

Goals, Motivation for, and Outcomes of Personal Learning through Networks: Results of a Tweetstorm

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Abstract

Recent developments in the use of social media for learning have posed serious challenges for learners. The information overload that these online social tools create has changed the way learners learn and from whom they learn. An investigation of learners' goals, motivations and expected outcomes when using a personal learning network is essential since there have been few empirical studies in the domain. Previous research focused on the factors that influence learning in virtual environments, but these studies were mainly conducted in an era in which online social media were not yet used for personal learning networks. The current paper reports findings of a study that examined factors impacting professional learning through networks. A personal learning network identification session and a brainstorm via Twitter (Tweetstorm) regarding goals, motivational factors and outcomes of learning through networks were conducted. The article concludes that seven factors play a pivotal role in professional learning through networks: sharing, motivation, perceived value of the network, feedback, personal learning, trust and support, peer characteristics and peer value. Also, different perspectives, motivation, social media and collaboration, reciprocity, intrinsic motivation, innovation, status and reputation and networking strategies play an important role in motivation. Future work should focus on investigating the interplay between factors that influence networked learning identified in this article.