ADL Journey Discussion: How Far I Have Come

When I began the M.Ed. In Applied Digital Learning, I thought I was simply learning how to integrate technology more effectively in my kindergarten classroom. What I did not expect was how much I would grow as a self-directed learner, instructional designer, and emerging leader. The ADL principles, especially COVA, changed how I approach learning. Instead of completing assignments just to earn grades, I built everything around my innovation project, Tech Time: My Time in Kindergarten. What started as a structured digital routine for center rotations evolved into a research-informed innovation focused on building student independence, engagement, and ownership.

Self-directed learning became one of my greatest accomplishments. I learned how to manage long-term projects, connect coursework intentionally, seek research that supported my ideas, and revise my thinking based on feedback. I stopped waiting for instructions and began designing with purpose.

Developing my innovation plan pushed me to think beyond daily lessons. I created an organizational change strategy to support teacher implementation and sustainability. I learned that innovation is not just about having a good idea. It requires alignment, structure, and leadership.

The learning theory foundation gave meaning to what I was seeing in my classroom. Constructivism and self-regulated learning helped me understand why structured technology routines matter in early childhood. Backward design strengthened my planning. I now begin with outcomes, define clear success criteria, and intentionally design measurement strategies. Through action research, I developed a measurement strategy focused on student independence and engagement. Collecting and analyzing data helped me move from assumptions to evidence. I now see data as a tool for reflection and growth, not just accountability.

Building my ePortfolio has been one of the most meaningful parts of this journey. It represents not only my work, but my transformation. It shows how I moved from integrating technology to designing significant learning environments grounded in research and measurable impact.

The most important shift in my ADL journey has been my identity. I am no longer simply a kindergarten teacher using digital tools. I am a digital learner and emerging leader who designs intentional, structured, and research-based learning experiences for young students.

And that growth, more than any single assignment, represents how far I have truly come.