

Developing a Professional Development Plan

The following outlines the steps identified by Educause, a non-profit association whose mission is to advance higher education by promoting the intelligent use of information technology. These steps were originally developed by NASA as part of a management program.

- I. **Reflecting.** Write and reflect on your career, organize your thoughts, set aside regular amounts of time to journal, make professional development planning a priority.
- II. **Gaining Self-Awareness.** Define your strengths. Consider what aspects of your work give you satisfaction and what aspects do not. Look at particular events and analyze those to learn more about what elements you would want to include or emphasize in your career.
- III. **Seeking Outside Input.** Talk to your supervisor, your mentor, your peers to gain information in your planning process. Your plan should be uniquely tailored to your needs, with consideration of the organization.
- IV. **Developing Action Steps.** How will you get from where you are to where you'd like to be? How can you improve your satisfaction with your career? First, determine something you would like to change in the very short term, then list concrete steps you can take to move yourself toward that change. Some examples of action steps follow.
- V. **Setting Longer Term Goals.** After you have begun to test out new areas you want to explore, work with input from your supervisor and /or mentor to set goals which cover the bigger picture for the next three years.

Examples of some action steps:

- ___ Develop and/or update your resumé
- ___ Ask for new assignments in your current job
- ___ Seek a mentor
- ___ Obtain on-the-job guidance from someone who is more expert in specific areas
- ___ Start a journal to record reflections and new insights
- ___ Attend seminars/conferences
- ___ Enroll in university or college courses
- ___ Experience self-paced learning (books, videos, computer-based instruction)
- ___ Conduct informational interviews and visit other programs
- ___ Join a discussion group or book group on topics you want to learn more about
- ___ Look for networking possibilities in your community: ex. professional associations, support groups, etc.

Consider using planning tools you are familiar with:

- Try adapting a lesson plan you use with children to reflect a plan for you
- Create a “web” plan with you in the center
- Adapt the High Scope model of: “Plan – Do – Review”: Make a plan, implement your plan, and then take time to assess and reflect
- Journaling – write it down: this is what I just learned and this is how I will incorporate my new insight into my practice... and this is what I need to know more about...

Be generous in self-affirmations!

Acknowledge what you've already done and what you are currently doing to advance your professionalism. When you become consciously aware of professional development planning, you'll see yourself as actively engaged all the time. Take pride in your accomplishments; others will notice.