

Script video – PLN

I've got a question for you. How many staffrooms should a teacher have? 1 or 2?

You may think that this is a weird question? Well I will explain.

The main part of the profession of a teacher takes, of course, place in the classroom with the pupils.

But as a teacher you are also part of the school as an organisation. You will interact with colleagues in the staffroom and discuss your teaching practice. You will probably connect to senior teachers who will be your mentors. You will learn from the experience of colleagues and eventually you will also inspire other teachers.

Next to the staffroom in their own school, networked teachers of the 21st Century also have a second staffroom. It is in fact a virtual staffroom, you create for yourself. It is a group of teachers working in other schools, or other people and organisations working in the educational sector. This second staffroom we call PLN, or Personal and Professional network. It is Personal, because you decide yourself, who is part of your network, and Professional as well as the interaction is related to Learning and to the job of a teacher.

So, a PLN is a group of people you connect to and this happens in most cases on social media. On social media you can follow interesting people or organisations and learn from them.

In many cases we just enjoy and use the ideas of other teachers who share them on internet. When you grow as a teacher you will start sharing your ideas and resources as well and become more interactive and productive.

How do you get started to build your second staffroom? Where do you find inspiring colleagues?

Well, you may find them here in this course, for a start. Taking a course, be it online or onsite connects you to likeminded teachers.

There are indeed many learning opportunities for teachers: you have MOOCs, webinars but also face-to-face trainings and conferences. You can follow or keep in touch with some of the fellow participants to these events and consider them as part of your Personal Learning Network.

In many countries you have organized networks for teachers you can be part of, but it is maybe even more interesting to join international networks. Etwinning, for instance, is a network for European teachers with more than half a million members. It offers lots of opportunities for learning and sharing, not only for collaboration with your students but also for your personal development.

Also some big industry players have set up communities for educators. The Microsoft Education network, for instance, is a global network for teachers, where you can learn and share.

Social media like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram etc. give you the opportunity to reach out to almost anyone in the world. On these internet services you find ways to find profiles of inspiring people. You can start from hashtags or become part of dedicated groups. You can take parts in social media events like streamed webinars or Twitterchats.

Another way to get in touch with inspiring educators is through curating services like Pinterest, Diigo etc. With these social internet tools anyone can collect and share interesting resources.

In the end you will see the same names of educators and organisations coming back when being active online and you will have the feeling they are part of your second staffroom.

The attitude of sharing starts at your own school. Don't close the classroom doors for your colleagues. Discuss your classroom practice and experiences.

At the same time try to connect to a network of teachers outside your school. Teachers of the 21st Century are lifelong learners and they learn from their peers in networks. Teachers of the 21st Century also share: they store their knowledge in friends.



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