

# Amazing Ways Twitter Can Give Wings to Your Professional Development

## **INSIGHT**

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## Twitter for Professional Development

Online communities offer a great potential for professional development. Among various online platforms, Twitter is an amazing tool for educators to discuss what is or what's not working in the classrooms with not just their school colleagues but with teachers across the globe.

Twitter can act as powerful and economical mean to give your students best and latest information on various subjects. However, a lot of educators just feel overwhelmed on how to make best of Twitter. Here are some easy yet effective ways Twitter can help in your professional development.

### **Use Hashtags to Search Information**

Hashtags (#) are used in Twitter and placed before certain phrases or word to help to gather relevant information available on Twitter. Hashtags actually are search queries that help users to look tweets, chats and discussions related to that specific topic. When users put a phrase with hashtag in the search box, they will see a drop down list; this list contains the most common used phrases as suggestion. It is an important list that gives an insight about the type of information or hastags trending on Twitter.

For example - If a forth grade teacher wants to get latest discussions and idea on teaching the 4th grade. Making a tweet and putting the term with the hashtag (#4thchat) enables the teacher to collect valuable inputs and resources. And surely for this you need to know the common hashtags.

### **Know the Common Hashtags**

Now Twitter is ten years old. Over the ten years, a culture of standardized tweets has developed across the different industries. Knowing [these lists of Twitter hastags](#) will help you to narrow down your efforts also helps you to get relevant information.

Like if a teacher wants to collect information about the "project-based learning" for her classroom, she just needs to tweet the #pbl or #pblchat and she will get the latest tips, insights, ideas and

resources about "project-based learning" threads and can dig useful information from that. Not just this, you can find great list of various subjects and topics on Twitter.

### **Engage in Discussions and Follow Experts**

Today, everyone has their twitter handle, be it the renowned professors, major universities, scholars or famous educators. They constantly tweet the meaningful and valuable academic content and resources. Now, if teachers wishes to enhance their professional development, they no longer have to scan the scholarly journals. Teachers just need to follow the top researchers or scholars to get daily expert information in their twitter feed.

In fact teachers can reach out to the other teachers or well-known academics and discuss with them on specific questions or topics. When they discuss about a specific subject with the research group of professors of that subject then definitely they can access the most updated information. Just follow the expert of any related subject and get the answer of your questions.

### **Involve Your Students By Involving Your Followers**

Twitter is perhaps one of the best engagement tools for both teachers and students that helps in professional development. In your tweets you can tag a group of people about a subject, people just love to help. Such discussions will keep your students involve with your followers. As a teacher you can make your lesson interesting with the support of teachers across the globe, by asking them about the interesting information about the subject.

### **Participate in Twitter Chat Initiated by Others**

It is good that you initiate chats on twitter to gather information and involve students; however, it is also important to take part in the [chats and discussion](#) initiated by others. Regular participation in the chats and discussion enhance your knowledge base as well as help you to connect with your learners. You can check out the chat schedule [here](#) to start participating.

### **Build a Professional Learning Network**

Building a PLN is a never-ending task so need to continually follow really good educators to get the information they put out. To get the right people who share your interests you can search for specific hashtags and lists. The lists provide great sources as well as new good people to follow. Many professionals already have open lists of people culled from all of their follows for the purpose of grouping. You can subscribe to those open lists. These lists are regularly updated by Tweeters and that adds a lot of value to your learning.

Here are some **tips** you must keep in mind while using Twitter as a teacher:

### **Keep Tweets Open**

A lot of people keep their tweets private may be for personal reason. Keeping tweets private in a professional set up is not a good idea. Staying open for everyone makes your tweets easier to find for some looking for info.

### **Do Some Branding and Establish yourself as an expert**

Put some efforts in personal branding as well. You can definitely become a Twitter brand if you regularly share relevant articles, news or tools over your Twitter account. Let people know about you and your interests by providing your bio so that you can be followed by like-minded people. If you provide fresh and original content on specific subject areas regularly, people will take notice.

### **Remember to Give and Take**

Social networking including Twitter is more of giving than getting. Experts say that 90 percent of what one tweets should be sharing relevant and helpful information, connecting and retweeting other's tweets or story. Rest 10 percent can be used for asking help, sharing your own content or anything that benefits you directly.

### **Be Authentic**

Twitter is a best professional tool and users can take advantage from it when they have an authentic user's profile. Uploading your real picture and using your real name as your Twitter handle proves that you are an authentic user.

### **Do Not Forget Etiquette**

When using Twitter for professional development, it is important to keep the diplomatic behavior. If you are bully or rude person than there are chances that people will unfollow you or even block you. Social media platform is a place where anything you say can go viral within a sec. Therefore, it is important to not to forget basic manners while using a social media platform for professional reasons.

Here are some **tools** you must try while using Twitter as a teacher:

**[TweetDeck](#)**: TweetDeck is a great app for Twitter users to stay up to date by arranging their feeds with customizable columns, using filters and scheduling tweets.

**[Hootsuite](#)**: This allows you to manage multiple Twitter profiles and track your tweets with ease.

**[Twups](#)**: Twups is a twitter aggregator, pulling the most popular twitter topics into one place, so you can keep up to date on what is going on in the world, via twitter.

**[The Tweeted Times](#)**: This is a real time personalized newspaper generated from your Twitter account. You can create a newspaper for any topic of your interest. Topical newspapers are based on streams produced by Twitter lists or Twitter search.

**Twitscoop:** Twitscoop allows you to receive, send tweets, and find new friends instantly, without ever reloading your page. Search and follow what's buzzing on twitter in real-time.

Today, Twitter has become a more valuable tool for retrieving information and interacting with known individuals across the world who are same kinds of people you would like to exchange ideas with in real life. I am sure taking these steps will significantly upsurge your professional development.

How else do you use Twitter for professional learning? Share your practices in the comment box.

[Image Courtesy](#)

### **About the Author**

**Author:** Prasanna Bharti

Prasanna is a blogger by profession, and loves to write about education technology. Her write-ups intend to provide a deep insight about enormous resources and ideas available to make learning better and effective with the use of technology.

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