

“All the Places I’ll Go!”
by Annie Kim Sytsma

When I graduated from middle school and again when I graduated from high school, I had Dr. Seuss’s book *Oh, The Places You’ll Go* read to me and my peers by our teachers. The words of this children’s book have resonated with me throughout my life as I have accomplished one goal after another. As I get closer to finishing up my Master of Arts in Education Technology from Michigan State University, I hear those words again and think about all that has been and all that will be.

“Today is your day. You’re off to Great Places! You’re off and away!”

I hope to live my life honoring the first page of Dr. Seuss’s book and look at every day as “my day.” As an educator, I have run into difficult and challenging days, but I hope to remain steadfast that I am always heading to “great places” or at least steering my students to find their great places.

“You can steer yourself any direction you choose.”

Life is meant to be lived and I have taken control over the direction of my life to get where I am today. When I found myself unhappy and feeling as though there was more to life, I sought it out and redirected my life to be where I am today. I will continue to steer myself in the direction I choose. That direction might not always be right. In fact, I expect to choose the wrong direction more than a handful of times in my near and far future. I trust that I will learn something from every direction and decision I choose. I will not blindly follow the crowd, but instead understand why I choose to follow the crowd or head in my own direction.

“Wherever you fly, you’ll be the best of the best. Wherever you go, you will top all the rest.”

Whether it is as a student or as a teacher, I have and will continue to strive for my best. My goal is not to sit at the top to just be the best for the sake of being at the top. My goal is to be the best in order to be the most efficient and effective person I could possibly be. This is discipline that I have worked into my classroom community and I will continue to focus on the discipline of doing my best work and will expect my students to always do their best work.

“Rac[ing] down toward a most useless place. The Waiting Place.”

I have been trapped in the dreaded waiting place many times before and the waiting place is not all that bad. It is a place where we feel stuck, but it could be a place where we reevaluate and reflect. It is in the waiting place where I have received clarity. Our journeys aren’t always straight and they don’t always go up.

There are obstacles and even mudslides that obliterate us or the paths we tread. Rather than get flustered about walking in circles in the waiting place, I must remind myself to stop. Stop to take it all in. Stop to refocus. Stop to appreciate the moment and see the opportunities.

“Ready for anything under the sky.”

I usually know what I plan on tackling next, but this time I am sitting back and letting it come to me. I have controlled everything I possible could and have been so calculated that I have not had the raw opportunity to put my training to the test. I have used so much of what I have learned throughout the MAET program and I am excited to see how I could use more of it. I am interested in being part of the West Michigan Writing Project, but I am also interested in spending the summer developing, rather re-developing, my curriculum to incorporate all that I have learned about the Common Core State Standards and technology in education. While the specifics have yet to be decided, I am excited and encouraged that I am ready for whatever heads my way.

“Oh, the places you’ll go! There is fun to be done!”

Everything is much more enjoyable when we have a community to share and grow with. I plan on taking my MAET knowledge and share it with the teachers in my department, building, and district. Each one of us graduating from the MAET program are leaving with a wealth of knowledge in both theories and practice and it really is up to us to pass this on. I think about all the fun I had with my cohort buddies in exploring technology in education together that I would love to have that spirit among the people I teach with. There is so much fun to be had in education and integrating technology is a great way to do that for both teachers and students.

“Your mountain is waiting. So...get on your way!”

All of our mountains are waiting and I can’t wait to see the mountain range that all of us will create together. My mountain calls for me to redefine education and repurpose lessons in order to reveal the excitement behind learning that seems to have gotten lost behind standards and policies. The mountain I climb requires me to strip off layers of debris that have concealed the beauty of the journey. So here I go to climb my mountain and I take with me my students who will eventually leave my path when they find and make their own paths that will lead them to their own mountains.