

Starting and Growing a Professional Learning Network

Traditional professional development is great for in-depth training. But as teachers, we all have our own unique interests and needs when it comes to professional learning. And with so many amazing educators online, there's never been a better time to share our collective knowledge. **This is what makes a professional learning network, or PLN, so great!** A PLN is any network you create to learn from and share ideas with others. And the best part? Because our PLNs are truly personalized, our learning is bound to have a direct impact on the work we do in our classrooms.

Tips for Building a Positive PLN



- **Follow others, and get connected.**
 - You know the topics that interest you most — dig into them and find your focus.
 - There are probably *tons* of amazing teachers who share the same (or similar) interests. Connect with them!
- **Get inspired, and try something new.**
 - Read what others are up to, and don't be afraid to reach out and ask for advice.
 - PLNs are great for lesson ideas or even new tools to check out. Whatever you find, try something new in your classroom.
- **Give back, and share with others.**
 - The more we can share our successes, the better. Plus, we can even share challenges we've faced or aha moments.
 - Don't worry if you're not ready to share right away. PLNs are all about supporting each other and growing as professionals.

Suggested Tools



Twitter

Smart classroom tool if used with care; priceless for PD.

www.commonsense.org/education/website/twitter



Voxer Walkie Talkie Messenger

Voice- and text-messaging app is a teacher PD standout.

www.commonsense.org/education/app/voxer-walkie-talkie-messenger



Teaching Channel

See colleagues in action with digital PD for discussion and reflection.

www.commonsense.org/education/website/teaching-channel