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Personal Learning Network (PLN) **Assignment**

Due Date: End of Week 8 (July 17th)

Introduction

For many educators, traditional professional development opportunities often fall short of addressing individual needs or advancing professional goals. And, many times traditional PD does not offer the just-in-time learning that is most helpful to improving classroom practice. As a result, personal (or professional) learning networks (PLNs) have become a popular way for educators to collaborate with peers, mentors, and other professional and personal contacts to share resources and ideas. A PLN consists of the people you informally learn from and share ideas with, as well as the resources, tools, and materials that support your learning. In the past, your PLN might have been limited to the people and resources you interacted with at your school, but social media and other technology tools have made it possible to connect with educators and colleagues from across the globe.

A strong PLN can enable you to:
- Locate classroom resources and develop lesson ideas
- Find solutions to challenges you face in the classroom
- Locate research and news related to the profession and your content area
- Learn from experts and colleagues
- Build your own digital literacy skills and learn how to integrate these skills in the classroom

For the purposes of this course, you will look at developing your PLN with a focus on digital/information/media literacy resources.

This assignment has two parts, a written component and a visual component.

PLN Articles and Resources To Help You Get Started

1. **Edublogs Teacher Challenge – What the heck is a PLN?**
   https://teacherchallenge.edublogs.org/pln-challenge-1-what-the-heck-is-a-pln/
2. **School CIO - Using Social Media as a Professional Learning Tool**
   https://www.techlearning.com/news/school-cio-using-social-media-as-a-professional-learning-tool
3. **Common Sense Education: From PLN to Practice - Tips from 5 Educators on Personalizing your Professional Learning**
   https://www.commonsense.org/education/blog/from-pln-to-practice-tips-from-5-educators-on-personalizing-your-professional-learning
4. **Tech & Learning - Top 10 for PLNs**
   https://www.techlearning.com/resources/top-10-for-plns
5. **ASCD – The Importance of Developing Your PLN**
   http://inservice.ascd.org/the-importance-of-developing-your-pln/

Part I: Written Component

Please answer the following questions in standard, academic English. When citing sources, use APA style for in-text citations and include a list of references.
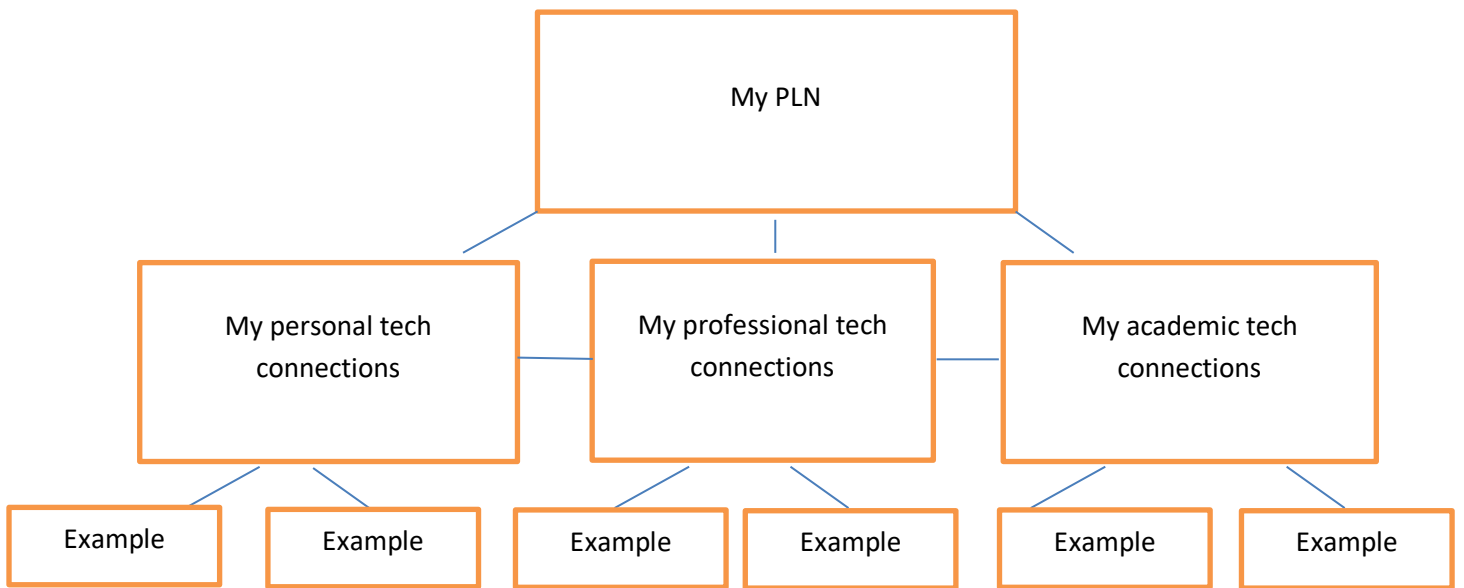
1. How would you explain the concept of a "Personal Learning Network" to your colleagues? If you were to create a glossary of terms for them to reference while trying to build their own PLNs, what would you include in it?

2. If you could choose one tool to recommend for starting a PLN, what would it be and why?

3. If you were developing a PLN focused on new literacies, which aspects of digital literacy (or information literacy or media literacy) would you consider most important for your identification of people to connect with or resources to consult?

4. Reflect on how you can utilize a PLN as part of ongoing personal, professional development. You may utilize this information in the infographic you will create for part II.

5. How can you utilize what you learned from a PLN with students? What can you suggest that they do to create a PLN?

Part II: Visual Component

For part two, you will create an infographic or visual display of the connections and resources that make up your PLN. Use the following categories to organize your connections and resources:

A. Personal Connections (these are connections you make/resources you consult for personal growth). Examples might include personal social media groups, face-to-face groups/ clubs/networks, events you attend, resources related to personal interests, etc.

B. Professional Connections (these are connections you make/resources you consult for professional growth). Examples might include professional organizations you are a member of, connections you make on LinkedIn or other professional networking sites, professional committees you participate in, professional conferences you attend, people you work with in a professional context, etc.

C. Academic Connections (these are connections you make/resources you consult for academic growth). Examples might include study groups, connections you make in your courses, academic resources and tools you use frequently, etc.

You may use any tool you wish to create your infographic. You can be as creative with the design of the infographic as you choose, as long as you include the three categories listed above. Below, is a simple template design that you may use as a starting point, if you choose.

```
                          My PLN

   My personal tech      My professional tech     My academic tech
     connections            connections             connections

  Example    Example     Example    Example     Example    Example
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