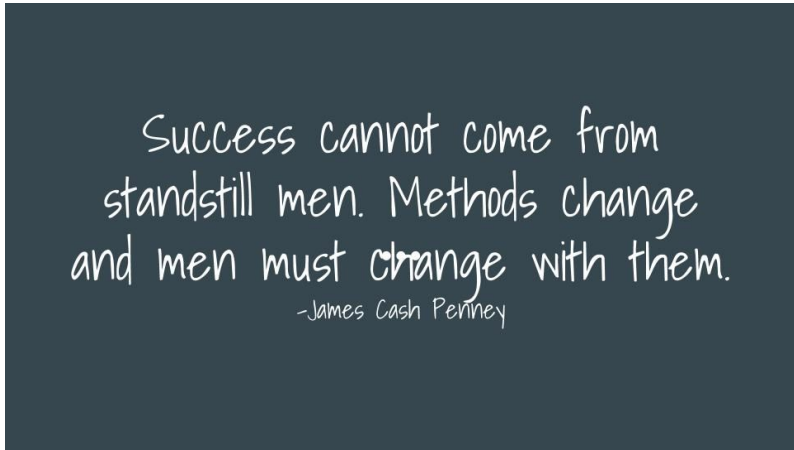# Oh, What the Future May Hold!

By Kate McCallum

Success cannot come from standstill men. Methods change and men must change with them.
-James Cash Penney

The word **future** is almost a double entendre. It holds both optimistic notes and pessimistic ones. On one hand, the future is exciting, unknown as it may be, with endless possibilities. On the other hand, the future holds daunting and sometimes overwhelming uncertainty. Personally, I like to think that one of my best triumphs in my educational journey is that I truly feel wise enough to embrace both circumstances. Wisdom, in the form of the many experiences I've encountered both professionally and personally, has steered me to embrace both challenges and opportunities. While we can never fully predict how the future will turn out, I have come to realize that successful people have a starting point or plan to work from as well as the flexibility and knowledge to be able to adjust along the way.

In outlining a focus/plan for my next phase in my career, I am interested most in continuing development in leadership initiatives, technology enhancements, and advanced knowledge in the ever changing field of communication arts.

Leadership

Over the course of my professional work thus far, I have come to really understand the need for leadership in an organization. I have come to believe that it is a foundation for motivation which in turn fosters more learning. This seems to be true both for students as well as adults. So far in my career I have switched from role to role as an educator- even experiencing the life of a traveling teacher. I have also been trained in and facilitated comprehensive leadership/mentor programming for students. Through such experiences, I am now eager to develop myself more in leadership positions that help guide decision making in the educational process and in educational communities. I aspire to learn more about successful organizations/businesses and how they implement better strategies into general leadership and staff organizations. I firmly believe (even on a national level) that there are some significant gaps in how teachers are supported, and I hope to take more personal action in this development in the future. I am particularly interested in researching/comparing successful business models like the well-known Google complexes, with the mindset that we too can facilitate an updated workplace environment for teachers/students that other businessmen enjoy. We need newer and

better ideas about how education can be set up. Far too many times I have heard teachers advising students and their own children "don't go into teaching"… As I now have my own children, I can't help but realize that I truly want good teachers for their education and I feel an ever-growing importance of getting involved in leadership roles to help ensure that we do gain and support great candidates in the field. While I'd like to get behind an entirely new school format someday, a more obtainable goal in the "right now" might be to get involved with my school's union to see if I can help, or perhaps to use my journalism background and get more involved with the local school board.

Technology

Technology advancements will simply just continue to develop. Obviously, this has always been an interest of mine as it was the focus of my Master's degree and even the core of my undergraduate studies (broadcast journalism). I have taken initiatives in web design and coding especially. I still have great interest to develop this passion further and I hope to take opportunities to attend more collaborative sessions such as the MACUL conference, and ISTE conferences on a national level. So far, I've only had minimal opportunities to do so. But, I have already prioritized these national conferences on my calendars and told administrators to include me. It is a step forward. I have created an online presence to use in my classroom- both using Google technologies and also my own website. I have begun a blended approach (at one point a "flipped" approach was highly discouraged in my schools!), and I hope to continue to be a leader in this area in my school and develop great ways to enrich my lessons for students. This blended space has also given birth to great strides in communication with my students and parents and I really wish to further this exploration as technology keeps enabling it. One goal I have is to try and work through a coding game (web based game that teaches you coding while playing) myself as many kids do this on their own. Some people are already using these games in the classroom. I really believe in learning coding skills and I haven't had the time affordances to explore some of these to date. It is a major goal of mine to do so and I believe that I can at least learn new ways of how educators do this by networking for example at the tech conferences.

Communication Arts

I began work in this field over a decade ago and I feel that my journey has simply not met its end. So much has developed in this time. While I relish in the media foundations I've gained in speaking, writing, and research, I also am intrigued in the way that new media is evolving the way people communicate. Even though my degrees constitute me as somewhat an expert already in this area, I know that my future will hold more exploration and knowledge in the field. Particular interests for me include studies of the effects of "likes" and motivation, using social media as a learning tool, and the pressures/stresses of keeping a non-stop online presence. Some of my graduate work dabbles in these researches, but I hope to develop more commentary and dialogue in the educational community in their regards. One attainable goal I have to do so is to rekindle my work within MIPA (The Michigan Interscholastic Press Association). I was a past board member in this organization, speaker several times for their conferences, and worked closely with other advisers in the area to develop scholastic journalism initiatives in the state. I got away from this a bit as my daughter was born, but I would like to return and work with these colleagues to develop more collaboration in the field, especially to create more resources and learning opportunities for students studying digital journalism.

Overall, I am a believer in lifelong education. I feel that the future, as uncertain and overwhelming as it may seem, is also an opportunity to further develop. I really do feel pride and accomplishment in my educational journey thus far and confident in my skillset to embrace new adventures and knowledge in leadership, technology, and communication. Future success for me, will be adapting along with these areas of study.