

Teachers' experience of professional learning through personal learning networks.

Research team contacts

Principal Researcher:	Kay Oddone	PhD candidate
Associate Researchers:	Associate Professor Hilary Hughes	Principal Supervisor
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What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of this research is to investigate teachers' real life experience of professional learning, through their engagement with their online personal learning network (PLN). The findings of this study will provide empirical evidence to enable a better understanding of how teachers might use contemporary technologies to enhance and extend their professional learning. It will also contribute to the development of a conceptual model which advances theory around innovative professional learning approaches.

Are you looking for people like me?

The research team is looking for practicing teachers from K-12. This includes class teachers, teaching principals, teacher librarians, specialist teachers and part time or casual teachers. To participate, you must have an online personal learning network (PLN). This means you use a number of digital tools to connect and learn with others. These tools could include (but don't have to be limited to) Twitter, Facebook, blogs (your own or others), Diigo, Pinterest, Google +, teaching websites etc. You should use this Personal Learning Network regularly (at least once a week) for the purposes of professional learning.

What will you ask me to do?

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do agree to participate, you can withdraw from the project without comment or penalty. If you withdraw, on request any identifiable information already obtained from you will be destroyed. Your decision to participate, or not participate, will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with QUT.

Your participation will involve constructing a visual map of your PLN and participation in one online interview, where we will discuss your PLN map, and the principal researcher will ask you some questions.

PLN Map: The map will be a visualisation of your personal learning network. You can choose any way to draw the map, and can include as little or as much detail as you wish. You can view an exemplar map if you would like guidance. You can create the map using pen and paper, using a mind mapping tool, or any other way that is easy for you. It is envisaged that the map will take between 15-45 minutes to complete. We will discuss the PLN map during the interview, so that you can explain the diagram in more depth if you wish.

Interview: The interview will be online, using any video conferencing tool you feel comfortable with (e.g. Skype, Facetime, Google Hangouts, Zoom). It will be at a time and location convenient to you. The interview will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes of your time and will be audio recorded. No video footage will be stored. This will be a semi structured interview.

The interviewer (Kay Oddone) may ask you prompt questions to allow you to elaborate on your responses. The full list of questions will be shared with you prior to the interview.

Are there any risks for me in taking part?

The research team has identified minimal risks for participation in this research. There is the possibility of discomfort due to low level anxiety during the interview procedure, and inconvenience due to the time required to complete the research tasks. The likelihood of the risk of discomfort is low, and you may choose the level of response to interview questions and prompts to which you feel comfortable. The likelihood of inconvenience is moderate, however mitigating strategies will be put in place to minimise the inconvenience participation in this research may cause.

It should be noted that if you do agree to participate you can withdraw from participation at any time during the project without comment or penalty.

Are there any benefits for me in taking part?

It is expected that this project will not benefit you directly. However, it may benefit teachers, teacher educators and researchers.

There may be some potential advantages for you as you may find it beneficial to reflect on your understandings and practices when interacting with your PLN, and you may experience an enrichment of your own PLN through engagement with the research process.

Will I be compensated for my time?

No, but we would very much appreciate your participation in this research.

I am interested – what should I do next?

If you are interested in participating in this study, please follow this link to the study site:

<http://www.linkinglearning.com.au/doctoralresearch/>

Alternatively you can contact the researchers for details of the next step:

Kay Oddone k.oddone@hdr.qut.edu.au

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You will be provided with further information to ensure that your decision and consent to participate is fully informed.

Thank You!

QUT Ethics Approval Number: 1700000083