

What is a PLN? <i>watch video clips</i>	
Key Learnings	New Questions

What is the power of the PLN? <i>read blog post, whole group discussion w/ a connected educator</i>	
Key Learnings	New Questions

Reflections	
The most powerful key learning of today is...	
In thinking about other colleagues, it would be interesting to work with...	
I can contribute to the professional school community by...	
I need to know more about...	
Information Needs	Resource/Material Needs



@tdishelton on Twitter

The Power of the PLN by Tricia Shelton, Boone Co Schools

read the entire blog post at <http://tdishelton.wordpress.com/2014/01/07/the-power-of-the-pln/>

Today is the last day of our winter break –extended just a bit due to the cold weather. As I begin the new year and set new goals for myself, I find it necessary to look back over the last year to put my new goals in context of my previous growth. Reflecting on how transformative the last 6 months have been is amazing! Most of it is due to the Power of my PLN: Professional Learning Network which includes those face to face network connections as well as the virtual ones through Twitter and other forms of media/technology. This blog is about how my PLN impacts my journey and now my students’ journeys as they build PLNs- partnering in learning together by being connected through media and technology.

This past summer, I joined Twitter. Mostly this was because I heard a few instructional coaches talk about how they use it to learn, and because I attended a conference that used Twitter as a backchannel for participant involvement. That first month in the summer was all about trying to understand Twitter, so I was a lurker-no tweets. I watched others use Twitter and gathered resources to use in my classroom, but did not engage in the conversation...

After deciding on my path, I started to build my PLN to learn by interacting with people I followed and who followed me, participating in Twitter chats, and using the power of the hashtag. We knew we would be BYOD for the first time for the upcoming school year and my students expressed interest in using Twitter and Instagram in class. Using technology to support science education then became my learning goal when building a PLN...

Walking down the technology media path, determined to connect it to my passion of facilitating student thinking, has been so exciting. However, I have had many failed attempts in the classroom. It took me a month and half to send out that first tweet and I still looked at it multiple times before sending (still remembering that adrenaline anxious feeling today!). I was following 1 person, my friend who was following me back. A few seconds after sending that first tweet, someone favorited it and retweeted it, then they DMed me–what was that? It was so exciting; I was hooked. I decided at that point to be brave and practice what I preach with students. I was going to try new things no matter how uncomfortable it made me. I knew I would have support. Reflecting back over the past 6 months today, I couldn’t have imagined how that tweet could have transformed my life: new partnerships, new projects, new opportunities, a ton of learning, and most important (to come full circle back to my first tweet!)– a classroom full of engaged students excited to learn using media and technology. This technology use has become an integral part of our daily learning experience, and opportunities for them to extend their learning beyond the four walls of our classroom and continue to develop. The best part–it’s still just the beginning.