CONNECTED EDUCATOR
STARTER KIT

STARTER KIT

About this project

The Connected Educators project is funded by the U.S. Department of Education under contract (ED-PEP-10-C-0059) with the American Institutes for Research in partnership with five organizations, including the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN), Forum One Communications, the Friday Institute for Education Innovation, Grunwald Associates LLC, and the State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA).

Visit the official Connected Educator Month site at http://connectededucatormonth.org.

Get ready for back to school

Connected Educator Month

August 2012

All of August

All for free

All online

Shape the future of the profession

Sign up to participate, collaborate, and innovate

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August 2012

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Shape the future
of the profession

Strengthen your network
and plan your professional
learning

A celebration of community, with educators at
all levels, from all disciplines, moving towards
a fully connected and collaborative profession

Connected Educator Month includes a cornucopia of
online events and activities, including forums and
conversations with experts, webinars, guided tours,
open houses, challenge contests, book groups,
badges, and more.

Convened by the U.S. Department of Education,
dozens of organizations and communities will be
providing professional learning and engagement
opportunities for educators throughout August.

Sign up to participate,
collaborate, and innovate at
www.connectededucatormonth.org

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About Connected Educator Month

Online communities and learning networks are helping hundreds of thousands of educators learn, reducing isolation and providing "just in time" access to knowledge and opportunities for collaboration. However, many educators are not yet participating and others aren't realizing the full benefits. In many cases, schools, districts, and states also are not recognizing and rewarding this essential professional learning.

For these reasons, the U.S. Department of Education's Connected Educators initiative has made August 2012 Connected Educator Month. Throughout the month, there will be coordinated opportunities to participate in events and activities in dozens of online locations to develop skills and enhance one's personal learning network.

What you can expect this month

An intensive, three-day online conference on transforming teaching and learning—featuring senior Department of Education officials and education thought leaders—will kick off the month. Be sure to also check the calendar as it's constantly being updated with opportunities like:

- **Month-long forums on key topics**, such as personalizing learning and the future of the teaching profession, which will be moderated by noted education leaders and consist of online discussions, interviews, webinars, chats, and more.
- **Guided tours and real-time community open houses**, which will connect educators with communities, answering questions such as: *Who can help me solve challenges I'm facing in my classroom and how do I best connect with them? How can I help change my profession for the better?*
- **Contests for addressing community challenges**, developing innovative ideas, and creating compelling video demonstrations.
- Inauguration of **a new series of open badges** for connected educators as well as online communities.

All events and activities will be archived and synthesized into multimedia "proceedings" that will serve as a permanent resource to educators and community sponsors.

Getting started

About this starter kit

Powerful Learning Practice, a professional development company for 21st Century educators and a Connected Educator Month participating organization, has created *The Connected Educator Starter Kit* to help you join the vast sea of connected educators, Web 2.0 tools, and online communities. Whether you just dip your toe in the water by trying a few of these activities or you dive in headfirst and take advantage of this entire month-long, do-it-yourself professional learning journey, we're sure you'll find something to challenge you or spark your interest.

This guide is separated into **31 days worth of online activities** (one for each day during the month of August) to get you started into your journey as a connected educator and learner. How you use the kit is up to you. Try a few activities and then explore on your own, follow this guide to the letter, find a tool or community that fuels your passion and spend your month really cultivating your presence there. I**t's like a choose your own adventure starter kit!** Feel free to replace any day's activities with an activity or event from the Connected Educator Month calendar.

And be sure to sign up for Connected Educator Month updates so you won't miss out on any of the exciting opportunities.

Once you're signed up, you'll get regular updates about:
- Webinars and other real-time events—many headlined by education, technology, and community leaders—that you can register to attend.
- Forums on key education and community issues in which you can participate.
- Guided tours, open houses, launches, exhibits, collaborative projects, polls, and other special activities of which you can partake or be a part.
- Contests you can enter, badges you can earn, plus other resources ranging from starter kits to book clubs and classes to help you join the world of connected education or become more connected.

We encourage you to jump right in with the Day 1 activity and find out exactly "what is a connected educator?" This is your month of learning, trying new things, and growing. Keep an open mind and have fun!

POWERFUL LEARNING PRACTICE
Professional development for 21st Century educators

About the calendar of events

The calendar is chock full of events, collaborations, and activities for you to get involved. You can search or browse for events that interest you (use the easy color-coded categories to sort the calendar events) or sign up a free account and you can mark events you're interested in to create a personal calendar. Don't get overwhelmed by all of the options – it's fine to just stick your toe in and pick one or two activities. There is so much to do that no one could possibly do everything. So browse the calendar, see what sparks your interest, and get involved!

What is a connected educator?

You know that the world is changing...
New and emerging Web technologies are connecting our children in ways never before possible. Through blogs, social networking sites, multimedia and other Web 2.0 tools, their world is becoming more and more net-worked and participatory. Your students spend time every day in virtual environments that are highly engaging and encourage creative thinking and problem solving. They frequently participate in games and social media where they routinely acquire and apply knowledge and collaborate with friends.

…but schools are not.
Schools have by and large been resistant to these shifts. Yet, this networked landscape of learning challenges you to re-envision what you do in your school and classroom, or risk growing irrelevance in your students' lives. At the core of this challenge is how you and I, as educators, realize the po-tentials of these technologies in our own professional and personal learn-ing practice as educators.

If you want to become a 21st century connected educator — and prepare iGeneration students for an exciting but unpredictable future — you first have to become a 21st century learner. That's right. The "connected learner" is YOU. **To become a connected educator, you must first become a con-nected learner.**

Think about it. Kids today seem to have been born with chips in their heads. They've grown up with remote control everything, smart phones, constant communication, and instant access to information in entertain-ing formats. Almost everywhere they go they are connected, engaged and plugged in. Through various social media, their worlds are becoming more and more networked, creating environments for learning and collaborating that look very little like the classrooms in which you and I grew up.

What is a connected learner?

Connected learners develop networks and co-construct knowledge from wherever they live. Connected learners collaborate online, use social media

The CONNECTED Educator

Learning and Leading in a Digital Age

SHERYL NUSSBAUM-BEACH
LANI RITTER HALL
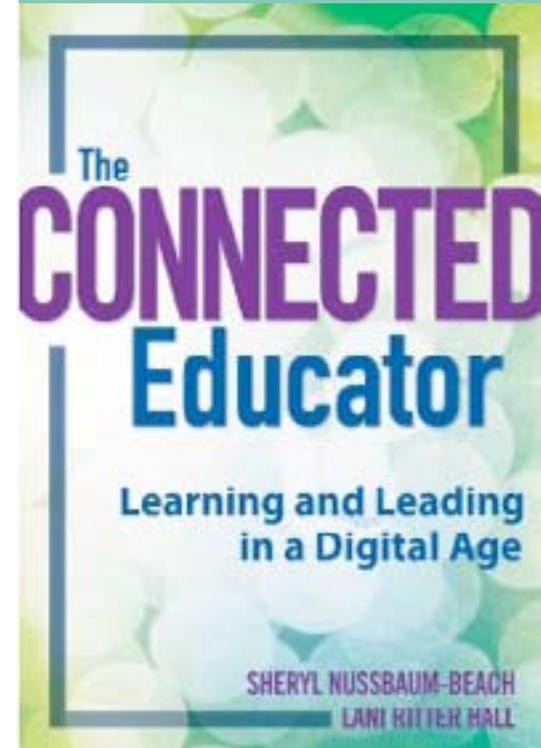
Want to dive deeper into being a connected educator? Check out The Connected Educator - Learning and Leading in a Digital Age by Sheryl Nussbaum-Beach and Lani Ritter Hall. Want sup-port as you make your way through this groundbreaking book? Join the book club for Connected Educator Month and find discussions, collabo-rate with other educators, and more.

to interact with colleagues around the globe, engage in conversations in safe online spaces, and bring what they learn online back to their classrooms, schools, and districts.

Within these connections and networks, the complexity of learning and teaching becomes more apparent, and educators deepen their understanding. As networks and available knowledge expand and grow, and educators make additional connections, a more accomplished global teacher practice evolves—a practice that continually focuses on maximizing student learning and staying current with knowledge about learning.

A new culture emerges as teachers shift away from a paradigm of isolation and closed doors. Connected learners share a deep commitment to understanding ideas related to teaching and learning. Conversations turn to topics of practice rather than to the staff room complaints and rumors that too often occupy faculty members' time and energy. As educators grow into connected learners, they not only start to ask more critical questions of each other related to practice, but they also begin to actively listen and closely attend to varied perspectives that may help the community of learners to move forward.

We could argue collaborative problem solving in real time is a new pedagogy of connected learning, just one of many that surface when we are thinking about learning in an open, connected culture. George Siemens describes the way we learn in networks as a form of knowledge exchange, a collecting and curating of stories and ideas, a wayfinding, a figuring it out through collective activities like crowdsourcing. This is a leveraging of the wisdom of the crowd and their resources through the various social sites to which we belong (Siemens, 2005a).

What is a personal learning network?

Educators have always had learning networks—colleagues from whom they learn and with whom they share. Often those networks were small, determined to a great extent by physical location. More recently, with the availability of technology to make connections and to extend learning, the physical boundaries of the past have been erased and the possibilities for connecting and learning have expanded. Those global connections that

reach literally around the world are a personal learning network or PLN. A personal learning network consists of the connections an educator makes to extend learning; the environments and spaces created as they find their colleagues or mentors. PLNs can be viewed as a reciprocal learning system, in which educators participate by sharing and then learn from others who share with them. PLNs become the personalized classrooms and curriculum where educators connect around ideas for which they are passionate. Everyone may connect to different people as the building of the network is a series of self directed, independent learning experiences. The growing and nurturing of a PLN is a complex process in which educators develop the literacy of finding trusted sources in a safe, effective and ethical way. In that end, PLNs are the creation of personal learning spaces and environments; they have the potential to profoundly impact both professional and personal learning. PLNs focus on individual needs, interests, conversations, and learning. Interestingly enough, learning in networks connects the learner to learning objects as often as it does people. An RSS stream or news feed (authored by many) can be part of a personal learning network.

Will Richardson, educator, co-founder of Powerful Learning Practice, and author of *Personal Learning Networks - Using the power of connections to transform education*, has some additional thoughts on personal learning networks in this video:

A day in the life of a connected educator

All these concepts might sound like abstract ideas that seem appealing, but how does this play out in real life? Check out this compelling infographic complete with a play-by-play of a day in the life of a connected educator. Click the graphic to view the entire thing!

Connected learning principles

The Digital Media & Learning Research Hub has come up with a set of connected learning principles, design principles, and core values for re-imagining the experience of education in the information age. Read their connected learning principles and become familiar with these concepts.

Recommended reading

Browse this list of books often most read by connected educators. See what sparks your interest, and dive in to the mind of a connected educator.

That's it for day one. *Tomorrow: what is Web 2.0?*

What is Web 2.0?

What is Web 2.0 and why is it important? Today, you'll find out. Complete the activities below to steep yourself in the concept of Web 2.0.

- Complete this page on the K12 Learning 2.0 site. Read the page, watch the videos, and make notes on questions or reflections you may have.
- Go to http://docs.google.com and login with your Google account. *Don't have a google account? See the sidebar on how to set one up. It's easy!*
- Create a new Google document and copy your notes from the activity above on to the page. The page should save automatically.
- Next, share the doc with a friend or colleague by clicking the "share" button and entering their email address. Attach a message to the document in the space provided in the popup window.
- Optional: have the person you shared it with join Google docs and edit your document with comments about your notes.
- Having trouble? Watch this video tutorial on how to create a Google doc.
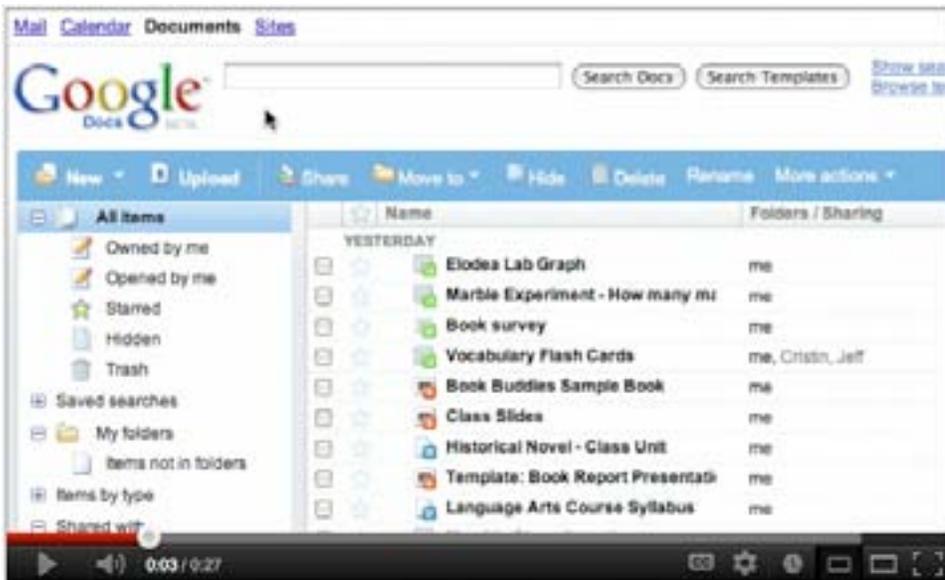
That's all for today! *Tomorrow: you'll be introduced to the wonderful world of Twitter.*

Day 2
What is Web 2.0?

Don't have a Google account? It's easy to set up!

To create a new account, click here.

Fill out the form and click "create my account".

Keep your username and password in a secure place that you can access in case you forget them.

Tip: It is helpful to use the same login name across various Web 2.0 tools so others can find you.

Twitter

Twitter is a microblogging service, accessed from your computer or mobile phone, that connects you to a worldwide network of people. Think of Twitter like a very short blog—Twitter's "tweets" are microposts of a maximum of 140 characters. Like blogs, the tweets may contain videos and photos, but these are shown as links in order to stay within the character limits.

Just as you have readers and subscribers for your blog, you have "followers" on Twitter. Your followers see your messages (called tweets or updates) as you tweet them, along with the chronological tweets from all those they follow.

To find out more about Twitter and how you can use it, watch this short video: Twitter in plain English. Then complete the activities below to get started with Twitter.

- Visit Twitter and create an account.
- Visit Sue's site that shares tips and tricks to consider when creating your Twitter account.
- Create a few tweets.
- To get started, follow a few connected educators like @snbeach, @willrich45, @edcocp, @dcambrid or @plpnetwork. View their lists of followers as well as who they are following, and then follow some users that are interesting to you. Want more people to follow? Check out this collaborative list of connected educators to follow on Twitter. If you

Day 3
Twitter

Earn a badge: Complete the activities on this page and earn the Baby Tweet badge! Visit this link to grab the code and learn how to display the badge on profiles or sites you use.

have suggestions of who to follow, add them to the document!

- Once you've followed a few educators, retweet someone's tweet. Look for the retweet link when you place your mouse over an individual tweet.
- Find even more educators to follow at the Twitter4Teachers Wiki.
- Make sure you update your profiles around the Web with your Twitter name so others can follow you.
- Watch the video below from Sheryl Nussbaum-Beach about why being a connected educator is important.
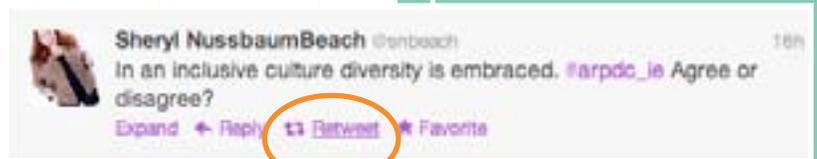
Great job! That's all for today. *Tomorrow, we'll explore hashtags, and how you can use them for even more DIY professional learning.*

Who to follow?

Want some ideas on who to follow? Check out some of the great organizations who are sponsors of Connected Educator Month and follow them on Twitter!

@plpnetwork
@3dgamelab
@bookmentors
@brainpop
@brighttalk
@teachingquality
@classroom20
@edublogs
@edutopia
@knovation
@middleweb
@learningforward
@schoodl
@schooltube
@slidespeech
@unplugd

Hashtags

If you've completed the activities from day three and have been browsing through your Twitter stream, you've no doubt noticed the use of hashtags. Typing a pound sign (#) followed by a word or phrase (such as #edchat or #CE12) into a tweet makes a special link that searches Twitter for that word or phrase. In this way, you can follow discussions, topics, live tweeting of conferences or events, or join Twitter chats (scheduled discussions of particular topics which are grouped together by hashtags for easy tracking), even if you don't follow the users who are using that hashtag.

Here are some activities to get you started using and following hashtags.

- Check out the hashtag #CE12 (the official hashtag for Connected Educator Month 2012) to find out about events, join discussions, and discover other connected educators to follow.
- Join a Twitter chat during Connected Educator Month. Check out the calendar and click on "Twitter" in the list of topics to see all the chats that are happening this month. In addition to the #plpnetwork Twitter chat (see the sidebar on this page), there are chats around Project-based learning as well as chats sponsored by Intel and ConnectedPD. View the calendar now.
- Read educator Patti Grayson's account of discovering hashtags and using them for her DIY professional development.
- If you want more on how to use Twitter for professional development, check out Middleweb's excellent resource on Twitter for summer PD.
- Sign up for a Twitter application like Tweetdeck or Hootsuite (both sites have web-based, desktop, and mobile apps). These Twitter clients let you track hashtags, make lists of people you follow), quickly check your @replies and direct messages, and more.
- Start following a few hashtags. Start with #CE12 so you don't miss out on Connected Educator Month discussions and announcements. Find more suggestions in Middleweb's Twitter for summer PD article and a comprehensive list of A-Z educational Twitter hashtags.
- Try composing your own tweet using a hashtag. Stumped for ideas? Just tweet this: *I just learned all about hashtags from my Connected Educator Starter kit with #CE12 and @plpnetwork. Get your kit here: http://bit.ly/NwIboA*

Nice job! That's all for today. *Tomorrow, we'll delve even further into Twiter.*

Day 4
Hashtags

Watch this video for an easy how-to on tracking and creating hashtags.

Join our Twitter chat

Join the **#plpnetwork** Twitter chat on August 9 at 8 p.m. EDT (New York time). The topic of our chat is the **"How To" of Connected Learning** - *with everything that's out there, how do you get started? What steps do you take to become connected?* Click here to sign up!

Earn a badge: Complete the activities on this page and earn the Twitterati badge! Visit this link to grab the code and learn how to display the badge on profiles or sites you use.

Even more Twitter

Another great way to collaborate, build your personal learning network, and use Twitter for DIY professional development is to join a Twitter chat.

A Twitter chat is a lot like any other online chat, where people gather to talk about a specific issue. The great thing about a Twitter chat is it brings people together from all over world to a central area (Twitter) where they can interact in real time. To join a Twitter chat, you just need to know what hashtag is being used. *Not sure what a hashtag is? Check out day four for activities surrounding hashtags.*

Here are a couple activities that will let you take your Twitter experience even further.

- Sign up for the Connected Educator Month Twitter chat, hosted by @plpnetwork. This one-hour, live chat is scheduled for **August 9th at 7pm** Eastern (New York City) time. We will be discussing *how to become a connected learner.* The chat will be full of easy steps to take to become more connected and use online communities for learning. There will also be plenty of other connected educators to follow, from newbies to seasoned 21st century educators. We hope you'll join us!
- Visit the Connected Educator Month calendar and click on the Twitter chat label for a list of other Twitter chats you can attend during the month of August.
- Want to study up before the chat? Check out this guide on how to get the most out of participating in a Twitter chat.
- Want more ideas on how to use Twitter? Download Powerful Learning Practice's free *Twitter Handbook for Teachers*, a brand new, 13-page guide to Twitter. This guide is for educators who are new to Twitter, or veterans to the social media platform who want to bring Twitter into their classrooms or grow their network.

Great work! That's it for today. *Tomorrow, we'll take a look at Facebook.*
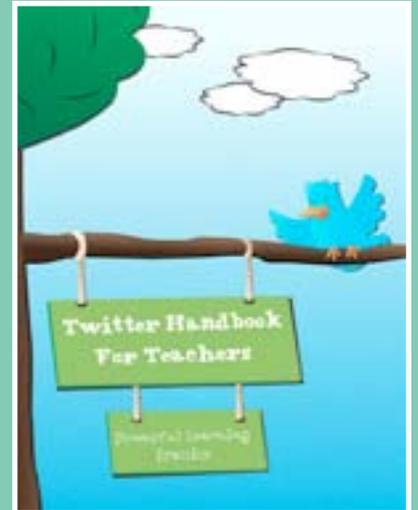
Become a Facebookworm

Facebook is a global social network. If you're not already a user, you've probably heard of it, and if you haven't, then today you'll become part of the largest social network on the planet. Want a few statistics about Facebook?

- 398 million users are active on Facebook 6 out of 7 days of the week.
- More than 125 billion friend connections have been made on Facebook.
- More than 300 million photos are uploaded to Facebook per day.
- An average of 3.2 billion Likes and Comments are generated by Facebook users every day.

Most of your friends and family are probably already on Facebook, and finding them and connecting to their updates is easy. Here are a few activities that will get you started with Facebook.

- Create a Facebook account. Click here to get started.
- Search for friends, family members, or colleagues and add them as friends to start making connections.
- Already part of Facebook? Great! Facebook for Educators has a wonderful guide to facebook for... you guessed it - educators! Check out the guide here, as well as their information on Facebook groups and pages.
- Search on Facebook for your favorite educational groups, brands, celebrities, or authors and "like" their pages. Get started with these: Powerful Learning Practice, The Connected Learner, The Global Education Conference, Connected Educator Month.
- Curious about how to take Facebook into your classroom? Check out 100 Ways You Should be Using Facebook in your Classroom.
- Should you be friends with your students? This article, The Why and How of Using Facebook For Educators – No Need to be Friends At All!, tackles that topic as well as the overarching question, does Facebook belong in the classroom at all?
- This presentation features school leaders who ban & block Facebook as well as those who empower and prepare. It also provides examples of a teacher and students from The Science Leadership Academy who have had success using social media in education.

That's all for today! *Tomorrow we'll take a look at YouTube.*

Day 6
Facebook

Earn a badge: Complete the activities on this page and earn the FacebookWorm badge! Visit this link to grab the code and learn how to display the badge on profiles or sites you use.

YouTube - online video sharing

Making your own video is easier today than it ever has been. Nearly every cellphone, new laptop, or point & shoot camera has a videocamera built in. YouTube is a community for sharing videos. After you make a video, you can upload it for the world to see. Your video is given it's own link which you can share. You can also embed your video into websites, blogs, or social networks like Facebook.

There are plenty of silly and "fluff" videos on YouTube (cat videos, anyone?), but many educators are also on YouTube. You can expand your professional knowledge by learning from other educators. You can also find great content that students can watch at home or in the classroom. Here are a few activities to get started with YouTube.

- Visit YouTube and login with your Google account.
- Fill out your YouTube profile.
- Record and upload a simple video: introduce yourself and tell us the biggest "a ha moment" for you so far during Connected Educator Month. Be sure to tag your video with *CE12* when you upload it, and put Connected Educator Month in the title (such as, "Jane Smith, Connected Educator Month").
- YouTube has its own teacher's channel: YouTube.com/Teachers, a guide to using videos in class. You can follow tips that show everything from organizing videos to sparking lively discussions to help struggling students through videos.
- Subscribe to a channel (like Powerful Learning Practice) to get started with video subscriptions. Want to find more videos about education? Check out YouTube's Education section, which features the best videos from around the web for every subject imaginable, from math to science to engineering and business.
- If YouTube is blocked at your school, don't miss out on Teachertube. Read this article from Edutopia on how teachertube is a wonderful resource for the classroom.
- The National Education Association has a guide to YouTube for Educators, including how to find instructional videos, limit access to educational content only, and advice on creating your own channel.

That's all for today! *Tomorrow we'll talk about digital storytelling.*

Day 7
YouTube

Alan Levine has a useful and fun video with tips for those who are new to YouTube, as well as a few ideas for using YouTube in the classroom. Click it to watch!

Also, check out the rest of Alan's presentation for the K12Online conference, which is chock full of tips and tricks for doing all kinds of cool things with free Web 2.0 tools.

Earn a badge: Complete the activities on this page and earn the YouTube badge! Visit this link to grab the code and learn how to display the badge on profiles or sites you use.

Digital storytelling

Before the advent of online content and easy to use software, producing multimedia content required expensive equipment and technical know-how. But nowadays we can create compelling digital content with nothing more complicated than a Web browser or camera. Digital storytelling is simply telling a story using digital tools. Much like regular storytelling, telling a digital story should come from the heart, include personal experience, and have a point of view. Here are a few activities to get you started with digital storytelling.

- Explore Alan Levine's wonderful and comprehensive 50+ Web 2.0 Ways to Tell a Story. He includes tips, tricks, and tools for getting your story across using online tools, video, and other multimedia platforms. According to Alan, it's "As Easy as 1-2-3! - Outline a Story Idea, Find Some Media, andPick a Tool and Build Your Story."
- Another popular approach to digital storytelling is the 5x5 project (25 second videos featuring five five-second clips put together to tell a story). Read more about the project and watch some examples.
- Think about a story you'd like to tell. It can be complex or simple, a deeply personal tale or an entry from a travel journal, you can narrate it or it can be silent. Tomorrow, you'll dive right in with this, so be ready with some ideas!

Great work, that's all for today. *Tomorrow, you'll create your own digital story.*

Enter the Show Us Your Network Video Contest

To celebrate the launch of Connected Educator Month in August, Powerful Learning Practice has teamed up with the Intel Teachers Engage Community to organize a video contest and we want to hear from you – *What makes you a connected learner? How does being connected play out throughout your day? What are your tips and tricks for growing and building a personal learning network?*

Find out more and enter the video contest here.

Tell your story

Yesterday you learned about digital storytelling and browsed through more than 50 ways to tell a story using Web 2.0 tools. I hope you put your thinking caps on and dreamed up your own story to tell! Today, you'll take your first step into digital storytelling.

- Follow the 3 easy steps on the 50 Ways wiki to get your story online. Outline your story, find some media, and create your story using an online tool.
- Maybe you'd rather try your hand at a 5x5 video. Record five 5-second clips and put them together to create a 25-second simple vignette. See the sidebar for a great resource on video editing if you need help with that.
- Another great example of using clips to create a story is this time lapse video of the first 12 years of a little girl's life.
- Maybe you'd like to enter the Show Us Your Network Video Contest.
- If you chose video as the medium for your digital storytelling journey, log in to YouTube and upload your video. Be sure to fill out the title, description, and give it some relevant tags, including CE12 (the tag for Connected Educator month) so others who are doing this activity can find your story.

That's it for today, nice work! *Tomorrow we'll explore the world of the online photo sharing community Flickr.*

Day 9
Tell your story

Vimeo has free instructional videos on the basics of video recording, choosing a camera, and even video editing, which could come in handy when putting together your first digital story. Check out their video school.
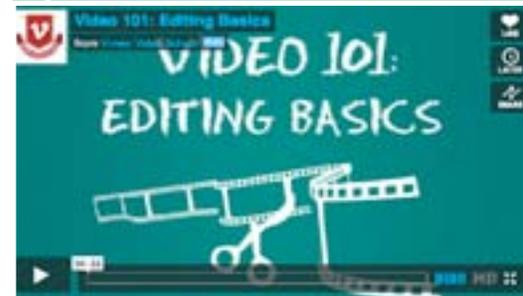
Photo sharing

By this time, you probably realize there's probably a social network or community out there for every type of media, and photos are no exception. One of the most popular photo sharing communities out there is Flickr.

Flickr lets you upload your photos, add friends, follow their Flickr streams, leave comments, and join groups relevant to your interests. Here are a few activities to get you started sharing photos on Flickr.

- Take the Flickr tour. Learn how Flickr works and explore some possibilities for using this site.
- Sign up for a Flickr account. You can use your Facebook or Google account to sign up.
- Upload a photo. You can upload a picture from your computer's hard drive, from one of your social networks, your mobile phone, or many photo apps. Flickr makes it easy to figure out.
- Be sure to fill out all the fields on your photo including a title, description, and relevant tags. Include the tag CE12 so others following this connected educator starter kit can search for your photo.
- Search "CE12" in the search box and see if other connected educators are uploading photos. Browse through their accounts and perhaps add a few of them as contacts.
- Join the Flickr for Education group and browse the photos. Leave a comment on a photo that you find interesting.
- Once you have a few more Flickr photos, consider turning them into a YouTube video for a quick-look of your life through photographs!

That's all for today! *Tomorrow we'll take a look at Wikis.*

Day 10
Photo sharing

Wondering what sorts of activities you could use Flickr for in your classroom?

Check out this Flickr photo from Alan Levine. The photo includes notes on different sections of the photo - just click to see the photo on Flickr, then mouseover the outlined areas for lots of tips and ideas!

Earn a badge: Earn a badge: Complete the activities on this page and earn the Photo-gogo badge! Visit this link to grab the code and learn how to display the badge on profiles or sites you use.

Wikis

You've probably heard of the giant online encyclopedia site, Wikipedia. But there are all kinds of wikis, and many different uses for them. To learn more about wikis and how they work, watch this video: Wikis in plain English.

Maybe just from watching that video, your brain is already whirring with ideas of how you could use a wiki in your classroom. If you need a few more ideas, check out these links:

- This link has dozens of examples of educational wikis, what they are used for, and links to the actual wikis.
- This Edublogs teacher challenge lets you create your own wiki, teaches you how to set up pages, add users, and gives additional ideas for using your wiki with students.
- Wikispaces put together a list of the best educational wikis of 2011. There are some real superstars in here!
- Wikis aren't just for classrooms. Wikis for School Leaders has information on how school or district leaders can use a wiki as a highly effective communication and collaboration tool with their staff.
- Check out Edudemic's list of 30+ Open Wikis Every Educator Should Know About.

That's all for today, nice going! *Tomorrow, we'll explore webinars!*

Earn a badge: Complete the activities on this page and earn the Wiki Wanderer badge! Visit this link to grab the code and learn how to display the badge on profiles or sites you use.

Webinars

A webinar is an online seminar or workshop delivered over the internet. The host of the webinar sends emails to attendees with a link to the webinar hosting provider, allowing them to register. At a specified time, the attendees log in at the webinar site, and view the presentation. Usually there is an audio component, and there may also be video or a chat channel. There are thousands of free webinars about every conceivable subject and topic. They can be a great way to receive information in an interactive format.

- Get a peek inside the life of a connected learner in a free, one-hour webinar from Powerful Learning Practice. We have lots of convenient dates and times to choose from. Sign up now.
- ConnectedLearning.tv is a community-centric website that seeks to help people understand the theory of Connected Learning, spread awareness of its Values and Principles, and advocate for adoption of the Connected Learning model. Check out the free webinars offered by Connected Learning.tv. Sign up for a free webinar here.
- Don't forget to check out the webinars posted on the Connected Educator Month calendar and sign up.

That's all for today! *Tomorrow you're going to map yourself on a collaborative Google map.*

Day 12
Webinars

Want to become a tech-savvy educator and connected learner? Powerful Learning Practice has designed a whole year of professional learning designed to get you there. **Learn more about it in our free, one-hour live webinar** about "The How-to of a Connected Educator". We have lots of convenient dates and times to choose from.

Sign up for your free webinar.

Map yourself

Emerging technologies make it easier than ever to connect, collaborate, and learn together with others around the world. In this fun activity, you'll add yourself to a collaborative Google map along with hundreds of other connected educators around the globe!

- Log into your Google account.
- Click here to access the collaborative map.
- Click on the Edit button at the top left. You will be able to see the Edit button only if you are logged in with your Google or Gmail account.
- Use the + and – tool to zoom in or out and find your location. Use the compass rose to move north, south, east, or west. Tools are in the upper left-hand corner of the map.
- Click on the blue "Add a placemark" pin symbol at the top of the map.
- Drag it to your location and click on your city or town.
- Edit the Place Information box by adding your name and a description. Click on OK.
- Save your changes.
- Click on Done in the left-hand column of the screen.
- Your name should appear in the list in the left-hand column.

There are a few other maps you can add yourself to as well. Check these out:

- The Assess4ed k12 Broadband Speed Test
- The EPIC-ed school and district profile map: Map here | Form here

That's all for today! *Tomorrow, we'll explore blogs, and you'll get your own blog.*

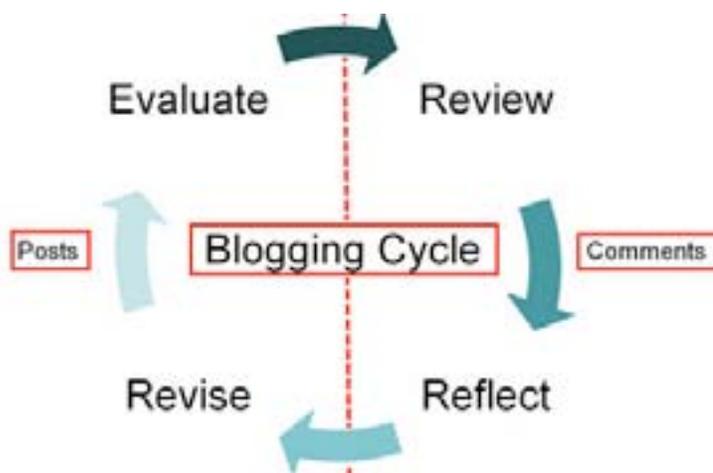## Get a blog

One of the best ways to build your personal learning network is to become a blogger and use your blog to network with others who write and share online. Let's get you started down that road.

- Today's activity is to sign up for an Edublog. Follow the easy steps in this teacher challenge activity from Sue Waters. She's got tips on choosing a name, setting up your blog, and customizing a theme.
- Once you've set up your blog, it's time to leave your first comment. Blogging isn't just about writing, it's also about interacting and conversing with others, and building relationships. Leave a comment on this post answering the following questions: What part of this activity did you find easiest or most enjoyable? Was there any part of the exercise you didn't like or that got you stuck?
- Familiarize yourself with this graphic by Sue Waters which shows the cycle of blogging.

That's all for today! *Tomorrow, you'll become a blogger!*

Day 14
Get a blog

Earn a badge: Complete the activities on this page and earn the Blogger badge! Visit this link to grab the code and learn how to display the badge on profiles or sites you use.

Become a blogger

It's time to start your journey as a blogger, which is an important step along the way to building your personal learning network. Before we get started with your first blog post, watch this video: Blogs in plain English, for a brilliantly simple explanation of blogs. Then, you'll get started with your first blog post.
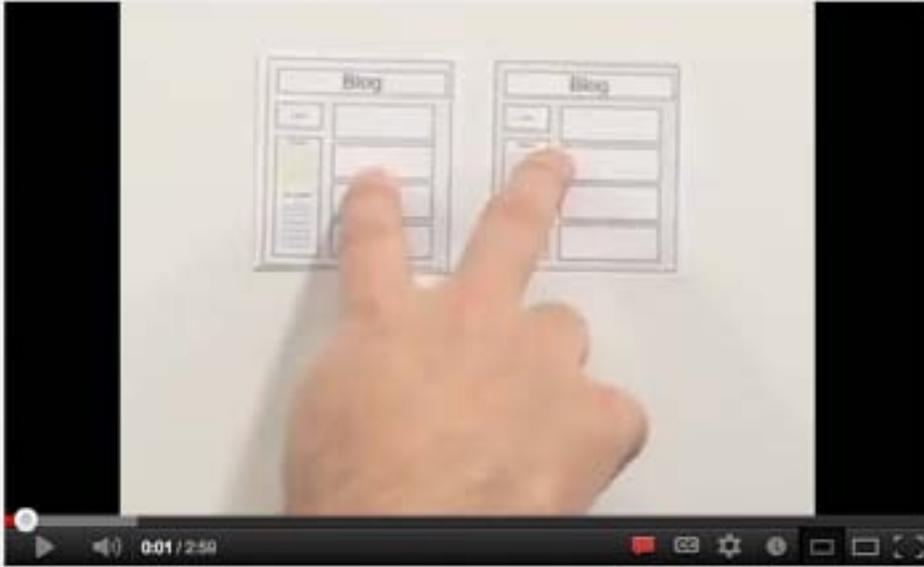
- Create your first blog post on your new edublog. (If you're already a blogger, you can follow these instructions, just use your existing blog.)
- Here's a guide to writing your first post. Write a reflective post addressing the expectations of what you'd like to gain in your month-long journey as a connected educator. Maybe also write about what you've learned so far or a tool that's sparked your interest.
- Blogging begins with reading. Below are several blogs to choose from – read a post on at least three to give you a sampling of some great educational blogs. Then leave a comment on at least one post.
- 21st Century Collaborative
- Will Richardson
- Voices from the Learning Revolution
- The Fischbowl – Karl Fisch
- Free Technology for Teachers
- MacMillan Dictionary Blog
- Middleweb

Congratulations! You've now become part of the conversation! *Tomorrow we'll check out some Connected Educator month guided tours!*

Day 15
Become a blogger

Earn a badge: Did you complete all the activities for the first two weeks of Connected Educator month? Then you've earned the Social Butterfly badge! Visit this link to grab the code and learn how to display the badge on profiles or sites you use.

Join a guided tour or open house

All month during Connected Educator month, there are guided tours and real-time community open houses. These events will connect educators with communities, answering questions such as:

Who can help me solve challenges I'm facing in my classroom and how do I best connect with them? How can I help change my profession for the better?

Participate in one or more Guided Tours here.

That's all for today. *Tomorrow, we'll explore social bookmarking.*

Day 16
Guided tours

Social bookmarking

The Web contains more information than a thousand libraries, and social bookmarking is a useful and fun way to organize it all. Having a presence on a social bookmarking site makes finding new resources and   articles easy, because your network does the work for you. You'll see what sites your friends and colleagues are bookmarking, and you can save links that are relevant to your interests. For a simple explanation of social bookmarking, watch this video: Social bookmarking in plain English.

Social bookmarking is one more tool to add to your connected learner toolbox. Let's get started with social bookmarking.

- Go to www.delicious.com and create an account.
- Add the delicious buttons to your browser to make it easy to add sites.
- Here is a tutorial to help.
- Visit five different sites including your own blog and plpnetwork.com. While you're there, use your new delicious button to bookmark and tag the sites. You might tag your own blog *blog, education, CE12, connected educator, connected learner*, etc.
- Visit the plpresearch tag on delicious and explore some of the links there.
- Go to your edublog and write about the benefits of social bookmarking. What sort of personal applications can you think of for using delicious?

That's it for today. *Tomorrow, we'll look at social networking.*

Social networking

Most are familiar with online social networks such as MySpace or Facebook, but thousands of niche social networks have been designed for people with specific interests. For example, online social networks can help you find your next job, help you parent—or help you as an educator. Ning is a powerful tool that allows anyone to create a specialized online social network for a few dollars a month, or you can join any of the thousands of Ning communities for free.

Social networks on Ning can feature discussion forums, blogs, photo and video sharing, widgets from other websites (small representations of applications that you put on a webpage for specific information or functionality, similar to apps for smartphones) such as Google and Twitter, and an RSS reader to share blog feeds from outside of Ning (such as your Edublog feed).

- Visit the Classroom 2.0 Ning and click "sign up" on the right side of the screen.
- Follow the signup process. Fill out your profile on the site (add your photo and some personal details).
- Take a look around the community and see what sparks your interest. Maybe there's a group you'd like to join, or a discussion to comment on.
- Find a link, a discussion, or a topic that interests you, and write a post about it on your blog.
- Check out Edmodo. Edmodo provides teachers and students a secure place to connect and collaborate, share content and educational applications, and access homework, grades, class discussions and notifications. Edmodo connects more than 8,000,000 teachers and students in secure social networks.
- Edweb is a professional social network for the education community. It allows you to connect with colleagues, create learning communities, share and collaborate, and mentor new teachers. Check it out.

That's all for today! *Tomorrow we'll explore some month-long forums from Connected Educator Month.*

Day 18
Social networking

Earn a badge: Complete the activities on this page and earn the Socialize badge! Visit this link to grab the code and learn how to display the badge on profiles or sites you use.

Month long forums

All month during August, there are Connected Educator Month-long forums on key topics, such as personalizing learning and the future of the teaching profession, which will be moderated by noted education leaders and consist of online discussions, interviews, webinars, chats, and more.

The key forum topics for Connected Educator Month are:

- Professional Learning and the Learning Profession
- Knocking on the Door: Connected Education and New Technologies
- It's Personal: Personalized Learning for Students & Educators
- Beyond Top Down: Teacher-Led Change
- Giving Credit Where Credit is Due: Incenting and Recognizing Teachers for Their Investments in Learning
- Connected Education and the First Six Weeks

Visit the calendar and click on Forum Kickoff to see details on these live kickoff events. Add your voice to the conversation!

That's all for today. *Tomorrow, we'll explore online communities.*
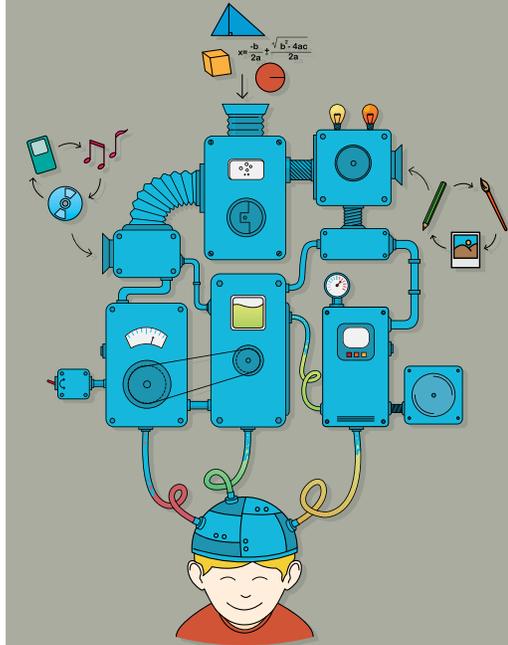
Online communities

So far during Connected Educator month, we've explored dozens of educational blogs, sites, tools, and fellow connected educators. But the world of online community engagement reaches into every corner of the world, for every conceivable interest, hobby, and passion. Check out these other online networks and communities. Maybe one of these will appeal to a hobby or interest you have. Don't see anything that tickles your fancy? Do a Google search for "insert your interest here" community.

- Fitocracy - lets you log your workouts and turns fitness into a game - earn badges, levels, or become a hero!
- Curbly - a community for people who are passionate about home improvement and do-it-yourself house projects
- Ravelry - a huge community of knitters, crocheters, and fiber artists from around the Web. Browse thousands of patterns, find yarns, and see pictures of finished projects from other users.
- Bakespace - a social networking just for bakers. Find a baking mentor, compare recipes, browse photos of yummy baked goods, and more.
- Goodreads - a social network for your bookshelf! Log your books, tell others what you're reading, join a read-along group, read reviews, and more.

Can't pull yourself away from educational communities? Connected Educators.org has put together a Community Directory of the most notable online educational communities. This directory lets you comment on communities you find valuable, add your own favorites, and read interviews with Notable Community managers.

That's all for today! *Tomorrow, we'll check out a tool called Voicethread.*

Voicethread

A VoiceThread is a collaborative conversation around a topic. It can consist of images, video clips, sound recordings, and more. Watch this video to see how it works. Visit this link to view the how-to section if you need help with VoiceThread.

In this application piece, we will create a collaborative reflection on the case for connected learning using VoiceThread.

- Visit Voicethread and register for an account.
- Visit this Voicethread, and leave a comment answering this question: *Our schools need to change. We need to make the classroom a place that is tailored to the way connected learners learn. Can we accomplish that through collaboration and community? Do you believe that to remain effective for today's learner, we must change the way we teach and the way we learn to provide time for deep conversations and reflection? Why or why not? And if so, how?*
- Like Voicethread and want to play with it more or experiment with it in your classroom? The Voicethread for Education wiki may be of interest.

That's all for today! *Tomorrow, we'll try out collaboration with Google docs.*
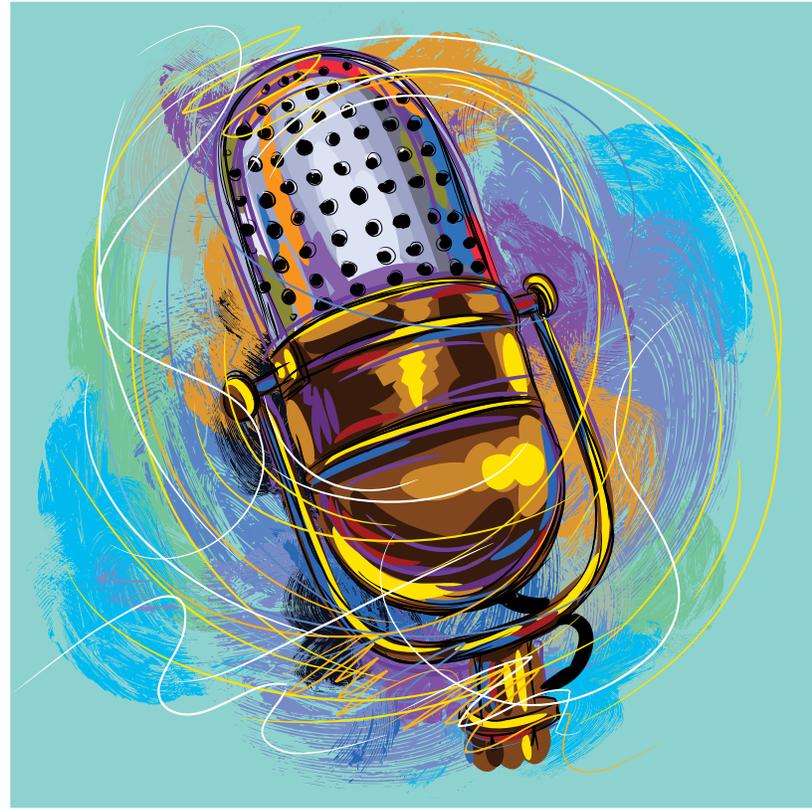
Collaboration with Google docs

How do we build a collaborative culture in online spaces? What are the needed components? What does it look like? What should the connected learner do to make collaboration happen?

A shared vision emerges from the intersection of professional learning community members' personal visions. First, however, connected learners must develop personal visions through their personal learning network. In this activity, we collaborate on Google Docs to create a shared vision.

- Visit docs.google.com and login with your Google account.
- Visit this shared vision Google Doc slideshow.
- Create your own slide within our slideshow that answers the following questions: *What are our (connected educators and learners) guiding principles for how we should operate and work together? Why do we exist? What do we want to create? What should school look like to support the needs of today's learners?*
- When you create your slide, add images and be sure to use a template that expresses how you feel and shows your personality.

That's all for now. *Tomorrow, we'll check out the Teacher Leaders Network.*

Teacher Leaders Network

The Teacher Leaders Network, a national initiative of the Center for Teaching Quality, is a network of active communities of accomplished teacher leaders from across the nation. Much of its work is virtual and takes place online.

- Visit this link to see the featured blogs on the Teacher Leader Network.
- View some of the posts, then leave a comment on a post that resonates with you, and introduce yourself as a budding connected educator going through this month-long journey.
- Bookmark the link of the post you commented on on Delicious. Tag the link with #CE12.
- See if there are other blog posts with the tag #CE12 on Delicious that other connected educators have written. Follow them on Delicious.
- Go to Twitter and tweet a link to your blog post. Use the hashtag #CE12 in your tweet.

That's all for today. *Tomorrow, we'll think about unlearning and relearning, and check out a tool called Wallwisher.*

Day 23
Teacher Leaders Network

Unlearn & relearn

In the film Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back, Yoda admonishes Luke Skywalker, "You must unlearn what you have learned." Unlearning and relearning doesn't apply only to levitating Luke's X-wing out of the bog. You re-envision yourselves as connected learners, unlearning all of those elements we discussed previously. We want to hear on Wallwisher what you will unlearn and relearn. Wallwisher is a collaborative virtual noticeboard that lets users post virtual sticky notes, including images, notes, video, and links. Visit http://wallwisher.com/demo to view a demo wall.

- Go to Wallwisher and create an account.
- Visit this "unlearn" wallwisher page.
- Create a sticky note that answers these questions: *What do you have to unlearn and relearn about education, teaching, the classroom, or learning? What are some challenges along the way?*
- Go to Twitter and post a tweet with one of your reflections. Be sure to include the #CE12 hashtag in your tweet.

That's all for today. *Tomorrow, you'll collaborate with others to build our connected learning manifesto.*

Add to our connected learning manifesto

A manifesto is a document which sets forth the principles and goals of a group of people based on strong belief. As a revolutionary statement, a manifesto can be a powerful and daring document. Be part of the ongoing creation of a manifesto around connected learning. Visit the collaborative Connected Learning Manifesto add your "I believe" statements or your strong assertions. Keep the language simple. Use shorter and more vivid words, those that are more concrete and direct. Add your Twitter name so others can follow and engage with you online.

Connected Learning Manifesto
a collaborative statement on teaching & learning in the digital age

We believe in **messy learning** within a **culture of collaboration.** Through non-linear, non-directed, self-initiated learning, collectively we find and **solve problems** within our networks, classrooms, communities, and the world.

Be a **learner first**, educator second. Never stop learning.

It's all about asking hard questions and then **listening deeply**. It's a **synergy** that creates something greater than its individual parts and **fertilizes your thinking**.

Embrace **failure** as a learning strategy. You are teaching when you are **transparently sharing**. You are leveraging your passion to help others understand.

Community is built through the co-construction of knowledge.

Pacing guides and scripted curricula should **die**.

Experts are at your fingertips. **You are never alone.**

Connecting makes our thoughts and actions **stronger**.

I believe that the collective **WE** is always smarter than **ME.**

Connected learning is **wide open** learning.

Connections increase **serendipitous** learnings.

Honor the gifts and talents each learner brings to collaborations.

Bring your passion. Selflessly **share** what you know.

Want to learn the most? **Bring people not like you** into your network.

Cell phones **ARE** learning tools. Relationships **CAN** be built 140 characters at a time. **Learn** first, lead second.

Connections **enhance** individual reflection.

Be collaborative. Own it. Share with others.

There's nothing powerful about mere technology. **Real power** rests in the hearts and minds of those I learn with online. To question is the answer.

Connected learning is entrenched in a culture of action research and evaluation. **Fail Forward!**

Connected learners are never lonely.

Think, **share**, and then **act** collectively.

That's all for today. *Tomorrow, it's reflection time.*

Reflection time

It's time to reflect on your learning during Connected Educator month so far. Write a post in your edublog to reflect on the month of connecting. Pick four of these questions to answer.

- *How has your PLN grown?*
- *Which tools do you like?*
- *Which tools have given you trouble or do you not understand?*
- *Did you discover anything about your journey as a connected educator that surprised you?*
- *Are there any communities you want to delve further into?*
- *Do you have a hobby or interest that you could see yourself using your connected educator skills to get deeper into?*
- *Did you find any tools or skills that you're inspired to use with your students? Which ones and how will you use them in your classroom?*
- Tweet a link to your post, put a link on Facebook, and add a bookmark in Delicious. Tag your post #connectededucator and #CE12.

Tomorrow we'll explore the Voices from the Learning Revolution blog.

Day 26
Reflection time

Voices from the Learning Revolution

Voices from the Learning Revolution is a blog where voices, strong educator voices, tell their stories about connected and shifted learning. This group blog is titled "Voices from the Learning Revolution" not because these bloggers are necessarily revolutionary leaders — but because they are leaving behind outdated practices and mindsets and shifting toward the kind of connected, digitally infused teaching and learning that we know our 21st century students need. We have some voices who are strong and well developed in their understanding; we have others who are just beginning their connected learning journey. And we'll be inviting some guest writers to join us who most will agree are truly on the front lines of the learning revolution, leading the charge.

Voices from the Learning Revolution is about creating and mobilizing connected, collaborative communities on behalf of 21st century learning. So we need you to join our conversations. We must have your voices. Read, post your own thoughts, and push the work of this excellent blogging team out through your own networks. Together, we are so much smarter than we are apart.

- Skim a few posts in this powerful group blog. Find a post that sparks your interest. Read it and comment. Maybe even write a reflection about the Voices blog back at your own blog.
- Sign up for the VFLR newsletter to keep up with the latest updates from the Voices.

That's all for today! *Tomorrow we'll explore the world of online communities outside the sphere of education.*

What makes a connected educator?

Now that you've spent almost a month becoming a connected learner and a connected educator, you may have formed your own ideas about what connected learning is, and what "makes" a connected educator. At least, we hope you've been thinking about it!

Is it how many tools he knows how to use? How many friends she has on Facebook or followers she has on Twitter? How well he's known around the internet? Does she have to be connected 24/7? Does he have to bring Web 2.0 tools into the class-room? What do you think?

- Answer the following question in a blog post: *What "makes" a connected educator?*
- Tweet a link to your blog post and use hashtag #CE12 so other con-nected educators can check it out.
- Do a Twitter search for CE12 and see if others have chimed in. If you find a post that resonates with you, leave a comment!

That's it for today! *Tomorrow we'll do a web 2.0 check in.*

Join us on **September 28**, 2012 for PLP Live: Inspire. Collaborate. Shift. A full-day conference with:

Inspiration from top names in education such as John Seely Brown, Bruce Dixon, Will Richardson, Sheryl Nussbaum-Beach, Jackie Gerstein, Eliza Spang, Jane Krauss, Suzie Boss and more to be announced

Active, creative collaboration with educators and leaders from across the globe

Most importantly, shift: why we need it, and how to make it happen in your own teach-ing. Learn more

Web 2.0 check in

You've spent almost a month exploring new tools, learning new terminology, experimenting with things around the Web, and participating in Connected Educator month activities. It's time for a Web 2.0 check in!

Write a blog post answering the following questions:

- How has your network grown this month? This doesn't have to just be a measurement by numbers of followers, friends, and contacts (although that can be interesting to note), but also can consider what type of connections you've made, and how you might connect, collaborate or build those relationships in the future.
- What is your favorite tool or technology you discovered this month? How do you see yourself incorporating this tool into your everyday life and work?
- Were there tools that you signed up for and never used? What do you think is the impediment to you diving right in and trying these tools?
- Is there a tool that frustrated you? Why do you think that happened?
- Are there any applications for the things you learned this month to make their way into your classroom?
- Have you begun to see yourself as a connected learner? A connected educator? Why or why not?
- What is the biggest "a-ha!" moment or realization you've had this month?
- Be sure to Tweet your blog post with the hashtag #CE12 so other connected educators can check it out.
- Do a Twitter search for #CE12 and see what others have learned.

That's all for today! *Tomorrow we'll check out the culminating events for connected educator month.*

Culminating events

Make plans to participate in one of the culminating events for Connected Educator Month.

- Check the calendar for details.
- Sign up for an event.
- Post a tweet letting others know which event you'll be participating in. Be sure to include the #CE12 hashtag.

Tomorrow is our final day!

Connected Educator Month August 2012

Get ready for back to school

All of August

Strengthen your network and plan your professional learning

All for free

Shape the future of the profession

All online

A celebration of community, with educators at all levels, from all disciplines, moving towards a fully connected and collaborative profession

Connected Educator Month includes a cornucopia of online events and activities, including forums and conversations with experts, webinars, guided tours, open houses, challenge contests, book groups, badges, and more.

Convened by the U.S. Department of Education, dozens of organizations and communities will be providing professional learning and engagement opportunities for educators throughout August.
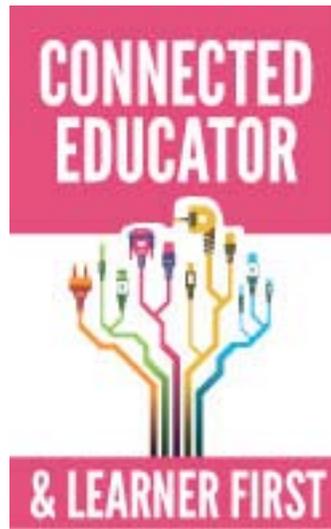
ED.gov   AIR

Sign up to participate, collaborate, and innovate at **http://www.connectededucatormonth.org/**

Final thoughts

Congratulations! You've made it through all the DIY professional development activities offered in The Connected Educator month. Here's a badge for you to use on your blog or website. Just copy and paste this code to display it!

**

Although we have done this work, we are continuing to learn. Like all restless lifelong learners, we have more questions than answers. Here are some of the things we think about.

- What principled changes should we be making in our classrooms to ensure that we are developing in students the skill sets they will need as they face future challenges?
- Are we preparing kids for yesterday, today, or tomorrow?
- Are current classroom techniques helping those we teach become future scientists, technologists, and imagineers who will solve the social ills of the society of the future?
- How can we collectively advocate best for needed policy changes that will enable our teachers and students to engage in connected, authentic learning?
- How can we help our students be ready to learn using tools we cannot yet imagine?

As you think about how to become a connected learner or continue on your journey, revisit these questions and develop your own answers, or add to the questions to advance your learning. To paraphrase Gandhi, *be the change you want to see in the world.*

Powerful Learning Practice

plpnetwork.com

Find us on Twitter @plpnetwork