

# *A journey to connect the dots.*

*By Pearl Alimo. Michigan State University*

When I decided to pursue my Master's Degree Program in Education I had to think profoundly about my mentor's counsel when I shared my goal with her. In her words 'education is expensive so it is important to know what you want to and would love to do with your degree'. Her words sunk deep and challenged me to reassess my life and rewrite my goals.

One thing was clear; I have always loved to study and to climb higher the academic ladder. Learning, researching, teaching and leading has always been challenging yet exciting for me. Growing up I did not only enjoy learning and leading but also teaching others. This reflected in community projects I created to train, coach and mentor young people across the globe.

At the time of my application to be in the Master of Arts in Education (MAED) program, I was working as an education technician with the Navy Child and Youth Programs. My primary responsibilities were teaching, nurturing and caring for school age children. I created educational and recreational projects and programs for school aged youth in out of school learning environments. I was also teaching English as a second language and working on different projects online with other youth development champions across the globe. With all of this, I was sure I wanted to be in the education field. I was looking for a program and an institution that would lead me to gain deep knowledge, help me learn new skills and improve my teaching and training abilities. The college of Education at Michigan State was my best choice.

My professional goal at the time I applied for my Masters of Arts in Education (MAED) program was to major in *Technology and Learning*. My ultimate goal was to transfer my new knowledge and skills to others through teaching and training and also to introduce modern e-learning programs and projects for the children and youth I work for and with.

My story after two years? I have seen these goals develop over time as I journey through my Master's Degree Program. For example, now I do not only wish to acquire and transfer knowledge to others but to learn to apply new approaches to teaching and learning that aim at bringing the best in others, exposing students to knowledge, providing students with opportunities to interact with ideas and or concepts, acquire skills through creative play as an effective way of lighting the fire of literacy, creativity and ingenuity in children, youth and adult learners. This evolution is due to new profound knowledge gained and different learning experiences I have been exposed to in this program.

Again, I have seen myself evolve and I do not only desire to teach or lead but to help others grow and develop personally and professionally. This has led me thinking designing training and professional development programs for adults with an ultimate goal of coaching career development programs for adults.

Overall, my goals have not changed specifically but have just been refined based on new experiences, knowledge and skills learned through my Masters of Art in Education (MAED) program. My refined goals include designing e- teaching and e-learning programs that will spark creativity in children and to carve career development programs for working adults that results in new and improved services and products for humanity. To this point, I can boldly say that I have a transformed mind as a new educator. From here I can connect the dots from desiring to be a 'learner, teacher and leader' to being a 'creative designer' in education.

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