

PLN: Teachers' Use of Social Media for Professional Development

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores teachers' use of Personal Learning Networks (PLN) for professional development purposes. On the basis of research conducted in an ESL environment, this paper demonstrates why a PLN is a necessary tool for language teachers. It also illustrates how they may exploit a variety of social media in order to enhance their knowledge and skills. In the digital era Personal Learning Networks are becoming increasingly significant as a means of acquiring new knowledge and enhancing one's skills as a language teacher. In the 21st century teachers from all over the world are finding it much easier to create networks whose main purpose is that of facilitating the process of continual professional development. Using as its foundation the results of a study on secondary school teachers' use of social media, this paper will allow the audience to understand how teachers make use of their PLN. It will seek to show that the immediate effects of a PLN in language teaching are connected teachers who are constantly in tune with the most recent developments in the field and who are better able to contribute and share innovative ideas with a network of people that extends beyond the physical confines of the classroom. This paper will illustrate how some of the social media that teachers might already be using for non-educational purposes can be exploited as a means of achieving professional development. It will also provide the audience with the opportunity to discover social media that might not yet be so popular but which can redefine the way a teacher thinks about the process of acquiring knowledge and skills.