Motivated to Mitigate
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Reflecting on goals is difficult for me as I have never been a person to set long-term (or even short-term) goals. I've always felt that by setting goals I set myself up for disappointment when I don't reach them, so I shouldn't set them. Instead, I just make decisions based on instincts and then set really high expectations for myself. When I began the journey to achieve my master's degree from Michigan State University, I made a clear decision, one that was disheartening but also intriguing. I decided, though it was hard to admit, that I didn't want to be a teacher for the rest of my life. Don't get me wrong, there are components of teaching that I love, especially getting to see the smiles on my students' faces and building positive relationships with them. However, my passions and my interests took me elsewhere. I started the Masters of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) program, knowing that I had a large interest in technology and learning as much as possible about its implications in the classroom.

Ever since doing my student teaching in a one-to-one device school district and writing my honors thesis on the integration of it, I've wanted to learn more about the effective uses of technology in the classroom. I've always considered myself a life-long learner, so gaining knowledge was my initial expectation when starting this program. I would say that learning more was probably my biggest "goal" when starting this journey. MAET did not disappoint. I learned everything from different software and how to use them in the classroom to creating quality assessments for students. I learned how to use multiple maker kits and iterate to develop lesson and unit plans surrounding different technologies. I learned so much and was even more motivated to share my knowledge and support my colleagues.

I've never regretted my decision to pursue this opportunity. If anything, completing this program has only assured me that technology is something I am passionate about. In my application for the program, I wrote "I want to become an expert, so that I can help other teachers create engaging and thought-provoking lessons by allowing students to use technology and feel comfortable using it themselves. In an ideal world, I would like to take these skills to the instructional consultant level, enabling myself to present and communicate with a multitude of teachers." While I may not be an expert yet, I do feel like I've explored, read, and created many tools and tasks that will allow me to support other teachers. During my time in this program, I was also challenged professionally, as many members of my school staff identified me as a leader in terms of technology. During this pandemic, our teachers were tasked with teaching remotely and requested my support and assistance often. With this professional experience as well as the graduate program, I am more inspired than ever to work with teachers to provide technologically-based lessons as a member of their team.