Professional Growth Plan
For Lisa M. Conley

There is always room for growth- one can always improve themselves in some way. I believe I possess many strengths, but I also have numerous things I would like to change for the better.

My strengths include working well with others and possessing successful communications skills. I also listen actively and express my thoughts articulately. I enjoy my subject area- art, and I feel strongly about it so I like to spread my enthusiasm concerning it. Organization is a must for me and I feel this too, is a positive. In addition, I hate being late so punctuality is imperative. I try to be efficient in my lifestyle, concerning the environment, and this need for efficiency leaks over into my time management. I also like to think I have a good sense of humor and personality. If asked, my friends would probably say I am dependable and easy to get along with.

While I feel these things are positive about myself, there are three things I am currently working to improve: my accent, my lack of patience, and my tendency to be too serious.

Since I am from Eastern Kentucky, I have a southern accent. Though my dialect is not as thick or slang as most of the people I know, I feel I need to continue working to eliminate it. I have monitored it most of my life, and more so since entering college. I feel this could be a
communication barrier between my future students and me, since I plan to live in a more urban area.

Another thing I need to improve is my lack of patience. I walk quickly, I eat quickly, I do nearly everything quickly. While this allows me to use time efficiently, it also causes stress in others areas of my life. Driving can oftentimes bring out my impatient side, especially when waiting at red lights or while being stuck behind extremely slow traffic. Since I hate waiting, I take the stairs sometimes simply because I feel more productive walking. Although I am patient with people, I am aware that children require double the amount of patience and so I need to improve this area.

The final thing I plan to work on for now, is lightening up. Sometimes I become so wrapped up in completing what I need to get done, that I am too serious. I want to find happiness in the mundane things of life. Since life is what one makes of it, I need to make all I do not only purposeful, but enjoyable as well. This would also decrease my stress levels.

My plan of action for losing my southern accent consists of monitoring my speech and possibly taking a speech class. I listen intently to how others speak and find it easy to pick up on speech patterns and dialects. The speech department at my university offers classes to theatre and speech majors who have to alter their dialects for the careers. I searched for books that could also provide me with helpful direction and am planning on
reading Accents: A Manual for Actors by Robert Blumenfeld. This will be one of my summer vacation reads. I could then record myself and listen to the playback, while at the same time, correcting myself as I go.

To increase my patience, I will simply have to force myself to slow down when I feel the need to rush. To put the task at hand into perspective with greater things will remind me that there is time for all I need to do and rushing through life is not necessary. While driving, I will keep in mind that being on time is not as important as getting wherever I am going safely. There is no outside assistance that can really be utilized. This is for the most part, something I must control.

Lightening up is yet another area which is mostly left to me to change. I could use my family and friends as assistants in helping me see when I am being too serious or cranky and need to have more fun. I will monitor my moods and keep my emotions in check.

Through a little persistence and work, I should be able to change my accent, my lack of patience, and being disconsolate- all of which, will benefit me in the classroom. Perhaps in the near future I will be able to add these three weaknesses to my list of positive characteristics.