

Research Topic and Research Questions:

While technology continues to change the way students are learning, the role of the teacher is expected to change also. Teachers are being encouraged to adapt and adopt new practices and to move forward in preparing 21st century students for a global, connected society. This major shift in pedagogy is clearly not a change that will happen overnight (Prensky, 2005). Teachers need to move from “telling” to “partnering” with their students, and the role of technology is to support the partnering pedagogy, and to enable each student to personalize his or her learning process (Prensky, 2005). Students believe that this world should be extended into our schools (Project Tomorrow, 2010), however; current professional development for teachers often does not effectively support teachers in transforming their instruction (Crawford, 2011). In order to address the role of educator’s in fostering innovation (Siemens, 2008), Personal Learning Networks (PLN’s) need to be looked at in order to better align teaching and learning for our era. The research proposed here will begin to address this need. The purpose of this research is to examine the effects of PLN’s on teachers’ instruction at the elementary level. Specifically, I ask (1) What types of PLN’s are teachers connected to? (2) What are the benefits of PLN’s to keep educators current in their teaching practices? (3) What is the correlation between teachers' ongoing connection to PLN's and the impact it has on their instruction versus teachers who are not gaining professional development through PLN’s?

References:

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