Professional Learning Networks and Professional Development Resource List

Characteristics of Effective Professional Learning Networks

American English Webinar: Teachers Working Together - A Successful Community of Practice (YouTube Link) (60 minutes)
This webinar, hosted by English Language Specialist Mari Bodensteiner, explores best practices and innovative ideas that can be shared and cultivated in a Community of Practice (CoP). This webinar provides an overview of a CoP and its components, discusses the benefits of a CoP, highlights examples of a successful CoP, and examines practical steps for building a sustainable CoP.
American English Webinars are online teacher training seminars produced by the U.S. Department of State for English teachers around the world.

American English Webinar: Connecting to Learn: Growing Professionally Through Teacher-to-Teacher Engagement (YouTube Link) (60 minutes)
This webinar, hosted by English Language Specialist Chris Stillwell, explores how the act of connecting and conversing with peers can offer teachers valuable opportunities for professional growth. The webinar discusses practical steps to recruit a group of colleagues, establish a goal, and learn to cultivate inspiring conversations through simple activities like group problem-solving, reading discussions, and discussing lesson plans.
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American English Teacher's Corner: Personal Learning Networks (PLNs) (30 minutes)
This resource examines ways to develop, maintain, and use a personal learning network for professional development purposes. This article's use of the term, "Personal Learning Networks" overlaps with the term "Professional Learning Networks" as used in many other resources. This series of short articles provides practical tips for teachers looking to build and maintain face-to-face and virtual learning networks.
The American English Teacher's Corner on the American English website is a compilation of resources developed for teachers of English around the world.

Self-Paced Course: Building Your PLN (30 minutes)
Edublogs provides free courses on blogging and educational technology. This seven-unit Edublogs mini-course on "Building your PLN" offers participants a step-by-step guide to getting started with building their face-to-face network and furthering their connections through online social media platforms such as X (formerly known as Twitter), Bluesky, or Threads.

Innovative Approaches to Professional Learning Networks

English Teaching Forum Article: Reflection as a Necessary Condition for Action Research (20 minutes)
This article by Bettiana Blazquez highlights the practice of action research for teachers to improve their practice through critical reflection. The author notes that action research is most effective when done in collaboration with another teacher or a group of teachers who can observe and participate in post-observation discussions.
English Teaching Forum is a quarterly journal published by the U.S. Department of State supporting the teaching of English around the world through the publication of innovative, practical ideas.

English Teaching Forum Article: The Mini-Conference: Creating Localized Opportunities for Professional Development (15 minutes)
This article, by former English Language Fellow Brad Tipka, advocates for the use of mini-conferences as cost-effective, localized alternatives to national or international professional conferences. He highlights the role of mini-conferences in putting teachers at the center of their own professional development and in building teachers' capacity as educational leaders. Tipka also provides step-by-step instructions on how to organize an effective mini-conference.
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American English Teacher's Corner: Research to Practice: A Discussion Group for Language Teachers (10 minutes)
This article explores ways that teacher trainers can bring teachers together to learn about current research and practices in language teaching through discussion groups. The article presents tips for how to get a group started, where to find content, and how to recruit and retain participants.
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Technical Guide: [Structuring And Supporting School- And Cluster-Based Continuous Professional Development](#) (45 minutes)
This guide from the World Bank outlines best practices to structure and support school- and cluster-based continuous professional development (PD). This model for a PLN is most effective when participants teach at the same institution or at schools in the same system. The guide elaborates on key principles for each of five key decision points: how to group participants; how often to meet; who should facilitate; how to support facilitators; and what content to address.

Academic Article: [Virtual Professional Learning Network: Exploring an Educational Twitter Chat as Professional Development](#) (30 minutes)
This paper highlights the opportunities that Virtual Professional Learning Networks (VPLNs) provide for educators to engage in professional dialogue with participants who have similar interests but varying cultures and lived experiences due to varying geographic locations. The authors use the example of a weekly education-based Twitter chat (now known as X) to demonstrate that a "third space" can provide a virtual network for educators to connect and collaborate.

Academic Article: [Using Social Media as a Platform for a Virtual Professional Learning Community](#) (30 minutes)
This qualitative study provides insight into online faculty members' perceptions and experiences interacting in a VPLC within a social media environment purposefully designed for networking and learning. It explores the ways in which social media platforms serve as a way to cultivate learning through the understanding of others' experiences within a social community of peers.

Blog: [What is an Educator Mastermind, and Why Should You Join One?](#) (10 minutes)
This Cult of Pedagogy blog outlines the *mastermind* model and advocates for setting aside time for intentional conversations with like-minded peers to talk deeply about goals, to trouble shoot, and to problem-solve.

Blog: [Teachers Learn From Looking Together at Student Work](#) (10 minutes)
This article in *Education World* explores the ways in which teachers learn from one another when they take the time to collaboratively examine student work. Engaging with colleagues to ask questions and reflect on student work enables teachers to make relevant connections between their teaching practices and student learning.

Professional Development: Observations and Feedback and Mentoring and Collaboration

American English Webinar: Teachers Helping Teachers: Peer Observation for Professional Development (YouTube Link) (60 minutes)
This webinar, presented by English Language Specialist Heather Benucci, explores how teachers can engage in collaborative peer observations, enabling participants to share teaching techniques, provide helpful feedback, and mentor each other. The webinar explains how to foster an environment that promotes trust and growth and introduces the American English resource, "Shaping the Way We Teach English: From Observation to Action," a video-based resource for EFL teachers that can be used to help develop observation skills.
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English Teaching Forum Article: Options for Teacher Professional Development (30 minutes)
In this article, Gabriel Diaz-Magioli discusses the need for professional development and examines characteristics of adult learners. He suggests six sustained approaches to teacher development: conference plans, peer coaching, action research, collaborative study groups, individual development plans, and dialog journals. Diaz-Maggioli considers best practices for adult learners as well as the cyclical stages of teacher evolution.

Website: Getting Started with Peer Observation (30 minutes)
This website, developed by Cambridge Assessment, offers an overview of the peer observation process, including what steps the observer and the teacher being observed should follow before, during, and after the observation. It also discusses the benefits of peer observation, debunks several misconceptions about the peer observation process, and suggests alternative models of peer observation.

English Teaching Forum Article: Teaching Better, Together: Literacy Coaching as Collaborative Professional Development (30 minutes)
This article introduces the concept of literacy coaching, a form of instructional coaching that focuses specifically on improving literacy outcomes. It examines several roles that instructional coaches play: content expert, promoter of reflective instruction, professional-development facilitator, and builder of a school wide learning community. The article also identifies strategies coaches can use to offer

opportunities for teacher learning. The literacy coach model could be adapted to focus on various professional development outcomes in addition to improved literacy.

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Literature Review: [From Teacher Isolation to Teacher Collaboration: Theoretical Perspectives and Empirical Findings](#) (30 minutes)

This article reviews research on teacher isolation and collaboration. The authors identify ways that collaboration can contribute to professional development and recommend that schools support collaboration among teachers. They advocate for models of teacher training that support active construction of knowledge, such as study groups, peer coaching, and pair mentoring.

Online Resources

TESOL International Association Communities of Practice
https://www.tesol.org/tesol-global-community/communities-of-practice/

Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Training Center (SEAMEO RETRAC) YouTube Playlists
https://www.youtube.com/@SEAMEORegionalTrainingCenter/playlists

American English YouTube Playlists
https://www.youtube.com/@AmericanEnglishatState/playlists

English Teaching Forum Magazine
https://americanenglish.state.gov/forum

UNESCO AI Competency Framework for Students (also in Tiếng Việt)
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000391105

UNESCO AI Competency Framework for Teachers (also in Tiếng Việt)
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000391104/PDF/391104eng.pdf.multi