

# edcamp

## The Complete Guide

How to Start & Run Your Very Own EdCamp

learn

share

lead

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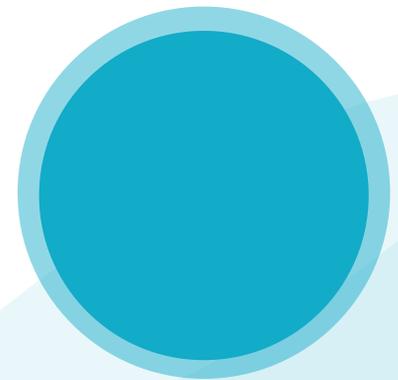
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# Introduction

## EdCamp:

UNconference event organized by groups of educators, specifically designed to create a participant-driven, fun-filled day of professional development. Educators can connect with like-minded individuals, collaborate ideas, brainstorm solutions to common education problems, have group discussions, and receive information that can immediately be applied in the classroom.

	<b>Traditional Conference</b>	<b>EdCamps (UNconferences)</b>
Audience	Large - Thousands	Small - A few hundred
Cost	Expensive	Free
Content	Set in stone	Participant-driven and flexible
Involvement	One-way lecture style	Discussion-based
Keynote	Hour long; sometimes a non-educator	If any, around 15-20 minutes from an educator (costs nothing)
Networking	Between sessions	All day long
Presentations	Selected in advance	Decided on the day of
Presenters	Professional speakers	Anyone can present or lead a session
Time-commitment	Multiple days	One day
Setting	Formal	Relaxed
Vendors	Exhibit Halls	None

**The SimpleK12 EdCamp Guide** is designed to help educators learn more about the revolutionary EdCamp movement and encourage individuals to plan their own UNconference events. From start-up to follow-up, you will find tips and advice from real educators who have already planned and hosted their own EdCamps. We've focused on several important areas and have included ideas, strategies, and resources for starting and running your very own event.

## 4 Tips to Getting Started

When you've decided to take on the challenge of hosting an EdCamp in your area there are a few things you need to do before anything else...

**1**

### Attend an EdCamp

Before hosting your own, try to attend an EdCamp. While it's not essential, this will give you guidance in planning your own, so you can decide what you want and don't want to do at your own event. If you can't attend one in person, find an EdCamp that is broadcasting some of their sessions so you can get an idea of what they are like. You can even try to get in touch with the organizer and see if they'll let you tag along the day before and/or day of and let you in on any of their team's discussions. No one has the same experiences, concerns, or problems, but it's a great way to get a behind-the-scenes look prior to when you're on the hot seat.

**2**

### Visit the EdCamp Wikispace

The purpose of the official EdCamp wiki page is to provide planning space for EdCamps as well as a place for interested educators to connect and pull together ideas. You can search the calendar to see all upcoming events. If you notice there is already an EdCamp being organized in your area, maybe that's a good opportunity to work together or combine the two events. If there is not an EdCamp in your area, you should create your own page on the Wiki. This is a great place to start brainstorming and organizing.

3

### Choose Your Team

Organizing an EdCamp is hard to do alone –so why not enlist the help of others? Your team’s attitude is key to setting the tone for an enthusiastic, welcoming day full of learning. Everyone should have cheerful attitudes, energy and passion to help make the event a success. When choosing your organizers, mix it up. It doesn’t have to be made of only people in your town or people who you’ve met in person before. If you use [Twitter](#) or a listserve, put out a message that says, “I’m starting an EdCamp in \*insert town name.\* Who wants to help?” You’d be surprised at the people who’ll respond!

It’s also a good idea to contact organizers of other EdCamps with your questions or concerns. Even if they aren’t officially on your team, it never hurts to have their ear. Most of them are very willing to give you advice from their experience.

4

### Get Organized

Once you’ve selected your team, it’s essential to stay organized when planning your UNconference. Meeting in person doesn’t always fit into everyone’s schedule, so email and [Google Groups](#) are great ways to keep everyone on the same page. You should figure out what your team members’ strengths are and then designate tasks and responsibilities, share links and ideas, and ask questions without having to meet face-to-face for every detail.



## Location, Location, Location!

When planning an EdCamp, location is everything. Before you go looking for a place to hold your event, you need to have an idea of what you need. Here are some important things to consider when looking for a location.

**Size matters:** How much room are you going to need? Has there been buzz about your local EdCamp? Have you received messages from hundreds of excited people? You need to have a good guess as to how many people might attend. Look for a venue that can hold 150 - 200 people. This is a nice size venue for a first time EdCamp.

**Look, no wires:** It is very important that the venue have wireless access for the attendees. One of the things that makes EdCamps exciting is the sharing that takes place online during the event. People will want to access presentations and tweet new ideas with others. Wireless makes sharing easier and EdCamps are all about sharing ideas.

**Nice and roomy:** EdCamps need break-out rooms for the sessions and one main room to kick-off and close the day. The number of break-out rooms will depend on the number of sessions that are planned for the day and the number of people that are going to attend. Each break-out room should be equipped with a projector at the minimum. If presenters need their own computers, make sure to let them know before they arrive.

The main room should have tables and chairs for people to be comfortable during the day if they choose to meet with new friends during a session time. The session board should be in the main room as well.

**Feed me:** If you are not supplying food, make sure there are plenty of restaurants within walking distance. EdCampers should be able to walk and get lunch and be back in time for the second half of the day.

**Dude, where's my car?:** Make sure there is ample parking at your location. Will people be able to park close by or will they need to walk? Consider parking when choosing a venue.

**Pack a Bag:** Will people be coming in from out of town? If so, talk to your local hotels. You may even be able to secure a group discount rate.

**Who to ask?:** Educational institutions are the first places to check. Local universities generally have all of the amenities listed above. Contact the College of Education and see if they would be interested in hosting EdCamp as a sponsor. The trouble with universities is that they do have classes on the weekend, so scheduling might be difficult.

Local public schools could be a good option, but they may not have all of the amenities listed above. Look for teachers you know and see if they could contact their school administrators to see if hosting an EdCamp would be possible.

**Extra fees?:** Are there any extra costs associated with the location? Find out if you will need to acquire insurance, pay for security, staff, electricity, etc.

People can't RSVP to  
attend something new and  
exciting...  
**if they don't know where  
they will be going!**

When putting  
together an EdCamp, the  
venue is the most important  
piece of the puzzle. With location  
confirmed, it's easier to start advertising  
to attendees and finding sponsors. When  
a venue is chosen, the date is easy to pick.  
Start early and look at places around  
you that might make great venues for  
an EdCamp. Once this is taken  
care of, everything else is a  
piece of cake!

## How To Market Your EdCamp

Organize your team/committee? Check! Start to plan your event? Check! Next up on the list: start spreading the word. Sure, shouting from the rooftops might get a few people's attention but perhaps there's a better way to tell everyone all about it... Here are 5 promotion ideas – that won't break the bank!

**TWEET! TWEET!:** One of the first things you should do is create a Twitter account for your EdCamp and decide on a #Hashtag (Example: #EdCamp\*insert your event's name\*). A lot of information for upcoming EdCamps is tweeted out by amazing educators that are a part of a large Personal Learning Network (PLN) on Twitter, so this will help others keep up with your latest EdCamp news.

**“Like” it?:** Create a Facebook Event, Fan page, or do both! As one of the most popular social networking sites, Facebook is a great place to publicize your EdCamp.

**Calling all Bloggers!:** As you go through the EdCamp organization process, why not document your experience along the way? Any ideas, goals, completed tasks, to-do lists, you name it –start blogging about it. Once everything is said and done, how cool would it be cool to go back through your old posts and re-experience it? It would also be a great way to improve your event the following year. Even better, your blog would serve as a terrific reference for future EdCamp organizers.

**Email:** Send information about your EdCamp anytime, anywhere and your recipient can read it at his or her convenience! Plus, they can forward along the information to any of their contacts as well. Make sure to attach important documents, videos, or pictures that you might have.

**Flyers:** Grab people's attention with a fun, catchy flyer! Admittedly, printing costs can get pretty expensive so make sure to pair it up with an electronic PDF. If you do decide to pass out hard copies, try to see if your local printing company will give a discount.

A combination of all these will give you a great start for getting the word out about your EdCamp. But to truly be successful, you will need to take it one step further: have one central location to point everyone back to...which means you need to create a Website.



## Website

Sure, Twitter and Facebook are great for helping to promote your EdCamp event but to get all of the relevant information out, a Website is the way to go.

### CHOOSING THE PLATFORM

Getting people the information about the EdCamp has been one of the most important factors in determining the success of that event. In addition, it makes sense to build a simple website to begin advertising and spreading the word about your EdCamp. Your Website doesn't have to be anything fancy and you don't need to know HTML to create one. Here are 4 free, WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) site creation tools to make creating an event Website a snap.

1. [Weebly](#)
2. [Wix](#) (Check out [EdCamp Cincinnati's](#) Wix page)
3. [Jimdo](#)
4. [Google Sites](#) (Check out [EdCamp Keene's](#) Google Sites page)

**Blog Examples:**  
[EdCamp Citrus](#)  
[EdCamp Detroit](#)  
[EdCamp Philly](#)

Although these tools will certainly get the job done, there are other options available: Wikis and Blogs.

### WHY A WIKI?

Wikis are a popular choice among EdCamp organizers for two reasons.

1. Adding information to a wiki page is just flat out simple. Click Edit, add your info, click Save and you're done. That's it.
2. It's very easy to add other users as collaborators to help you maintain your event website. Wikis also make it easy to embed any objects that come with an embed code.

### WHY A BLOG?

Whether you host your blog for free with [Wordpress](#) or purchase web hosting, blogs are a great way to build an event site.

#### Advantages:

- Easy to use
- Customized options: thousands of themes and plug-ins to choose from
- Save time promoting your event: use a plug-in to automatically post to Twitter or Facebook anytime you add a new post
- Collaboration: As an admin, you can add new users to, as with a wiki, help write articles and build your event site.

#### Disadvantages:

- Can sometimes be overwhelming: There are so many options available.

Free

Wiki Sites:

[PBWorks](#) & [Wikispaces](#)

PBWorks Example:

[EdCamp Charlottesville](#)

Wikispaces Example:

[EdCamp KC](#)



## WHAT TO INCLUDE

Your site should include as much information about your event as possible. Some of the items that are important to add to your site would include, but are not limited to:

1. What is EdCamp and what is your event all about?
2. The location – people need to know where they're going. Embedding a Google Map into this page is a pretty good idea.
3. Times – be sure to include the event starting time, session times, break times, and ending time.
4. Sponsors page – sponsors are donating money or their products to your event to help make it a success. A page dedicated to your sponsors is a small price to pay for their generosity.
5. A Contact page – If your potential attendees have questions, adding a form to your contact page is a great way for them to communicate with you. Don't want a form? Be sure to include a contact email address.

## TO BUY A DOMAIN NAME OR NOT TO BUY A DOMAIN NAME

Some organizers choose to purchase their own event domain name while others have not. If you have the funds to pay for and renew your domain name each year, then by all means, register it. If not, no big deal. Through your hard work and promotion, people will still be able to find your website.

If you create  
your own Website,  
don't forget to also add  
your event to the official  
[EdCamp Wiki page](#).

## Sponsorship:

### *Establishing & Maintaining Relationships*

EdCamps are supposed to be free... but associated costs will inevitably come up. When they do, don't be afraid to ask for help. Identify your needs early on and contact sponsors accordingly.

#### 10 Steps to Establish and Maintain Relationships with Sponsors:

- 1. Get Organized** - Keep track of everything on a Google doc. Give your core planning team access to it all the time so it will always be up to date.
- 2. Start Networking** - Reach out to potential sponsors via Twitter, Facebook, and direct email. Once communication is established, offer to set up a Skype call to have face to face conversation. Or visit some of your local businesses to see if they'd like to help.
- 3. Educate Them** - Send all important information about your EdCamp. You want your potential sponsor to fully understand what your EdCamp will look like (especially if they have never heard of one before.)
- 4. Shoot for the Moon** - No donation is too small! Take what is offered to you. If you're asked, "What do you need?", don't be reluctant in answering. Ask if they'd be willing to provide "the big giveaway of the day".
- 5. Show the Benefits** - Make it clear how you will give the sponsor publicity for their donation.

6. **Cultivate relationships** - If an organization declined the opportunity to sponsor this time, stay in contact and determine if future opportunities exist.
7. **Focus on Them** - Create a sponsorship page on your website. Ask each sponsor for their logo and use it to link back to their website. You could also use the logo on posters, t-shirts, or any other publicity you are planning.
8. **Sponsor Love** - Tweet using your EdCamp's hashtag to share who your sponsors are and express appreciation for them helping your day be successful.
9. **Stay in Touch** - Throughout all of the planning and preparation, keep in constant communication with your sponsors. If they provide monetary sponsorship, confirm all funds that are received into your Paypal or bank account. If giveaways are sent, confirm what was received and when it was received.
10. **Say Thanks** - Start planting the seeds for the next one immediately after your EdCamp is over! Send a personal follow-up email to each sponsor after your EdCamp is over to thank them again for helping to make the day a success.

If your venue has facility fees or requires liability insurance, these are great areas to look for a sponsor to cover costs. Sponsors can also provide a light breakfast or lunch for the attendees, or provide giveaways. Are these things necessary to have a successful day of learning? Of course not. But if companies are willing to help out, that just makes the day even more enjoyable.



## **Financing Your EdCamp: *Making “Cents” of it all...***

When it comes to financing your EdCamp, there are two options. EdCamps have been held both with and without a banking account, so it's up to you.

### **Option 1: Create a non-profit checking account at your local bank.**

It helps to have an EIN number (you can get one through the IRS website). The bank will ask for the name and address of the organization so they can send statements and maintain contact. For this reason, it's probably best to use your home address. They will also need to put a name on the account. Two or three names can be used, so you can use the co-coordinators of the organization. The bank will also need proof the organization is organized. Give them a copy of your EdCamp meeting minutes and notes.

Make sure there are dates in the notes as well.

### **Option 2: Hook your sponsors up directly.**

Know exactly how much things are going to cost and then you can direct your sponsors to the appropriate place. Make sure that the people you are purchasing items from are OK with possibly getting paid by multiple people.



## Insurance: Are You Covered?

Some facilities may require events to carry liability insurance, so be sure to check with each venue you are considering using!

In the case of EdCampKC, their event was held at a university campus and required a 2 million dollar liability policy. It was simply called "Special Event Insurance". They had the policy written to only be in effect for the day of the event.

The coverage was outlined as follows:

### **General Liability Coverage**

- \$2,000,000 General Aggregate**
- \$2,000,000 Products/Completed Operations**
- \$1,000,000 Personal and Advertising Injury**
- \$1,000,000 Each Occurrence**
- \$300,000 Fire Damage (any one fire)**
- \$5,000 Medical Expenses**
- 0- Deductible per Claim**

Kyle Pace, one of EdCamp KC's organizers, was referred to an insurance agency in Missouri by someone on his core planning team that had used the agency for another event. The total cost for the policy was a little over three hundred dollars. They checked with several agencies and the price varied. If you know of an insurance agent friendly to educators, give them first dibs on getting your business. Thankfully Kyle had a sponsor that was willing to cover the insurance cost for EdCamp KC. Find out from the agency how they prefer to be paid and if it's OK for your sponsor to pay them directly.

Be sure to ask up front when trying to choose a location whether or not insurance is required and if so how much coverage is necessary. You don't want something like this to be a last minute surprise. Once the policy is paid for, get a copy of the policy to your contact at the facility where the EdCamp will take place ASAP.

## It's the Big Day: Are You Prepared?

*Murphy's Law says that if something is going to go wrong it will.*

EdCamp Birmingham's Experience – a first-hand account by Amanda Dykes

*“From the location being double booked to lining up sponsors, I thought everything that could go wrong had already done so. EdCamp Birmingham was scheduled to take place on April 30, 2011, three days after a tornado ravaged through the state of Alabama. We had to decide if we should still have the UNconference (which we did) and how to shift weight from team members who would not be able to make it due to clean up in their (or their families) community. This is where being organized beyond belief is extremely important! Make sure you have a check list and know what needs to be done on the day of the event.”*

### Amanda's Advice:

#### **1. Stay in touch with those in charge of the facilities – months in advance.**

I did not do this and through a miscommunication we became double booked with the Miss Alabama pageant. Luckily my teammate and I caught this early and figured out a way to co-exist with beauty queens and their entourages. Keep good contact and make sure you are on every calendar available. Make sure you also check with facility about the Wi-Fi logins. After phone calls and emails to four different people, I finally found out how to get the login.



## 2. If you are offering food, have it already ordered and paid for.

A month before the event you can probably get a good estimate on the head count. Use the “wedding rule” and count for half to two-thirds attending. Most EdCamps have had around half the registration attend. I cannot say from experience since most of our state was unable to get to town to attend, but we did have right at 50%. Make sure your sponsors know what to expect as the price.

## 3. Line up volunteers for the event.

There’s plenty of work to go around! Either students or team members will need to help out. You will need people to direct traffic, check people in, explain the “board,” and even get lunch set up for everyone. One of our wonderful sponsors actually sent volunteers and they were life savers.

## 4. Arrive early – really early.

Set up the schedule board at least an hour before EdCamp begins. We put ours up exactly an hour before and there were people already waiting on it. That was stressful. We used EventBrite for registration, which made it easy for check in. EventBrite has a wonderful iPhone/iPad app that allows for easy and fast check in.

## 6. Address the attendees as a group before your event officially starts.

Before EdCamp begins, speak to everyone together. Use this welcome time to go over the rules of EdCamp and thank the sponsors. Give a layout of the facilities - room locations, Wi-Fi logins, etc. Introduce the team members who have worked so hard and so people know who to find if they have a question - we wore matching EdCamp shirts we made at CafePress. Some EdCamps take this time to have a quick keynote and get everyone excited about the event. While this is going on, have someone put the session board on the EdCamp wiki/website (it may need updating as the day goes on, but this will give everyone an idea of the sessions before the group splits up).

## 5. Put signs everywhere.

Make sure you point people in the right direction – include signs for parking, which building to check in, and all of the session rooms. If you are not using all of the rooms in your venue, you can place signs outside the rooms you will be using to make them easier to locate.

## 7. Update your social networking sites throughout the day.

Throughout the day have someone taking pictures of the event and posting to Flickr using a #hashtag. Have a Wikipage or bulletin board for people to post notes of what they are learning throughout the day. Also make sure everyone knows the event #hashtag so there can be a backchannel of the EdCamp.

## 9. Allow Extra Time for Giveaways.

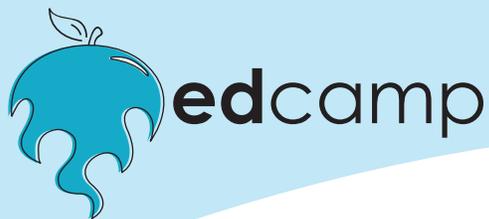
If you have any sponsors that donated "swag" items (T-shirts, lanyards, bags, etc.) make sure that you leave enough time at the end of the day or maybe during lunchtime to have a prize giveaway. These extra items are not required for an EdCamp but if you're lucky enough to have them, don't forget to give them out!

## 8. Don't forget about technology and clean up.

Make sure you have someone who has already checked out the technology and how it works. That person needs to check in at the beginning of each session in each room to make sure the presenter has a projector, Wi-Fi, and working computers. When it comes to clean up make sure you know where everything was when you got there. Find out what to do with garbage (especially if you had food in the building) and know where extra garbage bags are located or bring your own. Know where mops are in case of an emergency - just trust me on this one!

## 10. The number one thing to remember is not to sweat the small stuff.

If everyone is learning and having fun they will not notice the small slip ups. I can remember running around like crazy and worrying because it seemed like so many things were going on, yet the attendees had no idea. Have fun, it is worth the amount of time, every tear and all the sweat!



## EdCamp Schedule: The Day's Sessions

Unlike traditional conferences, EdCamp presentations are not scheduled ahead of time. Instead, the content is participant-driven, flexible, and decided the morning of the event. EdCampers should come prepared to share ideas, have organic conversations, and start their day of learning by posting session topics to a schedule board.

### How Does the Schedule Board Work?

When you show up to EdCamp, there will be an empty session board... waiting to be filled out by YOU! Attendees can write their name and topic on an index card and either:

- Tape it to the schedule board during an available time slot.  
(Great for Smaller EdCamps)
- Put it on a table, allowing other attendees to vote on their favorite topics. Once the votes are tallied up, all of the most popular sessions will be taped to the schedule board.  
(Great for Larger EdCamps)

### What's Needed:

Poster Board  
Index Cards  
Markers  
Tape

Both ways work, so it's up to each individual EdCamp to decide how they want to do it. If sessions aren't completely filled in right away, don't worry about it. They'll fill up throughout the day once people realize how informal presentations can be.

### Session Topics:

There are no rules – you decide what you want to learn for the day. Session topics range from new teacher tips, basic teaching practices, and classroom management to blended learning, digital projects, and the latest cool webtools. The possibilities are endless!

### Vote with Your Feet:

Throughout the day, you get to decide which sessions to attend. If a session doesn't meet your needs, it's perfectly acceptable to get up and move to another room.

Make  
sure that  
someone posts the  
schedule online and  
continues to update it  
throughout the day.

# Checklist

## Before EdCamp:

- Make board for sign up and set it up
- Check Wi-Fi
- Have signs up for Wi-Fi passwords and instructions
- Mark rooms with signs that will hold sessions
- Walk through and check out the technology hook ups, projectors, etc.

## Check in:

- Check list with names or Eventbrite Ipad/iphone App

## Facilities:

- Find out about trash (do they supply bags? enough cans? dumpster?)
- Have a contact for custodial emergencies (example: spills)

## Food:

- Breakfast items & coffee - easy to mingle and eat
- Lunch - either have list of nearby places to eat or have sponsors cater.
- Drinks w/coolers - have drinks cold and available not only for lunch but throughout the day

## Supplies:

- Post-its or cards for the EdCamp board
- Tape or Velcro to stick index cards
- Power strips
- VGA cables (do not assume the facility has them)
- Table cloths for serving food

## Technology:

- Check rooms for VGA hook ups
- Check Wi-Fi capabilities
- Be careful streaming, you do not want it to slow down the Wi-Fi
- Have a wiki that has a page to be updated by participants
- Have schedule from board on wiki
- Photo album (ex: Flickr, Picasa)
- Back Channels set up by room or by session
- Start gDoc with everyone's name/school/email/twitter, etc

## People/Volunteers/Team:

- Set up - have everything ready hour before event begins
- Greeters (best if a large or spread out facility)
- Someone to update tweets and wiki throughout the day
- Food set up/servers
- Clean up

## Post EdCamp:

- Make sure rooms are as they were before the event
- Turn off all technology used
- Take down all signs
- Follow up email thanking participants - include links from the day
- Thank you email to all sponsors



## Is It Really Over?

**Congratulations! You've successfully hosted your first EdCamp... now what?**

Although your event has ended, it's important to realize that your work has not. In order to make your event as successful as possible, it is essential that your interaction with everyone involved does not end when the event does. Once you complete the following tasks, you can begin planning next year's event!

Here are 4 Follow-up Tasks that should not be forgotten:

- 1. Take the time to write a post-event report:** This will help you plan an even more successful event next time.
- 2. Write a special Thank You email to all of your EdCamp sponsors:** It doesn't even have to be long! Just showing your appreciation for their help and giving a short recap about your event will go a long ways in fostering your relationship with each company.
- 3. Post all EdCamp Resources:** Give your attendees' one place they can go to access notes afterward.
- 4. Send a survey out to all of the EdCamp attendees:** Feedback from your attendees will be great for future planning purposes. You can easily create a free survey using Google Docs.

### Suggested Survey Questions:

- What did you think of the physical location?
- What did you think of the date of the event?
- What did you think of the length of the sessions?
- How did you first hear about this EdCamp?
- Do you have any suggestions for publicizing the event next year?
- What was your favorite part about the day?
- What do you think could be improved upon for next year?
- Would you be interested in being on the organizing committee for next year's EdCamp?

## SimpleK12 EdCamp Sponsorship

SimpleK12 supports EdCamps and have been sponsoring UNconferences in the following ways:

- **Door Prizes:** 10 FREE 1-year memberships to our Teacher Learning Community (each valued at \$300).
- **Featured Blog Post:** Announce your upcoming EdCamp event to our readership base – over 50,000 teachers and EdTech leaders around the world.
- **Virtual Session:** We will deliver an online session on the day of your EdCamp.

If you are interested in SimpleK12 sponsoring your EdCamp event, please contact:

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[@SimpleK12](#)

### About SimpleK12

*SimpleK12, the proud provider of the Teacher Learning Community, offers 100% online professional development opportunities for teachers. The Community blends webinars with Education leaders, a shared resource center, online learning programs, and social networking to create a unique global community dedicated to helping educators succeed in the 21st century. For more information, please visit: [www.SimpleK12.com](http://www.SimpleK12.com)*