

## Summer Journey Personal Statement

My journey as a professional educator started seven years ago after I researched digital literacy, constructionism and free software in the school system of Uruguay. It was amazing to see so many young students with laptops at their fingertips. I remember wondering why a country like the United States did not do the same for its youth. Once I realized how many people in the U.S. and throughout the world were digitally illiterate, I decided to help change that. When I started making a proposal for that research project, I had no idea how much my findings would impact my path forward into designing maker education spaces and activities, running a Fab Lab and starting a robotics team at an after school program.

Now I am a teacher at a dual-language, public high school. My students are almost all Latino from low-income families. It is my imperative to help them acquire literacy in these new digital spaces. I believe that the Playful Journey Lab experience will help me improve the formation and assessment of my students' learning within our community-based digital projects, such as creating mobile applications and creative digital art. Collaborating with the Playful Journey Lab will expose me to the benefits of implementing gamification with my students, a process I would love to improve.

Areas I would like to explore for my professional growth largely revolve around student-led assessment and cooperative elements of gamification. I feel confident in facilitating project-based learning. However, as a current formal public school educator, I am challenged to create an assessment system that values the process of learning versus checking off boxes for end products. Collaborating with the Lab would help me improve in this field.

I find myself already thinking of how I could best use my skills for a number of the existing projects listed on the website. Outside of curriculum development, I feel I can best contribute to this lab with my community and event organizing skills developed by directing two international conferences on freely licensed resources in education called Libre Learn Lab. Public speaking is fun for me and I love reaching out to people. I am particularly fond of equity-based work rooted in community, so I would be more than happy to help engage the upcoming community of practice.