A Learning Progression

My future in learning is part of a never ending process. As my master's education draws to a close a new part of the learning process begins.   As I look toward my future learning I frame my thinking around five major questions. The answers to these questions explain my past, present, and future.

Who am I? Currently I am a high school social studies teacher and football coach. Also I am a graduate student at Michigan State University. I have a lot to learn about all facets of life. This invariable fact excites me. Learning is an ongoing process which never stops.   The Michigan State master's program has taught me a lot of important lessons but most importantly I have learned about myself. The program identified my personal strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, certain classes showed me how to capitalize on my strengths and improve my weaknesses.   Through my course work I have done things I never thought possible. The most important lesson is better proficiency in technology. Before entering the program I had never used much technology. Now I regularly utilize webcams, video chat, online videos, and much more in my daily life. Utilizing my technological resources has made me into a much more effective teacher. In all my lessons I now incorporate some form of technology. Therefore I am a better person as a result of the Master of Arts program.

Where am I? I have now been an educational professional for four years. I am at a point in my career where I have developed a learning philosophy. Importantly, as a lifelong learner, I realize my learning ideology will forever be developing. The foundation of my learning philosophy is to inspire individuals toward self education. This tenant was instilled into me through the Michigan State University graduate program. Many times professors posted informational resources and gave assignments based on the information. In many cases the resources existed in various formats. I, as the

student, then educated myself with the sources I preferred. In my opinion, this is the future of learning. I am now trying this method in my classroom. I am assigning more projects and group work.   As a result of this I provide the students with computer lab time for working in class. As a teacher and coach, daily I learn with technological resources. In the future my teaching, as well as learning, will be founded in self education with technology.

What am I doing?   Although I have embraced learning with technology part of me is still struggling with the consequences of new age education. As a result of this my mind is still full of questions. In many of my courses we inquired into the digital age. As a result of my personal inquiries I realize many unanswered questions exist as educators enter into this new age of learning. How important is real life social interaction? As classrooms are confined to message boards, are we forgetting a major element in education? As we learn online, are we eliminating the student-teacher relationship? In certain individuals' minds this is the focal point of education. The teacher's influence and hidden curriculum of values and discipline are equally important as the content learned. A final question: Are students being effectively prepared for the real world.   So much of education now being student based.   Are students learning how to meet deadlines? Are schools dropping standards in order to accommodate student needs?   With the use of technology are student's grammar and spelling skills eroding?   These are some of the many interrogations I have as I question the future of education as well as my role within it.

Where am I going? Obviously I have established beliefs and unresolved questions. However I firmly believe this is part of the learning process. As my master's learning experience ends and I now have some years of experience in education I am entering another learning stage in my life. I have three simple goals for the next phase of my life. The first is applying the lessons I learned in the Master of Arts program into my teaching and learning experiences. My second goal is continue advancing in mastering

technological education.   Thirdly I want simply to continue learning new things and never be afraid to explore opportunities.

How am I going to get there? Setting the goals is only the first part of the journey. The important part is the actual steps. For goal one I will continue self educating myself in the areas I am interested in learning about.   Furthermore I want to resolve the questions about new age learning. Additionally I will base my classroom model around teacher directed as well as student focused education. I will fulfill the second goal by using programs like United Streaming (Discovery Education) and Skype for educational and personal experiences. Finally I will challenge myself daily to learn at least one new lesson.