Future Learning Goals

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I was shaken to my core early in my master's program. One sentence in Stephen Brookfield's book, [Powerful Techniques for Teaching Adults,](#) was the reason. That sentence has stayed with me and has created a more focused purpose in my own teaching, and consequently, my own learning. Brookfield said, "If the students are not learning, then you're not teaching." If the students are not learning - if no change is taking place in the dendrite connection of student brains, if behavior is not shifted because of the work I do, then I am not teaching. But, I say, I am a teacher! I bring information and strategies and new ideas to students! Does that mean that I can only define myself a teacher if my learners can define that they've learned? Am I only doing my work if the recipients have received? This idea, that a teacher is only a teacher if a student has learned, is a paradigm shift. Because of this shift, I have three goals for myself to ensure that students are learning so that I can continue to call myself A Teacher.

My first goal is to gain more knowledge about what motivates a learner to learn. If I can better understand the conditions under which people want to learn, I can better help them to gain new knowledge. There are a number of researchers exploring this fascinating concept of motivation to learn and my first goal is to know more about it. One of the important concepts I look forward to exploring is the knowing-doing gap. That gap is the space between the place where people know something - a best way to study vocabulary, for example - but they don't do the thing they know is best - they continue to study vocabulary the way they've always done it. This knowing-doing gap is fascinating and is an important bridge to cross when considering motivation for learning. I can learn about motivation for learning by reading *Drive* by Daniel Pink and reading the numerous recent scholarly articles about the topic.

My second goal is to become a more purposeful coach of teachers. Helping teachers to grow in their best practice and to be able to confidently articulate why they are using the strategies they are using is important work. To help teachers learn through large group professional development is great and is something I feel confident in doing. An area I look to grow in myself is in one-on-one coaching with teachers - helping them to address specific learning goals within their own classrooms - beyond the large group needs. Coaching adult learners is a skill to spend a long time perfecting, and to do this I can further my skills as a Cognitive Coach by taking a further series of courses. Also, there are a number of professional texts I look forward to reading - [Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School](#) by Andy Hargreaves [The Art of Coaching: Effective Strategies for School Transformation](#) by Elena Aguilar [Student-Centered Coaching at the Secondary Level](#) by Diane Sweeney.

A third goal relates directly back to the idea of helping students to engage with learning. Whether working with adult learners or youth, technology can be engaging if used purposefully. Keeping in mind that I am only teaching if those I'm working with are learning, I want to ensure that I am doing all I can to ensure learning happens. If I can increase engagement using a tool that is carried by everyone in the room, there is a higher likelihood that students learn when I teach. By staying in the forefront of technology-for-school platforms, by thinking creatively about the technology that people use in their daily lives and how I can incorporate *that* technology into my teaching, I can increase my effectiveness. Therefor, to accomplish my third goal, I should be on Twitter, read education technology blogs, and stay on top of what platforms and apps students use. By doing so, I can stay up to date with what technology can be used to increase engagement in my students, thus my students will be learning and I can then continue to define myself as A Teacher.