Learning Goals

My overarching career goal is to eventually find an educational software need that is not being filled and be part of developing a solution for this need. Before I can do this, I know that I must accomplish several learning goals. First, I need to determine what area of educational software in which I want to concentrate. Next, I need to learn more about what is currently available in the educational software world and what is lacking. Finally, I need to have the business acumen to be able to start or help run a software start-up business. While I have a base of understanding in most of these areas, there is still a great deal of learning that I must do in order to reach my goals.

Problem 1: Determining my educational software niche. While I believe that there are many areas of education that I could work within, my passion lies in improving overall administrative functions. Since I have spent several years working with procurement software, I believe a great place to start would be to learn more about the educational procurement world. It is my hope that I will be able to blend my professional experience with my passion for education by learning more about this very focused field. In order to learn more about this particular area, I am planning to become more involved with National Association of Educational Procurement (NAEP). This organization has annual meetings, webinars, and even a procurement academy that I want to learn more about. I want to begin small by reading more of their publications to see if this is the area that I want to tackle professionally, and, if it is, I would like to eventually enroll in one of their academies.

Problem 2: Knowing the Software world. Once I have determined my software niche, I need to know what is available and what is still needed. This pursuit will be accomplished in several ways. Depending upon the area that I settle upon, I may first start with International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). Their website and conferences are a treasure trove of current trends in educational software that I want to dedicate a great deal of time reviewing. If I do end up working in educational procurement, I will add the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) and ProcureCon to the organizations that I intend to get further involved with. Both of these organizations have several conferences a year and provide a great place to gain new insights and network with other industry experts. Through these conferences, I have already made contacts with several large universities, and I believe that they could assist me in furthering my understanding of the educational procurement world and what is needed within it. Just in the last few weeks, I have started attending local chapter meetings for ISM, and I see the value that these forums will add to my continued learning in this arena.

Problem 3: Being able to run a business. I am often asked why I decided to get my master's in educational leadership rather than pursuing an MBA. My response has always been that I know I need to understand my target audience as much if not more than I need to know the business. Now that my master's program is coming to a close, I know that I really need both. One resource that I learned about in my graduate work is The Personal MBA by Josh Kaufman. While I may eventually decide that I also need an official MBA, for now, I plan to start to work through The Personal MBA program and see how much I can get out of that before committing to another few years of a traditional program.

Eventually, I know that I would like to pursue a PhD. However, I know that I am still a long ways from knowing exactly what field I would want a PhD within. In order to get to the place that I know myself well enough to be able to attain a higher degree, I know that the steps listed previously will help make that path more clear. While I may not have every single learning goal laid out just yet, I am very excited about the road ahead and all of the learning possibilities that I will be pursuing soon.