebook](#) or my blog, a DM on [Twitter](#), a Skype call, a nomination for an award, and the list goes on.

Your reaching out has made the difference in my life. Reaching out makes a difference in your students' lives.

Recently, I read Marti Side's great post, [Check Yes or No](#), where she related how a student thanked her for being the first teacher willing to help him. This was my response to her:

Sadly, I am not surprised by his experience. I ran a creative writing program at at-risk schools and alternative schools in my city. They had the lowest reading scores and faced incredibly difficult situations in their personal lives. I thought the teachers would have a passion for helping these students. Instead, I frequently saw the opposite. The teachers called them stupid and told them they would amount to nothing. The principals walked the hallways and ignored the teachers yelling. I know what it is to grow up in a really poor area, I went to an at risk school. I was fortunate to have very loving teachers but how about my friends who had the ones who were burnt out by the job? Teachers have such an impact on students. A kind smile and help goes a long way. This is one reason I'm so passionate about building a support network for teachers. The less that are burnt out by the system then perhaps the more teachers we will have that are passionate and will make a difference in their students' lives!

Reaching Out to Teachers

For this reason, I am passionate about helping educators build a [Personal Learning Network (PLN)](). Perhaps, we can help burnt out teachers by reaching out with a nice gesture online and offline? Perhaps, we can just listen to them and offer encouragement? Perhaps, we can introduce them to a strong PLN who engages, supports, listens, shares, and collaborates? Perhaps, we will ignite passion in them so they can profoundly impact the students they impact year after year?

Let's face reality; teachers who are burnt out will always be in the system. Teaching is challenging. Teachers are overworked, underpaid, and under appreciated. We are the passionate ones. Can we create a movement of passionate teachers? I believe we can. Let's start by reaching out in some small way today with the long-term goal of reaching out in big ways for the rest of our careers.

Challenge:
Reach out to your students, teachers in your schools, or to members of your PLN.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the [hashtag #30Goals]()!

Care to share your experiences with reaching out?

Goal 13: Give Students Reign

Part of the 30 Goals Challenge Series

When I get into discussions about integrating technology effectively in the classroom, I usually pause. I fear many schools have a long journey ahead of them, because they have yet to adopt effective teaching practices, such as facilitation and cooperative learning. These are just a few. When I walk into most universities, lecturing is what I see. When I walk into public schools, lecturing is what I see. I also see many unmotivated students and read about the thousands of students who drop out every year and do not receive a diploma or about the struggle most universities have with freshman retention. I often think about students without a high school or college diploma and the struggles they bare. The reality is that many will raise children in poverty who will repeat the cycle. However, educators can do something about this. They can motivate their students to learn by giving them ownership of their learning.

- What if we took all the bookmarked web 2.0 tools we've been meaning to learn and let each student pick one to teach the class?
- What if we persuaded our principals to have one day dedicated to throwing out the lectures and book work?
- What if we walked into our classes on the first day, assigned some learning objectives to each student, and asked them to design that part of the curriculum with engaging lessons?
- What if we told every student, please use your cell phones during this test, because your classmates are your lifelines?
- What if we asked the students what they wanted to learn about the subject and how they wanted to learn the material?
- What if we gave students choices on how they would be tested?

I do not remember graduating from college and thinking I had all the answers now let me share them with my students. I think the best educators motivate students to experiment, research, and reflect. I think these educators are passionate about learning and continue to learn themselves. That is why my long-term goal is to provide more opportunities for my students to teach me, especially the ones that are labeled "challenging" by others. I want my students to have more control of the curriculum than I do. I believe if the student has more ownership of their learning they are motivated to be lifelong learners. I want my students to use what they learn and one way is by having them teach others what they learned. I do facilitate in the classroom like probably many of you do, but I want to take this further. What do you think?

Challenge:

Allow your students to have complete control over one class period. Have them choose the material and the way they want to present the material. Just trust them and see what they create.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the hashtag #30Goals!

Care to share your experiences with allowing your students to make decisions about their learning?

Goal 14: Cause a Ripple

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

While studying in college, I came across the Ripple Effect Theory. I was so enthused about the theory, I adopted it as a life motto. When we're young we do that. Recently, I discovered that this theory has been applied to education. According, to [Wise Geek](#), Jacob Kounin coined this term in 1970 in reference to classroom management. As [Wise Geek describes](#),

"When you throw a pebble into a pond, you'll see a splash and hear the resounding plunk of the pebble. You might notice concentric circles rippling out from the locus point of where the pebble hit the water. The thrown pebble might also have other effects… You are connected to the pebble, the water and the effects of throwing by the ripples… *You have caused change through a single and simple act*."

I believe the ripple effect can be applied to the current movement occurring in education through social media networks. I believe that educators are being inspired by their [Personal Learning Networks (PLN)](#) to cause ripples in their schools and local communities. Steve Moore's post, [Is Twitter Just Window Dressing?](#), made me reflect on this ripple effect theory. Here's my response:

I think because the numbers are there people will naturally look at them. However, every field has its community builders and with community building comes numbers. If every member is actively participating then real change is inspired. That is what we need in education. We need educators to go into their schools and cause a ripple. Even a small ripple makes such a lasting impact with a student, parent, educator, or administrator who in turns sends a ripple. I love that about social media. I believe PLNs inspire educators to cause ripples that are making a difference in a field that has been bombarded with bad policies and overrun by politicians who never were educators, do not have their own children in public schools, nor have spent enough time at at-risk schools trying to figure out why there's such an enormous achievement gap that hasn't closed for decades.

Preventing a Ripple

Ironically, the original intent of the theory by [Jacob Kounin](#) was preventative. Kounin believed teachers should deal with negative behavior at the onset to prevent a ripple effect of this behavior. In a recent Skype conversation with [Tom Whitby](#) and [Steve Anderson](#) we discussed why [lecturing is still heavily used in many schools](#) and why many teachers cling to ineffective instructional methods. One aspect is that student teachers who are getting into the field are trained by those who use traditional methods. Tom Whitby will be discussing more of these topics in his blog! Tom discussed how getting new teachers the right type of mentors would encourage them to use effective instructional strategies.

Considering this information, I want to make a long-term goal of causing positive ripples and preventing negative ripples. Everyday is an opportunity to stir the water, but are we actually making conscious efforts to do this? Do we really reflect on the consequences of all our actions before we make a move? I don't, but this year I plan to reflect before I act.

Challenge:

Teach your students about causing positive ripples in their community! Help them develop a PLN, start a club, volunteer, and so forth.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the [hashtag #30Goals](#)*!*

What are your thoughts? How can we cause and prevent ripples?

Goal 15: Create: 40 Writing, Music, & Art Resources

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

As we get older, we tend to leave our creative selves behind and take ourselves too seriously. Our hobbies can provide us with inspiration and release. This year I plan on being more creative by making time for my other loves- art, music, and creative writing. The short-term goal is to aim to write poems, prose, or short stories at least once a week until the process becomes a habit. I will start today by writing at least one poem. What else do you love to do than teach? Perhaps, you used to cook, act, sculpt, mold, play the guitar, write poetry, or paint? What can you do today to encourage yourself to inspire your creativity again?

As an educator, I also believe in inspiring students to seek their creative outlets. I believe that creative arts programs reach many at-risk students who do not succeed academically. Being creative allows them to express themselves when they might otherwise be reserved. Moreover, creativity helps many children stay out of trouble and gives them a way to believe in themselves. The most incredible experience of my life was organizing a creative arts program, ETHOS. ETHOS was an alliance of slam poets, artists, and musicians that volunteered to provide their talents to improving the surrounding community. We won an award for our summer youth program at the [SAMMinistries, which is a homeless shelter](#). Here are two of the events that brought tears to my eyes. A very talented musician, Ron Horne, ran one program where the children were able to drum on pots, pans, and chairs to make a group song while he sang. The children were so excited! You can hear Ron singing on this inspiring website he created about his organization, the [Texas Youth Word Collective](#). I am excited to see that Ron continues to give to the community through creative arts programs! On another day, my friend, Rod C. Stryker, [who is a published poet](#), and my friend, John Marsden, a musician, worked with me to have the children create and recite their own original poetry. Each child was given a metal cookie pan and worked with magnetic poetry. After crafting their poems, they were able to read them aloud on a microphone. Some of the children played their homemade instruments in the background. The children really enjoyed this summer program and we were glad to provide them with a few moments of joy.

Web 2.0 has revolutionized creativity. Now, students can share their works with a wider audience and collaborate on creative projects. Below is a list of various websites to help you or your students create!

Writing Resources

These are some of my favorite writing resources.

- [Twitter Magnets-](#) Create poetry on Twitter! This website works like the magnetic poetry pieces on your refrigerator. You get a choice of words, piece them together while listening to tranquil music, then tweet the poem if you choose. I heard of this wonderful website via [@NMHS_principal](#).
- [NanoWrimo-](#) If you write novels, try this free yearly contest. For the month of November, you are encouraged to write 50,000 words of a novel for a certificate and prize. If you do this as a class, you may be able to get [Alpha Smart Neos](#) for all your students that month! What I love

about this site is that it is social with several tools to help inspire you and your students to complete the project.

- ScriptFrenzy-Another social contest like NanoWrimo, except you have to complete 100 pages of a script during April. You may write any type of screenplay, stage play, TV show, short film, comic book, graphic novel, or adaptations of novels. You also have the option of doing this with your students and borrowing Alpha Smart Neos if you register by February 28th.
- One Word- You are given one word and sixty seconds to write about it. When you are finished, you have the option to publish this to your blog or on Facebook.
- Write Rhymes- http://www.writerhymes.com/students who are writing poetry can find more words that rhyme! Check out Kelly Tenkely's blog post for creative ways to integrate this tool into a lesson!
- Word Magnets- Mix text up and create new stories, poems, and more. You have a variety of backgrounds and graphic organizers to choose from. Visit Nik Peachey's post for more ways to use this amazing tool!
- Penzu- A free place to keep a journal or your writings. You can choose to make them public or keep them private with encryption codes.
- Character Chart- This chart will help your students flesh out their characters.
- Seventh Sanctum- This website provides 100s of generators for helping with creating Anime characters to finding plots for your movie or story.
- Cliche Finder- Are you searching for a cliche but only remember a word? Try this search engine.
- The Story Starter- Another generator that provides a sentence to get you started with your story.
- Creativity Tools- Find more generators, including a fantastic tool to help you come up with realistic names for characters. This generator asks for specifics like the census year and gender.
- How to Create a Writing Challenge Using Google Docs- This video and blog post will show you the tools that can help you create a writing challenge for your students.
- 49 Free Online Reference Tools for Freelance Writers- If you haven't found what you are looking for check these resources, which include a variety of dictionaries such as the slang dictionary.
- Is That A Narrative in Your Pocket- Several Iphone Apps for digital storytelling.

Music Resources

If you or your students are musicians or just like music, then these resources will be helpful.

- BlipFM- If you like to find new music or share music, then this social site is for you. You can dedicate the music to people on Twitter, Facebook, Myspace, and more! You can listen to my playlists.
- Youtube Instruments- Play the guitar, piano, organ and many more instruments on Youtube. Music lovers will love this channel of interactive instruments. Try playing the Youtube Piano.
- Noteflight- An online editor that helps you compose complicated songs on sheet music! Read more about Noteflight and other online music editors here.
- LilyPond- Free musical notation software that has so many features, including being compatible with MAC, pc, and Linux. Read about this amazing software here!

- [Absolute Sound Effects Archive-](#) You may like to host your own podcast and need background music or sound effects. Here is a resource with many sounds for free!
- [Classik TV-](#) Create music videos or films with subtitles! [Russell Stannard](#) recommended this as a top tool for students to make videos.
- [Audacity-](#) For my Mac I use Garage Band for podcasting and creating music, but for my PC you can download Audacity for free! See [Russell Stannard's tutorial on using Audacity](#).
- [Musipedia-](#) This website allows your students to edit any information on various tunes, melodies, and musical themes. You can also whistle a tune or play the tune on a piano and Musipedia will identify the tune for you.
- [Copyright Friendly Wiki-](#) Find creative common images and sounds for multimedia projects.
- [30 + Places to Find Creative Commons Media-](#) This has incredible sources for finding music.
- [Inudge-](#) Cool tool to create music by selecting various sound patterns with your mouse.
- [Museeca-](#) A search engine for music lovers. Search guitar tabs, mp3s, lyrics, ringtones, and music videos.

Art Resources

If you or your students are artists, then these websites will be helpful.

- [Animata-](#) Free software for editing and creating brilliant animation films.
  [Reverse Shadow Theatre](#) from [gabor papp](#) on [Vimeo](#).
- [Canvastic-](#) An easy tool for students to paint. Students are able to playback how they painted their masterpiece.
- [Artpad-](#) Similar to Canvastic where students paint and can playback. However, you can select frames and this has a nicer look.
- [Artsonia-](#) Kids can display and sell their art on this online museum.
- [Mac Mosiacs-](#) This free software turns your photos into mosaics.
- [Playful Learning Experiences-](#) This wonderful site provides you with many activities in writing and arts and crafts!
- [Artopia-](#) Teachers can create art galleries of students work. See [Kelly Tenkely's post](#) for classroom application ideas.
- [Odosketch-](#) Another easy tool for students to sketch and draw. For more information see [David Kapular's post](#).
- [Sketchcast-](#) Students can draw in several different colors, add text, narrate the drawing, and embed it into a wiki or blog.
- [VoiceDraw-](#) Draw with sound. For more information see [David Kapular's post](#).
- [Doink-](#) Students create free animation videos. See [Chickensaltash's blog](#) for classroom applications.
- [Art, Drawing and Art Educational Freeware-](#) Whatever your students want to do artistically you can find a free tool on this website!
- [Best Artsites for Learning English-](#) Larry Ferlazzo provides you with many tools and explains why they made his best list.

Challenge:
Dedicate time to something you enjoy doing aside from teaching or support your students' creative

hobbies with one of these resources!

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the *!*

Have you witnessed the power of creativity to inspire youth? Tell us about it!

Goal 16: Voice Your Appreciation

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

In 1996, I taught education classes at a hands-on science museum. For years I taught the same three siblings. The older brother was a nice student who was very responsible in looking after his younger brother and sister who were 6 year-old twins. The girl was the sweetest child. Everyday she'd give you the brightest smile and a hug. However, her brother suffered from severe anger issues and ADD. He confessed to seeing a therapist because he wanted to strangle his sister. Everyday he would get in fights with the other children.

The museum internship was preparing me to be an effective educator. The focus was on developing hands-on lessons that helped students make real world connections. My program director was an impressive mentor. When working with this angry six-year-old, she would not let us blame the child. She challenged us to try various methods with him to inspire him to improve his behavior. After the third summer of having this student, I finally figured out how to motivate him. We became friends that year and I would laugh with him. I found out he worked best alone and with his hands. Often, he needed alone time and did not work well in pairs. This is when I first began learning how effective learning stations are for classroom management. However, this was the last year he attended the summer program. I often wondered if I had helped him and worried about him.

In 2005, I began working closely with a nun at a high school. You can read about her [impact on my life here](#). One day I walked into her classroom and noticed the boy I had taught was sitting in the first row. Later, I asked her about his progress and she related how he was a star student, one of the most well-behaved and highest achieving students. I was overjoyed!

The Challenge

Yesterday, Joan Young, [@flourishingkids](#), tweeted to me, "I think sometimes we forget to tell those who inspire us that that they are important in our journey." Many of you who have taught for awhile may have stories like the one I related where years later we find out that we made a difference. That is why today's goal is to voice your appreciation for someone. The long-term goal is to continually voice our appreciation for those who impact our learning journeys. These are a few ideas, but please feel free to offer more:

- Send a message through social media outlets!
  - Dedicate a song through [BlipFm](#).
  - On Facebook, post a photograph of a memory from decades ago and comment on how the person made a difference that day.
  - Recommend an educator for an award and let the colleague know why you voted. [Sean Banville](#) recently posted a great [BBC award](#) site to recommend a teacher.
- Call one of your family members and thank the member or write a blog post about the family member. My father was so excited by this post I wrote [about him](#).
  - In this post, [Educators Are Only Human](#), many educators related their appreciation stories.

- Send an e-card with your message. My favorite e-greetings site is [Care 2 Cards](#) where your card supports a cause.
- Make an Animoto video or [Blabberize](#) the message. You can find more services to [show appreciation here](#)!

Challenge:
Voice your appreciation to someone. Tell someone how he or she has contributed to your learning journey!

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the [hashtag #30Goals](#)!

Who will you appreciate today and how? Do you remember a time when someone voiced appreciation for you?

Goal 17: Tell Your Story

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

Many of us have caught the social media fever. We love our [Personal Learning Networks (PLNs)](#) and want to persuade all educators to participate. However, Twitter, nings, blogging, and did I mention Twitter, are not appealing to a majority of educators. In a past post, [Most Teachers Don't Live There](#), I reflect on my reasons for wanting teachers to live in blog land and Twitter world. In spite of my convictions and passions, I do not try to sale social media and web 2.0. I have come to learn that sharing my personal learning journey is a better way. My blog is one way I do this. Many of you know a lot about me including what I looked like when I was a baby. My long-term goal is to begin sharing my personal learning journey at presentations.

Crafting Our Stories

In Marti Side's recent post, [The Story of Kunami10](#), she shares her journey about receiving her black belt. Marti does not paint a pretty picture. In fact, she talks about bruising and being so sore she did not want to get out of bed. I love this about her story. When we talk to others about our journeys we need to paint a complete picture. Yes, I had to invest time in learning about technology. I made many mistakes and really embarrassed myself at times. Technology and social media are not easy and do take time to learn. Some people will need to invest more time than others. If they are not prepared well for this reality, then they will be completely turned off to technology. I have seen this happen to many teachers who were forced to use technology in their schools with no notice or preparation. Some get very hostile if you mention the "T" word.

Another part of your story should be to share what you learned and how you learned this. When possible, we should offer guidance and resources. Later, we may also have to check-in and see how the educator's journey is going with technology.

Sharing Stories with Students

One of the most powerful ways to connect with your students is to share your journeys. Many of our students may not believe we relate to them. By sharing our personal stories we can overcome the generational gap and show our empathy. I am not saying we should get uncomfortably personal, but every once in awhile our colleagues and students can be inspired by our personal journeys. A wonderful example of a teacher connecting with his students is Jim Burke's post, [When the Teaching Gets Too Real](#). By posting this experience in his blog, Jim Burke also managed to reach many educators as well.

Challenge:
Share a personal triumph or failure with someone. Sharing this with your students may help you connect with them on a deeper level.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the [hashtag #30Goals](#)!

When has sharing your personal story inspired your colleagues or students?

Goal 18: Let's Move

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

One of the most popular resolutions is to exercise! Several members of my [Personal Learning Network (PLN)](#) have posted their physical achievements and goals. They have shared their exercise goals with their PLNs and have gained support. I love this idea, because I believe most goals are accomplished when we have a support system. Here are ideas others have shared with me in case you want to join me in my long-term goal of promoting my own physical well-being:

- If you like video games, then try the Wii Fit Plus program.
  - Follow this educator's journey in his blog, [Wii Me](#).
  - Follow 2 educators' journey to health in this blog, [Can Wii Do it](#)?
- Try running.
  - Joel, who writes one of my favorite blogs, [So You Want to Teach](#), shared this Will Smith video on his post, [Running and Reading](#). I love what Will Smith says about running and the person in your head pushing you to accomplish your goal.
- Try yoga or a peaceful walk.
  - Read Mary Beth Hertz's post, [The Importance of Silence](#), which has interesting research regarding sleeping disorders and the computer and tv.
- Post your fitness accomplishments using [#PLNfit](#), a hashtag that was created by [Beth Still](#).
  - One great suggestion I found on this hashtag was [@Cybraryman1's](#) tweet where he suggested changing up your routines.
- For more exercise tips for educators, try these resources!
  - [Cybraryman's exercise page](#) with many resources such as a BMI calculator and a list of elliptical workouts.
  - [Free Classroom Fitness Program-](#) Read about these one minute classroom work-outs on the Lesson Machine website.

Get Your Students Moving

One of the greatest technology workshops I attended suggested teachers wear comfortable shoes so they would be comfortable moving around the classroom all day! Many of children are becoming overweight and suffering from diseases like Diabetes. I love to move in the classroom. Movement makes me feel better mentally and physically. Moreover, I believe it is not healthy to have to sit in a classroom at a desk for nearly 8 hours a day, 5 days a week. Here are some suggestions to get you moving that I posted on the [Prestwick House blog](#):

- Have students get out of their desks and physically move.
  - Try a game where students sit down if they agree with something. This works well with history lessons.
  - Character education through a deck of cards- Give each student a card face down and tell them to place it on their forehead without looking at it. Instruct the other students who can see the card to treat the student according to the value listed on the card. A person with a Queen is treated very well and a person with the number two is treated

with disrespect. The students walk around the room while playing this game. Then the teacher asks the students to guess what their card value was by the way others treated them.

- Make videos—One of my high school student's favorite lessons was recreating television commercials. First, each student group chose a commercial and analyzed the stereotypes or misconceptions in the commercial. Then the students tried to recreate the same commercial without the stereotypes or misconceptions.
- Move the lesson outside. Try any of these outdoor tasks:
  - [Round robin discussions](#) — Students sit in small groups on the ground or on picnic benches and discuss a topic; one student keeps a record of the discussion. The class will then come together, with each group reporting its findings.
  - Go on a scavenger hunt — Students can look for objects of a certain color, texture, and so forth. If you want to add a digital aspect, have them record certain sounds, and then have other students hunt for these sounds. Have the students take close-up pictures of objects and have others hunt for the object.
  - Do a field study — I've had elementary students hunt for fossils with a paleontologist, collect and analyze weather data with a meteorologist, and explore the microbes in a nearby river with a water engineer. A majority of these activities required only a phone call, and we even walked to some of the events. In Germany, school groups walk to several places or take public transportation, which lowers the cost to make more field trips possible.
  - Journal — Students can simply listen to the sounds around them and describe the experience in a journal, or each one can pick a place to sit and compose a poem, create a comic, or draw.

Challenge:

Plan to be physically fit. Do something about it today! If you are currently active, then aim to get your students moving in the classroom!

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the [hashtag #30Goals](#)!

How are you getting physically fit? Do you want to suggest some tips?

Goal 19: What Do You Believe?

Part of the 30 Goals Challenge Series

One of my favorite NPR shows is This I Believe where people from all walks of life share their personal beliefs. This is in the form of an essay, which if selected is read on the radio and sometimes shared in a book. Reflection is important for our growth and to solidify our personal beliefs. Sometimes, I will browse through my writings and journals I completed years ago. I like to see what I thought then and evaluate how much these beliefs have been refined. I like to see what I steadily hold on to and which beliefs I have discarded.

We all have first-hand experiences about the learning process. We understand how we learn best. We have spent four years or more learning and testing several learning theories. We have observed the way our students with various learning needs think, evaluate, problem solve, and inquire. We have evaluated how our own children learn. As educators we sometimes forget to reflect on the educational philosophies we wrote when we first started teaching. Are your beliefs about how students learn still the same? Do you still believe the same instructional methods you first used are effective? Do you believe the way you were taught is still relevant for students today?
I know my educational beliefs have changed and today reflection is my short-term goal. However, by the end of the year I want to develop a new educational philosophy. I am a different teacher than when I first started and perhaps you are a bit different, too?

Our Students

We can also inspire our students to reflect on their beliefs. One way is by having them submit This I Believe essays. This statement should focus on one core belief and be 350 to 500 words. Visit the This I Believe website for more tips and to submit your students' essays. You can take this one step further and have students make a video essay they can share with their peers. Below is a video of Michelle Gardner-Quinn's This I Believe essay. Many famous actresses are reading this essay, because two days after Michelle wrote this essay she was murdered. Her essay has been shared at the Live Earth concerts and published. You can read the transcript of her essay here.

Please visit Michelle Gardner-Quinn's foundation, Michelle's Earth Foundation, which continues to improve the environment.

You can check out this post where I state some of my philosophies about teaching with technology.

Challenge:
Reflect on what you believe and inspire your students to reflect on what they believe.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the hashtag #30Goals!

If you are inspired, tell us what you believe in this e-book! You can also share links to your

educational philosophies, students' belief statements, blogs with belief statements, or videos/ podcasts of belief statements.

Goal 20: Seek Feedback

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

I remember watching a Dateline episode in which they videotaped several teachers and found that many called on boys more than girls. Apparently, the boys were also praised more. You can read the study, [Co-ed Classrooms Favor Boys](#), to form your own opinions. What I thought was really fascinating about the episode were the interviews with the teachers. The teachers watched their videos and were asked questions about their favoritism. Surprisingly, the teachers did not try to justify their actions. Instead, the teachers were appalled with their actions and reflected on how they would improve and pay more attention to their teaching styles.

Feedback From Your Students

Watching the segment made me wonder what I would discover if my teaching was recorded. I was never brave enough to attempt this, but I did begin to seek student feedback. My goal for 2010 is to seek more feedback from various sources and let the feedback help me improve. How often are we brave enough to do this? I do not think feedback from a principal's observation is enough. In my experience, I plan ahead to teach the best lesson for principal observations. I always get positive feedback. However, my student surveys have not always revealed high marks in all areas. This has helped mold me into a better teacher.

One of the best examples of student feedback is in Kevin Creutz's post, [My Reign is Over](#). In this must read post, Kevin tries a different approach by giving students reign over an entire lesson. However, he does not do this haphazardly. He has the unplanned lesson quite organized. He puts students into groups and at the end has them complete an evaluation of the new instructional approach.

I continuously try new ways of teaching my students. However, I rarely ask at the end of every lesson if they felt the experience improved their learning. Therefore, I plan to take the last 10 minutes of every class period to ask my students how they enjoyed the approach. If they feel the technology or instructional method was not productive, then no matter what I believe I will listen to them.

Challenge:
Seek feedback from colleagues or from your students for at least one period.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the [hashtag #30Goals](#)!

How has student feedback improved your lessons?

Goal 21: Have a Bit of Fun

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

My to-do list would make anyone tear out his or her hair and scream. I am sure your to-do list would as well. However, my [Personal Learning Network (PLN)](#) is what energizes me!

For example, last night I shared some great jokes and laughter with some Twitter friends! Today, I shared more laughs on Lindsay Clandfield's post, [Six anagrams of Well-Known ELT bloggers](#). I definitely had fun spending quite a bit of time [making anagrams](#) of some of my friends names! Visit Lindsay's blog for the names and to add an anagram of your name or other educators to the list.

Have Fun

Not to bore you with my recent social media escapades, but one of the most important goals I strive for every year is to have fun. I used to be a Type A personality. Then, I had three close calls and I realized that life is too precious to take myself so seriously. There is no time to be stuck in a job you loath, be brought down by those you surround yourself with, nor drive yourself to pursue ambitious goals you derive no inner pleasure from. I choose to have a job I may not make the most money in but am passionate about. I choose to surround myself with very supportive friends who make me enjoy life. I participate in projects, tweet, use technology, go to conferences, attend webinars, and so forth because it edifies me mentally and I enjoy these activities. Daily, I smile and laugh, because of you who interact with me.

There comes a time every year when I have to reflect on the stressors in my life, then plan to eliminate them effectively. Eliminating stress from our lives is not easy. Sometimes, it means we have to make tough decisions as my friend Tamas Lorincz has recently blogged about in his series, [My 5 Reasons for Leaving the UAE](#).

I think this is a long-term goal we can strive to achieve. What works for some people may not work for others. Here are some ways I relieve stress:

- Laugh and smile often
- Listen to great music
- Don't get stuck in traffic- I learned this one from my Psychology course. I began taking a different route to work that was a little longer, but ensured I did not get stuck in traffic.
- Go for a walk or run- I love to do this with my pug and take many pictures of him.
- Take naps
- Take breaks

Do you have any other tips to add?

Our Students

When you are stressed in class, it shows. Therefore, I try to have fun with my students. We are goofy, we laugh, and we have fun. Not all learning is fun, especially when our education system focuses on standardized tests. However, we should strive to make engaging lessons and permit students having

fun with their learning.

Challenge:

Reflect on the stressors in your life. For the long-term goal, reflect on how you can improve these situations.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the <u>*hashtag #30Goals*</u>*!*

How do you make sure you have fun?

Goal 22: 12 Resources for Giving Constructive Feedback

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

In the former school I taught at some of the students rallied together and complained to the principal about the previous teacher. The instructor thought it was because of the low grades they received in the class. I was receiving the same group of students the following year and I was really nervous. I was extremely shocked when the students thanked me. They said they really appreciated that I just didn't give them their grades, but explained why I took points off. They stated this was the main reason they had complained about the last teacher, because the students were never told how to receive an A or B. They were just given a grade and expected to accept this grade with no questions asked.

This experience made me reflect on my grading practices. I wondered how I had learned to grade the way I do. See, not only do I take the time to make notes of the grade, I also write goals to achieve for the next assignment. Moreover, I provide checklists and rubrics with my expectations. If the students meet these expectations, then they receive the grade. I learned to do this from some of my favorite college instructors. They always provided the students with clear guidelines and commented on why points were taken off. However, I only remember a few instructors doing this. When completing my Masters I realized only a few instructors provided constructive feedback.

Why do only a few instructors provide constructive feedback?

I believe this is due to two main reasons. First, many instructors probably do not realize what constructive feedback looks like. I believe constructive feedback is:

- specific- the student knows exactly what you thought was positive and what needed improvement.
- private- make sure the other students do not know who made the worst grades.
- immediate- provide the feedback as soon as possible when the assignment is still in the student's mind.
- helpful- We want students to strive to improve and to learn. If we are consistently pointing out the negative, then the student may give up or not try at all. Every student has something good about their work, even if it is the lowest performance. Perhaps, the student has never been given a shot at excelling. I have been given work I felt the student did not try at all. However, in my mind I try to remember that telling the student this or having a negative attitude with the student is definitely not going to accomplish anything. Instead, I rather encourage them to do their best in their next assignment and reassure them that I believe they have the ability to do some great work.
- open to discussion- I allow my students to approach me about their grades. However, I preface this by saying they must give me specific reasons for wanting the grade change and present a good case. I also set aside meeting times for this take place.
- goal-oriented- We should aim for our students to improve. We can do this by telling them what they should aim to improve and focus on the improvement instead of what they missed. Focusing on goals is motivational, while a focus on mistakes makes the student feel bad about themselves. This can be avoided by not marking everything in red.

Grading Resources

Second, many instructors probably do not have the time to give constructive feedback. I remember spending hours on grading. I understand the complaints. However, with a variety of free online tools, many instructors can cut down on their grading time in order to have more time to provide constructive feedback. My long-term goal is to begin using these resources more often and cut down on the amount of time I spend grading. For the short-term goal, I just want you to reflect on how these tools might help you provide constructive feedback.

- [Brain Honey](#)- Free online curriculum mapping. I love this website for many reasons. This is more than a grade book and curriculum planner. Easily drag and drop your state standards to assignments. They're already on the database. You can also find free lessons to match those state standards. Students have access to their grades. Additionally, the website highlights those students who did not achieve certain standards or are in danger of failing. This way you can let parents and students know as soon as possible.
- [Engrade](#)- Free online grader/ teacher website. If your school does not have an online grading book, then check out this tool which allows teachers to enter assignments, attendance, and grades. Parents and students can check these reports with a special code. Many other advanced tools include the ability to print a student grade book and individual progress reports, email parents easily, and more!
- [Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators](#)- Over 100 different resources and tools for traditional and alternative assessments. Tools include several rubric templates, rubric builders, electronic portfolio tools, and report card and progress report comment help for any grade level in any subject.
- [Rubrics for Assessment](#)- 100s of rubrics for all grade levels, several projects, and web 2.0 projects. Use these as a template and get your students involved in creating the rubrics for more success.
- [Digitales Digital Media Scoring Guides](#)- Simply check the type of digital project you need a rubric for. Then, click on each of the scoring guide's keywords for detailed descriptors.
- [Spellchecker](#)- Fantastic free tool that requires no download or registration. Copy and paste text into the window and this service will highlight questionable spelling and grammar. An explanation is given as well as ways to fix the problem. This tool supports over 15 different languages including 3 variants of English.
- [Whitesmoke Writing Assistant](#)- Free online spell checker for those with dyslexia, but useful for all students. Enter text, up to 1000 characters, and this tool marks incorrectly spelled words in red, and correctly spelled words used in the wrong context in blue. Right-click on the marked words for a list of possible replacements.
- [Viper](#)- Free plagiarism checker for essays. Just run student essays through this software. Save more time by having your students scan their essays and send you a copy that shows they passed the plagiarism test. This only works for Windows.

Helpful articles about grading:

- Russell Stannard's approach to constructive feedback by [recording the grading process and sending the video to students to correct their own errors](#).

- Sean Banville's series on using [audio files to provide feedback](#).

Challenge:
Test out one of these tools to see how you can use it decrease the amount of time you spend grading.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the [hashtag #30Goals](#)!

What do you think constructive feedback looks like?

Goal 23: Where There's a Will…

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

Many ideas exist for how the education system can be improved. In [#Edchat](#), educators have offered real solutions. However, many teachers wonder how these solutions can really take place when educational policy does not support them. I am an idealist. Often, I take the Don Quixote approach and "see life as it should be." Eventually people have to go from having ideas to actualizing these ideas. This is my long-term goal. A way to do this is to stop seeing the obstacles and "what ifs" that could get in my way. Instead, I implore us as an educational community to find successful examples of what we have envisioned. We can learn from these examples and begin to take the steps towards these goals.

The Will

I refuse to believe I have to accept the system we have lived in for decades. I worked with at risk students and in low-income districts. I grew up in schools that were left behind. I was part of the generation in my family who was the first to graduate from college. I have seen too many of my friends and family members be part of the end of that gap that did not achieve. I have seen their children also become part of that cycle.

The Way

Therefore, in February I plan on posting interviews with educators who have accomplished amazing feats in schools. My goal is to conduct more interviews with educators who work in successful educational systems that do not try to standardize students. In asking them how they are successful, perhaps we can find ways to make these ideas work in our schools.

The Connection

With these thoughts brewing, I was excited to run into Katie Lambrino, [@klambrino](#), on Twitter today. She will be one of the people I interview. These are bits of our conversation:

ShellTerrell: RT @bwillhoit: Great Post by @AndrewBWatt- Digital Textbooks? No. http://bit.ly/902vKg – No need for textbooks in project-based learning
Klambrino: @ShellTerrell Great post. Our school does not have any textbooks. It's all hands-on learning and I love it!
Klambrino: @ShellTerrell no textbooks, no report cards (portfolios instead) and 30 min P/T conferences each quarter, guest speakers and field trips!
ShellTerrell: @klambrino That's amazing! Do you have to worry about standardized testing at all?
Klambrino: @ShellTerrell yep, we have to follow the testing guidelines just like any other school. 100% of kids are either advanced or proficient

Rather than focusing on why it can't be accomplished, shouldn't we be seeking ways it can be accomplished?

Challenge:

How do you wish to change the education system? Who from your Personal Learning Network (PLN) can help you achieve these goals?

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the hashtag #30Goals!

How do you think we can begin to close the wide achievement gap?

Goal 24: Conquer A Fear

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

I have an embarrassing confession to make. The first time my husband and I went to Paris we didn't go up the Eiffel Tower. I was too afraid, because I am afraid of heights. Afterward, I was bummed out, because I thought I would never get another chance to visit again. Fortunately, my sister and her family visited the next year. In order to save face in front of my 4 year-old nephew and 12 year-old niece, I faced my fears and went up the Eiffel Tower. I remember being very nervous. My eyes were squeezed shut. On purpose I stuck myself in the middle of the crowd so I wouldn't have to look out the glass windows. In a second I opened my eyes and laughed at how easy the trip was. I felt silly. I had almost missed an opportunity, because I had let my fear paralyze me.

I am not the bravest person. My insecurities continuously creep up. This year I agreed to do several presentations and have taken charge of being the forerunner of technology at my school. I have many fears that something might go wrong and I will be solely responsible for scaring my institution into never allowing technology in the center again. I fear people will regret asking me to present or provide a workshop. See, this year I have taken on the challenge of trying to help many educators and schools see the benefit of using technology, specifically web 2.0 tools. At the conferences I have attended I have seen many educators hostile to the mere suggestion. I am trying a different approach that I am hoping pays off but I am not sure. However, I realize I cannot let my fears paralyze me into missing an opportunity. Therefore, I plan to practice, practice, and practice. Additionally, I plan to prepare myself mentally. In my experience, we sometimes psyche ourselves out mentally.

What are your fears? Will you join me in not letting them prevent us from missing opportunities?

Challenge:
Reflect on a fear you will try to conquer. If you want to take this one step further, have your students reflect on their fears.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the [hashtag #30Goals](#)!

How do you conquer your fears?

[Image Courtesy of Popilop](#) / [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)

Goal 25: Plant a Seed

Part of the [30 Goals Challenge Series](#)

One tidbit I carried from church was that having a mustard seed of faith could move mountains. I believe this theory applies to education. I believe if I plant a mustard seed of faith into the mind of every student, then perhaps then will believe that they can achieve success. Belief in one's self makes a big difference. If students believe they can go to college, then they will strive to complete high school. If students believe they can have successful careers, then they might work towards earning the credentials for that career. More powerful than belief is hopelessness. I see this daily. There are many students who do not believe in themselves and they live in poverty. Their children feel their hopelessness and often repeat the cycle. I see teachers who lack faith in the system. They teach without passion and without the belief that they can make a difference.

Our Attitudes

Everyday, we walk into the classroom we plant seeds in our students. When a student struggles we can choose to say, "Yes, I believe you can do this. I will help you." We also can choose to ignore the student or believe the student is lazy and just does not want to learn. When students disappoint us we can believe in them enough to challenge them to do better or we can give up on them.

I will admit that having faith is not easy, especially when we are underpaid, surrounded by students who are uninspired, blamed by parents, or stressed by test scores. However, I believe in passion. Passion takes faith, faith that you as an educator can make a difference and faith that all your students can achieve.

It is not easy having that faith, but we must muster this for our students. Trust me, your worst behaved student is probably the one most teachers and people did not believe in. Therefore, your belief could be the one seed of faith ever planted in this student.

My long-term goal is to continue having this faith and to plant these seeds of faith in every student so that I can move educational mountains. I have students I struggle with and those are the ones I want to ensure I have faith in, because they probably need my faith the most.
You give me faith. I see the work educators like you do in your blogs, wikis, videos, webinars, e-books, and so forth. You have given me the faith and passion to move educational mountains. Therefore, if you lack faith in your abilities, then let me be the first to tell you that you can and do make a difference.

Challenge:
Reflect on how you can plant more seeds of belief in your students and how they can begin to believe in themselves.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the [hashtag #30Goals](#)!

Where do you get your passion for teaching from?

Goal 26: What Are You Putting Off?

Part of the 30 Goals Challenge Series

I woke up today and began the daunting task of organizing my email. I have many projects, therefore, keeping my emails in their separate folders keeps me more organized with these projects. However, I often berate myself for putting these things off till they are overwhelming. I could have easily just put the email in the folder when I first read it. However, we often get so busy we put off some tasks till they build up and becoming overwhelming chores. In my case it is usually some type of cleaning or organization task. The apps on my Iphone should be organized. I should transfer the music in the Ipod I never use anymore over to my Iphone. I know I cannot possibly accomplish everything but I do want to be more organized. Organization saves time. Moreover, I want to be able to have peace of mind that I accomplished these tasks. Additionally, some of these tasks include having a nicer looking desktop or cleaner work area. This could help me when I experience a mental block due to seeing a mess. Some of these tasks would even help me accomplish other tasks more quickly. Therefore, I completed my short-term goal of accomplishing one of these tasks today. My long-term goal is to erase enough of these on my to-do list. Here are some tricks I have read about, perhaps they will help you:

- *A To-do Jar-* Write your leftover tasks on a small sheet of paper and throw it in the jar. Set aside time an hour every week to accomplishing one of these tasks. When you have free time, you could also pull out one of the tasks to accomplish. In this way, the task becomes a bit of an adventure, because you never know what you'll put out of the jar.
- *Trade-* This works best if you have children, a spouse, or friends you are doing favors for. Instead of just helping someone when you do not have the time, why don't you see what they can help you with? Many times people feel so grateful to help someone who is helping them.
- *Make it a Student Project-* Some of your tasks may be great lessons for your students. Sorting, evaluating, and analyzing are higher-order skills students can learn from doing a variety of tasks we do everyday. Moreover, students learn about the real life application of their classroom learning.
- *Outsource-* Companies frequently hire others to do some of their tasks. You may know some children around the neighborhood needing to raise funds for a charity. In local newspapers or church bulletins you may find people who need funds in this economy and would love for you to outsource your work to them. You can feel good about helping others.

Challenge:
What small task have you put off that you could complete?

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the hashtag #30Goals!

How do you manage your to-do list?

I woke up today and began the daunting task of organizing my email. I have many projects, therefore, keeping my emails in their separate folders keeps me more organized with these projects. However, I often berate myself for putting these things off till they are overwhelming. I could have easily just put

the email in the folder when I first read it. However, we often get so busy we put off some tasks till they build up and becoming overwhelming chores. In my case it is usually some type of cleaning or organization task. The apps on my Iphone should be organized. I should transfer the music in the Ipod I never use anymore over to my Iphone. I know I cannot possibly accomplish everything but I do want to be more organized.

Organization saves time. Moreover, I want to be able to have peace of mind that I accomplished these tasks. Additionally, some of these tasks include having a nicer looking desktop or cleaner work area. This could help me when I experience a mental block due to seeing a mess. Some of these tasks would even help me accomplish other tasks more quickly. Therefore, I completed my short-term goal of accomplishing one of these tasks today. My long-term goal is to erase enough of these on my to-do list. Here are some tricks I have read about, perhaps they will help you:

- *A To-do Jar-* Write your leftover tasks on a small sheet of paper and throw it in the jar. Set aside time an hour every

Goal 27: Reflection vs. Reaction

Part of the 30 Goals Challenge Series

Reflection…
looking deeply at ourselves
     meditating on mistakes
          contemplating lessons we were taught
               deciding our next steps

Versus

Reaction…
     acting on emotion
          regretting our decisions
            making mistakes
               paying the consequences

When I first started on social media I made the mistake of reacting to what I felt was an unjust situation. I paid hefty consequences. I knew I could have responded differently to the situation. We have all been there where our emotions get the best of us. However, reaction comes with consequences. For our students this can be deadly. For five students I knew, their reactions cost them their lives. Therefore, I think reflection is a great lesson we should teach students, but this seems to be missing from the curriculum. We need character education. Students need to be able to reflect on their choices and picture the consequences. They need to be able to see the possible outcomes of their decisions. Many emotions and hormones roar through our students that they often react to their emotions. I still struggle with this sometimes, but I know how to calm myself down. I know to channel the energy into something more productive like going for a walk or run. How about our students? Have they really been taught to reflect?

My goal is to help my students learn to reflect versus react. Today, I want to know how you think we can do this?

Challenge:
Help your students learn to reflect versus react.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the hashtag #30Goals!

How do we teach students to reflect?

Goal 28: 35 Sites and Resources to Capture A Moment

**Part of the **

I remember being amazed at the advertisement displays when I first moved to Stuttgart. Around the city are what appear to be normal posters, but they change every minute or so to another advertisement. With these displays in mind I have imagined what a school bulletin board would look like in the future. I imagine walking down the school hallway and seeing digital boards displaying students' multimedia projects. Comments are also displayed. A built-in webcam and microphone allow comments to be made by all those passing by. Captchas keep and other settings ensure that comments are safe. Touch technology allows the bulletin boards to be very interactive. No need to waste paper or have to throw away student work. This is my favorite part of the digital revolution. I can keep student work for years as reminders of teachable moments or creativity at work. So many projects lugged home each year and how many of us can keep every poster, science fair project, drawing, story, and so forth. So much work left behind by students, teachers, and parents.

We no longer have to discard student work.

Instead, with digital cameras, smart phones, and Web 2.0 tools we have the ability to save all work. Students can remember some of their best work and build on it year after year. These can be part of a portfolio and important for reflection. Parents can have a permanent record of their child's creativity and growth.

Before the Digital Revolution and Web 2.0

Before the emergence of digital technologies, we took Polaroid shots, developed film, or used camcorders. I never enjoyed taking pictures, because many times I would ruin the film. Unfortunately, there are countless moments I have lost this way. Now, that rarely happens. It's so simple to capture video and photographs with my Iphone. I can even edit my film and images on the Iphone. Additionally, I have a digital camera if I want better looking pictures. Instead of the PowerPoint slideshows I used to make of my students, I now have access to several web 2.0 tools. One of my long-term goals is to encourage my students to capture their special moments and keep their work for an ongoing portfolio.

Reflection is powerful. Sometimes, we forget and we need the reminder of fun times with friends or family. Sometimes, we just need to reflect on when we made a difference in our student's lives. With Web 2.0 tools and digital technologies we can easily capture moments to reflect upon.

Top 4 Sites

These are favorites from the edtech community, therefore, I am giving a brief description and helpful links to facilitate using these tools more effectively in the classroom. I have also included the links to the free educator accounts for each of these sites.

- [Animoto-](#) Make videos with creative common images and audio. Upload your own images, video clips, and audios.
  - My [Animoto holiday greeting](#)
  - [The Animoto Challenge-](#) various activities from the Box of Tricks blog.
- [VoiceThread-](#) Integrate slides, drawings, videos, and images. People can leave comments in a variety of formats. See these resources for examples.
  - [Getting Children Involved with Edtech](#)
  - [17 Ways to Use VoiceThread in the Classroom](#)
  - [Voicethread 4 Education wiki-](#) Find schools to partner with for your Voicethread projects.
- [Glogster-](#) An interactive and multimedia poster.
  - My glog, [The EFL Teacher's Kit for Surviving Young Learners](#)
  - [Glogster wiki-](#) lists resources, video tutorials, examples, and more
- [Prezi-](#)the alternative to PowerPoint. Create non-linear presentations with images, text, video, and cool transitions.
  - [Prezi as a Presentation Tool wiki-](#) Lists several tips, resources, and examples. You will also find useful information in integrating Twitter and other tools with Prezi.
  - [Prezi templates](#)

Multimedia Mash-ups

Here are some fantastic free tools in case you happen to want to create various types of multimedia videos or presentations to capture moments with your students.

- [Empressr-](#)Upload video, images and audio to create cool slideshows with impressive effects. Use the charting and table tools, import images from Flickr, embed your presentation on your blog, and create a backchannel with Twitter during your presentation.
- [SlideRocket-](#) Store your slide presentations online and integrate audio, images, and video. You can also collaborate with peers on presentations and create presentations online. Embed this on your blog, publish to a url, or conduct a webinar. A content library is available.
- [Masher-](#) Create a video by mixing video clips, music tracks, and images. These can be from your own library or choose from a huge library of audio, video, and music content, which are free to use. Easily embed it in your blog.
- [Video Thang-](#) You have to download this but it supports various platforms. This video editing software takes your uploaded video clips, photos, and music and allows you do to add cool transitions, text, and effects. Moreover, you can do close-ups, which I haven't seen in other video editing tools. You can then upload your video to Youtube or embed it.
- [JayCut-](#) This exciting video editor launches the full features in February. However, this is really impressive online video editor that you can [play with here](#). Online you can upload images, audio, and video clips. Add transitions, effects, and more. Easily collaborate with others on the same video. You can also edit videos on your smartphone.
- [Vuvox-](#)Choose from 3 different types of effective presentations- express, collage, or studio. Upload your own video clips, photos, and music and add incredible effects. You can embed this in your blog.
- [Stupeflix-](#)Mix images, videos, and soundtracks. Add titles, transitions, and themes. There is no

library of free music but you can easily embed it. See this great [example](#).

- [Capzles-](#)make an impressive presentation with your videos, images, and music. Moreover, blog about the experience which goes on a horizontal timeline.
- [Magnoto-](#) A mix between Wallwisher and Glogster. Display your photos, videos, text and audio in unique ways on a cool background. You have the freedom to move the parts around. People can comment on the different pages and subscribe to them.
- [Scrapblog-](#)Create multimedia scrapbooks. Upload your images and play with the themes, stickers, backgrounds, text features, and frames. Embed this in your blog.
- [Mixbook-](#) Collaborate on a photobook with friends. Create stories, photo journals, and more with your uploaded images. You can zoom in on photos, add backgrounds, and embed this in a blog.
- [Ahead-](#) Works like Prezi. This is an online platform for dynamic presentations. Upload videos, audio, images, pdfs, and Word documents. You can embed this.

Multimedia Slideshows

- [Yodio-](#) Add narration to slideshows easily through your computer or by using your phone. Embed this easily in your blog.
- [PanRaven-](#) Create digital stories with your uploaded videos, music, and images. The site has photo editing tools and lets you embed the presentation on your blog.
- [Slideshare-](#) Upload your PowerPoint presentations, Word documents and pdfs to embed in your blog. You can narrate your presentation.
- [Authorstream-](#) Upload your PowerPoint presentations to embed in your blog. You can narrate your presentation and play it as a video.

More Resources

For further information on these resources, please visit these websites:

- [Video Editing: 30 Free Tools and Web Services To Get Things Done-](#) Many of the tools featured here and more are further explained in this brilliant article!
- [Free video editing software list for all platforms-](#) If you prefer to have a software program for editing videos and making cool transitions, then check out this article which describes several.
- [Cool Tools for Schools Wiki-](#) Lists many more tools for digital storytelling.
- [Filmmaker's wiki-](#) Lists many more tools and resources for creating student films.
- [David Kapuler's multimedia category in his blog Technology Tidbits: Thoughts of a Cyberhero-](#) Lists specific details of many of these technologies and more.
- [Ozge Karaoglu's Digital StoryTelling series-](#) Lists several digital storytelling tools.

Challenge:
Begin to document your favorite lessons by taking pictures, recording audio, or recording a video.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the [hashtag #30Goals](#)!

How do you capture your students' moments?

Goal 29: Stay Focused

Part of the 30 Goals Challenge Series

When I was in high school I made a goal to run daily. After a few weeks I quit. I admitted this to my friend who volunteered to run with me. Every morning we ran for miles. I wish I could tell you that it was always a happy time but he had this annoying habit of pushing me. He would not let me lose my focus and running became a habit I kept for many years. From this experience, I learned that I stay focused and accomplish more when others are with me.

I was reminded of this throughout this series. Instead of one friend, I have many who have joined this journey. Reading your tweets, responses, and comments has pushed me beyond my initial expectations. When I began this series it was an experiment. Every year I undergo an elaborate ritual to accomplish many goals and create lifelong habits. I categorize my goals and sketch out detailed plans. Within a few weeks I lose my focus. I wanted to see if inviting my Personal Learning Network (PLN) to join me in accomplishing short-term goals would keep me focused. It worked. In the last 30 days I have woken up with a goal in mind to accomplish, because I knew I would have to post the goal.

The process was not always easy. Some days I struggled. Teaching, projects, distractions, and laziness got in my way. Then I would read one of your posts, tweets, or responses and I was energized to continue this journey. These are how goals are achieved. Obstacles will always get in the way, but we have to stay focused on the goal. Thank you for giving me that focus and helping me train my mind to become goal-oriented.

Tomorrow is the last day of this series, but not the last goal we accomplish this year. Let's stay focused. This is just the beginning.

Challenge:

Create a plan on how you will stay focused to complete your long-term goals for the year. Suggest ways to help our students to learn to stay focused on long-term goals like graduating from college.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the hashtag #30Goals!

How do you stay focused? How can we teach our students to stay focused on long-term goals like graduating from college?

Goal 30: Pass the Baton

Part of the 30 Goals Challenge Series

As educators we tend to be very giving people and volunteer our time to help others. In this way, education is a significant profession. I am fortunate to have been involved in many incredible projects. Along the way, I realized that some of these projects either no longer exist or lack the profound impact they once made. Funding is a problem. Another problem is when the leader leaves and no one else takes the reigns. I have been that leader, the one who failed to pass the baton.

This year I aim to pass the baton. How is this accomplished?

- Mentoring
- Creating a plan
- Creating leadership positions shared by many
- Having appropriate measures in place
- Establishing a vision

The Challenge Continues

My long-term goal is to ensure this project is continued. Many have been so incredibly wonderful in sharing this with their teachers and students. Thank you for this. To make this process easier I have created a free e-book that has all the goals listed in order. You can share this with your school, other teachers, your students, and administrators. Next week, I will ask you to help me collaborate on a better e-book. I would like to create a collaborative e-book with images, videos, student examples, blog posts, and comments that fit under each category. I want to be able to take this to the several conferences I am presenting at this year and share this with teachers and their students. I would like you to be able to share it as well on your blogs or at teacher trainings. I want this to be by a collaborative group of authors. I hope you will join me in this project.

Congratulations on endearing this journey with me. Here is a list of all the goals we have accomplished together. Continue, with your long-term goals now that you are goal-oriented. I feel so fortunate to have had you join me in this process and hope we will continue this community of support.

Challenge:
Reflect on what you would like to ensure continues and come up with a plan to achieve this.

Don't forget to leave a comment that you accomplished this goal using the hashtag #30Goals!

How do we ensure we pass the baton?

Image courtesy of Psychbird / CC BY-NC-ND 2.0