



# Shaping theFuture

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## Twitter: A Great Tool for Educators

by *Kevin Creutz*

Imagine a resource for educators that would give them an unlimited amount of potential for professional development and opportunities to grow, learn, connect, and collaborate. Imagine that schools and teachers could use the same resource to communicate with parents, students, stakeholders, congregation members, and the community.

On top of all of that, it would be a powerful way for schools to celebrate, promote, and market their product and ministries.

Fortunately for Lutheran schools, that tool is available, and it is free!

The source where all of this help for educators and schools can be found is Twitter. It has been less than six years since Twitter was created, and since then Twitter has given educators more

opportunities than ever before. Twitter has helped bring the world into the classroom to enhance instruction and increase student learning. Here are five areas to focus on as you discover how educators all over the world continue to learn and grow because of Twitter.

### #Give It A Try

One of my college professors once told us that it's acceptable to "steal from the best, and make up the rest." In other words, there are so many effective and innovative educators out there who are creating and sharing excellent content that we don't have to feel the need to create everything on our own. On Twitter, you can find educators who are sharing resources they have used in their lessons. The only thing you have to be willing to do in your own classroom is to try something new. You will find plenty of ideas from other educators on Twitter that are worth giving a try.



### #It Takes Time

Many educators have resisted joining twitter because "it takes too much time." That is correct: it will take time to learn to navigate Twitter. However, it's hard to imagine any professional development resource or opportunity that will not take any time to integrate into your schedule.

One of the notable benefits of Twitter is that the time requirements are completely user-controlled. The Twitter user is in complete control of how much or how little to utilize Twitter. Being active on Twitter once an hour, once a day, or once a week will still provide a valuable professional resource.

### #Just Say No

It is important to know that the number of resources and information that will be available to you on Twitter can be overwhelming at times. A blog post or article may seem like the perfect read for you when you see it on Twitter, but if after a week the post is still unread, it is probably safe to say that it is not something you **need** to read. There will be a continual stream of resources that can be found on Twitter, but don't be afraid to say no if you feel like you do not have time to read or investigate the resource within a reasonable amount of time.

While you don't want to put pressure on yourself to read everything you see on Twitter, it is a good idea to open an account with a social bookmarking tool like [Diigo](#), which allows you to save any link that you find and then



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## Review, Reflect, Resolve

- Do you have a Twitter account? How do you use it?
- What potential applications of Twitter do you see for you and your school?
- What is its potential for ministry in general?

### Links & Resources

Join [Twitter](#). (LEA has an account by the name of LutheranEd.)

Open a Twitter account with a social bookmarking tool like [Diigo](#).

[Resources](#) that have been dedicated to the benefits of Twitter for teachers, administrators, and schools.



Other articles you might be interested in in this issue of **Shaping theFuture:**

[K-9 Comfort Dogs](#) by *Jill Zempel* (Feature)

[Back to Nature](#) by *Cynthia Hasseldahl* (LEADnet)

[A Hanoi Tiger Rises](#) by *Steve*

retrieve it at any time from any computer, phone, or tablet that is connected to the Internet.

[Winkelman \(GLEnet\)](#)



## #Sharing And Connecting

Twitter is a tool from which you will receive more than you will give. Many educators strictly use Twitter as a way to read, observe, learn, and acquire. However, don't hesitate to share your own resources, methods, or experiences. All educators have so much to share with other professionals.

Twitter is also an innovative way for schools to share and communicate with parents, students, and the community. At Zion Lutheran School in St. Charles, Missouri, a Twitter account was started two years ago to share school information, athletic results, and schedules. One of the best responses we have had from parents is when we have tweeted from class trips. Twitter helps

parents stay connected to the very latest news at your school.

## #Conversations

Finally, one of the best ways Twitter can be used is by engaging in conversations with other educators. Sometimes you can ask a question on Twitter and get a more immediate and effective response than if you would have gone to Google. Many educators use Twitter as a way to converse with other teachers about best practices, resources, and methods. You will also find the Twitter community of educators to be a very positive, encouraging, and helpful group of people. Twitter users describe the group of people they follow and who follow them with the term Personal Learning Network (PLN). Communication with your PLN will increase your effectiveness as a teacher and increase the learning of your students.



This is just the tip of the iceberg. Twitter offers an enormous number of opportunities for any teacher, administrator, or school to become better. The best part of Twitter is that it is completely personalized to your needs, interests, area of expertise, and commitment level. There have been a lot of resources that have been dedicated to the benefits of Twitter for teachers, administrators, and schools. [Read](#) some of those resources and find people to follow once you sign up for Twitter. You do not want to miss out on the resources being shared, the conversations that are happening, and the opportunities to grow as a professional.

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