



**Title of Project:**

ESL/EFL Teachers' Learning to Teach with Technology through  
Participation in an Online Community of Practice:  
A Netnography of "Webheads in Action"

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**Abstract:**

The emergence of online learning environments and advances in web-based technologies enables teachers to interact and exchange ideas and experiences in online communities. However, these rapid technological advances also cause such online communities to disband quickly, before they have the opportunity to evolve into a community of practice (Wenger, 1998), in which a group of teachers build a shared history, a shared repertoire of resources and activities, and mutually engage in collaborative professional development, over time. Moreover, rapid advances in technology necessitate on-going collaboration among teachers so that they develop meaningful technology integration practice. While such collaborations have taken place in face-to-face settings, how this might be achieved through participation in an online teacher community of practice has been under-researched.

Geared from this need, the present study aims to examine one long-standing, globally-distributed, online community of practice created by English language teachers, called "Webheads in Action", whose shared domain of interest centers on exploring the pedagogical uses of web-based technologies in English language teaching. The study employs netnography, or online ethnography, in which the researcher collects data through participant observation, interviews, and archiving, all of which is conducted completely online. The study seeks to understand the broader culture of learning, collaboration, and mentoring in this online language teacher community by exploring and analyzing its shared repertoire of resources, and activities; ways members engage in the collective development of this technology integration practice; and the role of participation in such an online community of practice on developing language teachers' technological pedagogical content knowledge (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) when designing instruction. It is anticipated that this study will shed light on how practice is developed and how professional learning is achieved in an online community of practice, how such online collaboration helps teachers develop their technological pedagogical content knowledge, how traditional ethnographic practices are reshaped in online ethnography, and how online ethnography can be utilized in applied linguistics and language teacher education research.