

I'm finished with my degree. Now what? I'm picking up another book!

By: Mary Wever

I am about to share a story that I'm a bit embarrassed about, so no judging! :)

A few years ago, I was coerced into reading a book that I really didn't want to read because I thought the premise was awkward and silly. I mean, what self-respecting English major would read a book about a teenage girl who falls in love with a vampire? Yes, ladies and gentlemen, I am talking about Stephenie Meyer's best selling Young Adult book, *Twilight*. Despite many recommendations from friends and esteemed colleagues, I managed to dodge reading the series. However, there was one day during midwinter break that I was up north in a cottage with no electricity when I ran out of magazines to read. Oh no, what now? I still had three whole days to be locked in that desolate cabin, so I definitely needed something to do. That's when I found the *Twilight* book that a coworker shoved into my bag before the break. I rolled my eyes, but it was either read that goofy book or count the specks on the ceiling. In the end, reading won out.

The funny thing is, I couldn't stop turning the pages. Even though I thought I was too old, too mature, and too educated to read a new *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, I found out that I actually enjoyed the story and characterization. In college, I was so used to reading 18th Century British Literature that required a lot of thinking and analyzing that I forgot what it was like to read for pleasure. In contrast, this book took me to another world full of imaginary characters and problems, and I liked that feeling. So, I finished that book in a day and ended up craving more. When we got home, I bought the rest of the series and finished them within a few days.

Now what? I had a few options. I could stop reading altogether because I was satisfied with the books I just finished, or I could try to find another series that would get me as excited to read as *Twilight*. I chose the latter. I rushed over to Schuler's to talk to a girl who writes the Young Adult reviews. I found friends who also enjoyed that genre and had book talks with them. I researched books online and read people's recommendations. And I read for the sake of reading so I could share my insights and opinions with others. I couldn't stop with that one book because I was so motivated to consume more.

That is how I feel about the MAET program at MSU. I can't just cold turkey quit learning just because I don't have classes anymore. I have learned so much, met so many people who share similar interests, and pushed myself so hard that I crave to keep up with that level of engagement. I love the feeling of being the go-to person for technology in my school and district. I am proud of the friendships I've made with other MAET students and instructors. I crave to go to conferences, like MACUL and Google Academy, to learn more. I'm pushing myself to use

Twitter to read and share relevant articles relating to teaching with technology. And that's what it's all about, right? Pushing yourself to learn more for the benefit of your students.

I'm not saying that I am done taking classes forever. I am toying with the idea of working toward my PhD or applying to work for a university. However, I can't imagine that I would leave the classroom anytime soon because I am enjoying teaching with my newfound knowledge and skills. It's like reading *Twilight*. I want to keep going and learning more in the same genre with the added benefit of enjoying what I am doing. Since technology is forever changing, so must I. So, I plan to keep a rich dialogue with my PLN I have created through taking MAET classes, the Red Cedar Writing Project, and colleagues I have met along my journey. And I plan to keep learning, sharing, and expanding my expertise by forcing myself to try new things. Like Julia Childs said, "You'll never know everything about anything, especially something you love."