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# Kevin Corbett

By George Nantwi



Kevin Corbett (<http://bit.ly/1N8Wcm1>) is a developer of online education programs and a longtime advocate for the integration of technology and learning. He blogs regularly about eLearning, mobile learning, and the future of educational technology. EdTech Magazine named his blog as one of the 50 Must-Read Higher Ed Technology Blogs. Corbett previously served as an instructor at the University of Washington, where he taught their first hybrid educational technology course to high school teachers.

## **How did your educational trajectory and past professional experience shape your current work?**

My educational trajectory and professional past have had a profound effect on my current work and where I'm at today, in many unplanned and unexpected ways. I was a college wrestler and a pre-med major who was unable to successfully balance the demands and rigors of the two. I quit both and spent a very brief time in grad school doing brain research before finding my passion in helping young people find success academically. I went into education hoping to make a difference in the lives of young people and found technology to be a transformative tool when paired with good teaching.

## **How do you hope your work will change the learning landscape?**

The learning landscape is a big and powerful institution with a growing influence by powerful corporate and political players. More frequently, I find my personal educational views at odds with the many new initiatives that, in my opinion, ignore the development of healthy, positive, and productive young people. My individual efforts are best spent helping individual students become the best they can be, and share with other educators the power they have to focus the importance of their work.

## **What broad trends do you think will have the most impact on learning in the years ahead?**

There are many trends that will have an impact on learning, but I don't know if they're the ones that are most essential for a healthy future. Big data and expensive standardized tests continue to dominate, while educational leaders compete for federal money to increase programs in science, technology, engineering, and math. I tire of the rhetoric from educational leaders about 'preparing students for the 21st century' when liberal arts—the gateway to increasing creativity, imagination, and expression—are being reduced or eliminated.

Many of the STEM careers are being automated as industry excludes expensive human labor with robotics, while imagination, creativity, and ingenuity will be amongst the critical skills needed in solving tomorrow's problems. A balanced curriculum is important to face the challenges of the future. Affective factors of learning are rarely discussed, yet empathy, joy, love of learning and contentment are all important attributes in healthy societies, which I hope more educators will consider.

## **What are you currently working on & what is your next big project?**

I'm working on humanizing and bridging the electronic barriers to increase teacher-to-student relationships in online learning. I've talked with countless students throughout my thirty years in education and they are quick to mention the importance of personal connections and positive interactions they had with teachers. These connections made profound differences in changing their lives. This teacher-student mentorship is what I enjoyed most about my many years coaching youth and in the classroom. Techniques and tools to increase these relationships are what I am hoping to build and cultivate between teachers and students in online educational programs now.

## **Who are the most interesting people you are following on Twitter?**

Out of all of my social media outlets, I enjoy Twitter the most and find it so valuable in building a personal and professional learning network (PLN). I follow many incredible people who I admire and respect for all the time, effort, and energy they put into improving education and student learning. If pressed to list only three people to follow on Twitter (and I regret to leave many impactful people off this list), the following are inspirational to me:

1. The amazing Jackie Gerstein (<http://bit.ly/1Q5nGPm>) from Boise State University—one of the most passionate and authentic educators I've had the pleasure to meet.
2. Angela Maiers (<http://bit.ly/1Ij8ZKe>), whom I hope to meet someday because I admire her brilliantly positive work promoting her "You Matter" initiative.
3. Tom (<http://bit.ly/1LSQ7bx>) & Whitney Kilgore (<http://bit.ly/1Nvo3QV>), the couple who started the popular Sunday night #TXeduChat and both work really hard across the educational spectrum to improve learning and share widely best practices.

*Image: Courtesy Kevin Corbett*

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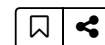
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