

Chasing Daylight

I read a book a couple of years ago called “Chasing Daylight” by Eugene O’Kelly in which the author writes down his memoirs and ponderings of life in the last couple of months before he died from cancer. It was a stunningly poignant and strong book to read as the author struggles with living in “the now”. How do you stop, take a breath, and take in what you are doing, what you may be learning and what you need to learn?

I often feel like I’m chasing daylight and that what I’m doing now isn’t enough for my students and I’m constantly looking for that bright patch of inspiration and innovation to light up the learning environment. In another interpretation I always seem to rush something through when daylight is brightest so I can finish up before darkness sets in when what I really need to do is sit back, reflect upon my work, and wait for the next day.

Last October, I ended up in the hospital with an irregular heartbeat. Probably one of the scariest days of my life. Have you ever been in a hospital bed thinking about what you still have not done and what there is still left to learn about the world? It’s a humbling experience. Taking your health for granted is something I do constantly and we skip through the days as if they’re mere annoyances on the way to our next vacation. Sometimes we need to stop and reflect and look at the sunset for a while. Literally and metaphorically!

As I end my Masters course I value taking a break, pausing, and taking in my surroundings. I’m certainly not the most educated and most versed person in all things education technology and if I ever say that I think I will need to get a different job. During my time in the MAET course I’ve stressed, I’ve crammed, and I’ve learned. It’s a shame that with learning and working, a little stress may pop into your life. It’s inevitable and I envy anyone who says they don’t get stressed out even a little bit in their profession. It’s been fun, I’ve enjoyed collaborating with fellow students and to be honest the best conversations have been in the culminating course, CEP807. I’ll be lying if I said I learned new things I didn’t know before in every course I took but in every course I took I learned another way of organizing my learning with each instructor’s unique way of delivering content. Right now I feel like I’m under a mild and peaceful sunshine, it’s comfortable and I think I will take my time, reflect and assess my current learning portfolio. There’s time enough to follow the sun.

If I said I knew where I was going both professionally and physically I would be kidding myself. Like a lot of other people who finish their Masters there’s a time to exhale and start contemplating their futures. I look forward to December 2012 and the completion of my final courses. I look forward to relaxing and not having any deadlines outside of my work. I think I deserve it!

Being an international school teacher you are constantly thinking of the next move. Right now, in October, as I’m writing this we have had to say already if we are coming back next school year. So right now, we have to think about if we want to stay or if we want to think about another school and/or another country. At our current school there is no Professional Development fund per teacher and in a lot of other schools there is. As this has a direct impact on workshop we can attend or online seminars we can sign up for it is a major part of our decision making. We must be able, as teachers, to attend whichever workshops we see as being advantageous to our current teaching. It’s all part of being a lifelong learner.

My goal is to be in a school which values ongoing professional development as much as I do. I want to work in a school that wants me to present at international conferences and not see it as a negative that I miss school days to go there. I want to work in a school that values teachers who value lifelong learning. I want to work in a school where every teacher strives to be the most current and relevant teacher that they can possibly be.

I think with my Masters completed will what I have be enough and is there enough daylight to do what I need to do? Will I need to get another degree down the road or change career paths altogether? These answers are just unknown and vague shadows in the dusk at the moment. I will enjoy the sun, take my time, have fun, and continue learning everyday from my students, teachers, administration, friends, and global connections that I make along the way.