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# English Language Teachers' Learning to Teach with Technology through Participation in an Online Community of Practice: A Netnography of Webheads in Action

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English Language Teachers' Learning to Teach with Technology  
through Participation in an Online Community of Practice:  
A Netnography of *Webheads in Action*

by

Derya Kulavuz-Onal

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Secondary Education  
College of Education  
and  
Department of World Languages  
College of Arts & Sciences  
University of South Florida

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Keywords: technological pedagogical content knowledge, online ethnography, online professional development, situated learning, collaborative apprenticeship

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## DEDICATION

To,

Pera, my earth

For she nurtures my roots and brightens my colors

Sinan, my fire

For the times he ignites give me strength and passion

Mertcan and Metin, my air

For what they blow in my times of need freshens up my sky

Kiyemet and Taip, my water

For their one drop of love clears my soul and mind

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## ABSTRACT

The emergence of online learning environments and advances in web-based technologies enable 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, 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. Therefore, the present study examines 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 aim of this study was 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 when designing instruction.

The data for this study comes from various sources of data collected through online participant observation in this community's activities over a year, reflective observational fieldnotes, online interviews, and archived data. Throughout my online fieldwork, I participated in this online community's activities both synchronously and asynchronously. At the same time, I took reflective observational fieldnotes of my participation and observations during these activities, as well as community's spaces and email communications. As for archival data, I archived the email communication that occurred during my time in the field, as well as screenshots of the community spaces and platforms. I conducted in-depth interviews with four key people in this community in order to better understand the organization and background of this community and its activities, and interviewed five individual members in order to learn about their stories with and as Webheads.

Through qualitative data analysis procedures, namely coding, categorizing and finding themes, the study provides a rich and thick description as well as an analysis of this community and its culture in the light of my experiences and observations, as well as the experiences of others. The study reveals insights as to the culture of teacher learning in an online community of practice and the mediation of technological pedagogical content knowledge in online communities of practice.

Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are also presented, as well as an in-depth discussion of how ethnographic fieldwork practices are adapted in netnography with online communities of practice.

## CHAPTER 1

### LOGGING IN

*“Every morning when I wake up, I reach over to the bedside table and slide my finger across the surface of my smart phone, flicking it to life. Since I went to sleep last night, I gained 65 new tweets, 33 email messages, six instant messages, and dozens of Facebook notifications. [...] After making coffee, I open the lid of my laptop, enlarging my windows to the world of information.”* (Markham, forthcoming)

In our technology-surrounded lives, much of our social life as well as our learning take place through online means. We perhaps belong to more social and learning communities online than we do offline. Online interactions are becoming equally important on our social self and relationships as are our offline interactions. I would argue that my ‘online self’ was born in 2007, when I began my journey into online learning, and online interactions across borders, which later grew in many other directions. In the following sections of this chapter, I present an overview of what directed me to an interest in studying an online community of practice, *Webheads in Action*, the community that ‘let my journey begin.’ I also explain my initial experiences with this community, what theoretical lenses I used to examine it, and what questions and purposes guided this study.

#### **The Puzzle**

Teachers engage in professional learning and development throughout their careers. Much of this learning takes place in practice – in teachers’ work settings, namely in schools- mostly in informal ways. However, earlier approaches to professional

development seemed to mostly focus on formal professional learning and development that was not contextualized or situated around teachers' school-based learning and development. Professional development opportunities were perceived to be those offered through traditional 'one-shot' workshops or training that were isolated from teachers' school settings and disconnected to their own realities. As a result of a reaction to such traditional approaches, there has been a shift from this more traditional professional development approach to school-based, situated, and contextualized professional learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Lieberman, 1995; Little, 2006). In this sense, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) point out the significance of inquiry-based, participant-driven, collaborative, ongoing, collective, and school-based development. Additionally, these approaches to professional development necessitate teachers' "meaningful, intellectual, social, and emotional engagement with ideas, with materials, and with colleagues both in and out of teaching" (Little, 1993, p. 138). It was this focus and approach to teacher professional development that gave way to the notion of collaborative development and learning in school-based professional learning communities (Hord, 1997).

Morrissey (2000) describes a professional learning community as self-explanatory and states that it "engages the entire group of *professionals* (in a school) in coming together for *learning* within a supportive, self-created *community*" (pp. 2-3). A professional learning community is usually located in a school, and targets ensuring student learning, and creating a culture of collaboration, where professionals collaborate for school improvement (DuFour, 2004). Its main focus is on the results of teaching and learning, and students' achievements. Therefore, a professional learning community is

distinct from a group of teachers that gather together in a staff room in that the latter does not necessarily have a significant impact on nor is it designed to aim for either teacher learning or student learning (Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001).

With emerging technologies pervading our daily life, teachers also have an opportunity to build, or participate in, networks and communities in an online environment. While teachers working in the same school can establish an online network or a community among themselves, the advantage and the essence of an online community is the fact that it enables teachers (or other professionals) from different places and time zones to connect and exchange ideas (C. M. Johnson, 2001). However, the same distinction between a group of teachers and a community of teachers also applies to online environments. Although there are already numerous online groups or listservs that enable teachers or other professionals to interact with one another independent from a shared physical space, which of those that can legitimately be considered *learning communities* that lead to teacher professional development and learning is questionable.

The *online learning community* gained popularity and attention first with more formal online courses because students and teachers did not have the advantages of a face-to-face instructional environment that would naturally help build a sense of community (Palloff & Pratt, 2007). This model emphasizes effective characteristics to be employed in an online learning environment in order to facilitate the creation of a learning community and a sense of community (Rovai, 2002) such as the use of both synchronous and asynchronous communication tools, to facilitate interaction and collaboration between participants, and to engage learners in authentic tasks (Palloff &

Pratt, 1999; Palloff & Pratt, 2007). In that sense, this model also offers a different perspective to an online teacher community where teachers only interact asynchronously through a discussion board or a listserv. However, as this model is proposed for formal online courses and programs, online learning community created during the course disbands when the course ends, much like an in-person professional learning community located in a school; once the teacher starts working in another school, s/he is no longer a part of the learning community in her previous school. Therefore, an offline or online professional learning community seems to survive within the boundaries of the school or the online course. It is at this point that an online community of practice plays a significant role.

A community of practice (CoP) is defined as a group of people “who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger, n.d.). What makes a community of practice different from just a group of professionals is a combination of shared domain of interest, mutual engagement and collaboration, a shared history, and a shared repertoire that is co-constructed through interactions and collaborations of the members within this community. An online community of practice, on the other hand, denotes a CoP that primarily interacts and develops its practice online, over the Internet. For this reason, an online teacher CoP is not physically-bound, nor is it created for an online course, but, ideally, it emerges from collaborations between people developing a practice in a shared domain of interest.

Glazer and Hannafin (2006) offers a collaborative apprenticeship model for teachers’ technology learning, which is essentially derived from community of practice framework. A collaborative apprenticeship is formed by teacher leaders (i.e. experienced

teachers) and peer teachers (i.e. novice teachers) primarily to learn about how to integrate technology into teaching. This model has been implemented in face-to-face settings, and it emphasizes the mutual engagement, shared goals, and a shared repertoire among the participants, which are also essential in a community of practice. However, this model, or how a collaborative apprenticeship for technology integration could display itself in an online community of practice does not seem to have been explored yet.

Although, since the introduction of this framework by Wenger (1998b), CoPs in workplace settings (i.e. in a shared physical space) have been of interest to researchers (Au, 2002; Barab & Duffy, 2000; Hodges, 1998; Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004; Palincsar, Magnusson, Marano, Ford, & Brown, 1998; Perry, Walton, & Calder, 1999; Warren Little, 2002), online communities of practice (OCoPs) seem to be attracting attention more recently and thus underexamined, especially with respect to their role in teachers' professional learning and development (Baran, 2007; Herrington, Herrington, Kervin, & Ferry, 2006; Hur & Brush, 2009; Lock, 2006; Teclehaimanot & Hickman, 2010). In an attempt to fill a gap in the literature, the overarching goal of this study is to understand and describe the role of an online community of practice (Webheads in Action) on English language teachers' professional learning and development with respect to pedagogically sound technology use and integration.

### **Webheads in Action Online Community of Practice**

Webheads in Action (WiA) ([www.webheads.info](http://www.webheads.info) , Appendix A) , the community of interest in this study, is considered an online community of practice as the characteristics of this community are congruent with Wenger's (1998b) criteria for

communities of practice (C. M. Johnson, 2006). In this section, I will provide a brief description of the community itself and my personal background with this community.

### **Description of Webheads**

Webheads is an online community of practice composed of English as a Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) professionals (teachers, teacher educators, teacher candidates, etc.) from around the world. Initially, a group of ESL/EFL teachers were part of a project called *Writing for Webheads* (WfW), formed by Vance Stevens, in which teachers gave feedback to student work using computer-mediated-communication (CMC) tools. Later, the number of teachers in this community surpassed the number of students, and the community began to diverge from its early goals. As a result, Stevens proposed an online workshop in the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Electronic Village Online sponsored by TESOL-CALL Interest Section in 2002 (Stevens, 2007). At the end of the online workshop, the group of participating teachers did not disband, but instead they gradually evolved into an online community, *Webheads in Action* (WiA). The goal of the community is described in the community's Yahoo! Group site as "to help each other learn about forming and maintaining robust online communities through hands-on practice with synchronous and non-synchronous text and multimedia CMC (computer mediated communication) tools." With this goal in mind, these professionals share, exchange, and explore the uses of web-based communication tools in their language classrooms (d'Eca & Gonzalez, 2006).

The Webheads in Action online community has been growing since 2002. As of January, 2013, in their evonline2002 Yahoo! Group site, there were 1012 members, who had exchanged around 30 thousand emails through the email list in this Yahoo Group site, since November 2001. Since 2005, from mid-January to mid-February, they continue to offer an annual online workshop entitled *Becoming a Webhead* (BaW). These

workshops are held as part of the free EVO workshops sponsored by TESOL- CALL Interest Section. These EVO workshops are described as “a set of online discussions and workshops that takes place every year from mid-January to mid-February. Sessions include a range from simple discussions to virtual hands-on workshops. They can serve as a run-up or preview to the TESOL Convention, or a discussion of an issue in the field of teaching language, or experiments with and pedagogy of new technology tools” on the EVO’s wiki (<http://evosessions.pbworks.com/>).

As newer technologies emerge, the CMC technologies and virtual spaces that Webheads use in order to interact and collaborate with each other expand. Although previously, in 2002 workshop, they relied on Yahoo groups, Yahoo Messenger, and TappedIn (Schlager, Fusco, & Schank, 2002) for communicating, they are currently making use of social networks such as Facebook, Ning, and Twitter, and virtual worlds, such as Second Life as well as other Web 2.0 technologies. Beginning in 2005, they have collaboratively organized a bi-annual online conference, Webheads in Action Online Convergence (WIAOC). Participation in this conference was free, and took place completely online. There have been three WIAOCs to date, in 2005, 2007, and 2009. By using free Web 2.0 tools, Webheads organized this conference, without receiving any outside technical support. All the content for the conference, from planning to the actual conference delivery, was co-constructed by the members, and took place completely online. These conferences have been replaced by weekly synchronous Learning2gether events, in which participants voluntarily present, share, and discuss technology-related projects, or issues.



## **My Background with Webheads**

An online community makes it possible for professionals to build connections regardless of time and space constraints. Therefore, it enables communication and exchange among people from all around the world. This, in turn, provides an opportunity for an individual to engage in professional learning and development while interacting with others in a broader context than his/her own workplace. My background with Webheads emerged as a result of a series of circumstances in my life at the time.

I graduated from university and became an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher in 2001. I started teaching at a technical university's Intensive English Program (IEP) in Turkey in November 2001, and continued teaching there until I gave birth to my daughter, Pera, in May 2006. During my years of teaching, apart from my colleagues at this institution, and in my master's program, I had not been a part of a community of professionals that I regularly interacted with in pursuit of professional development. Also, in those years, I did not have regular and/or reliable internet access other than the one at my workplace, where I did not spend much time after teaching my classes. After I gave birth in May 2006, I was on maternity leave, and started spending almost all my time at home, which necessitated regular and reliable internet access from home, for the first time.

My maternity leave lasted around one and a half years until I came to the United States for my doctoral study. The shift from a full-time working professional to full-time stay-at-home mother made me feel isolated from my colleagues and my professional life. Since I had also finished my coursework in my master's program, I felt distant from my professional connections. With this shift in my life, I began to live more in an online

world, retaining and building both my professional and personal connections through internet, mostly via email. During that time, I began to familiarize myself with local and international professional organizations in the field of English language teaching (ELT). Around this time, I received an email announcing the TESOL's (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) Electronic Village Online (EVO) sessions through TESOL's email list.

EVO sessions were 6-week workshops that took place completely online, and were freely available to any English teacher/professional interested. This struck me as surprising, as I had not previously come across a free workshop online (which was uncommon at the time) or offline. I hesitated at first, thinking that I would register and then would need to pay later. But, as I was always at home, away from my professional connections, I desperately needed such reconnection, and I decided to participate. I now understand that these workshops had a similar structure to an online course (e.g. interacting online, following a syllabus with readings and activities, etc.), but they were shorter and used open source tools (e.g. wikis) for the management of the course content and activities. I checked the syllabi for various workshops and chose to participate in the one, entitled "Becoming a Webhead" (BaW) (<http://baw07.pbworks.com/w/page/5828477/FrontPage>). I did not know at that time that this decision would immensely influence my future career in instructional technology.

BaW 2007 workshop started in mid-January and lasted until the end of February. During this workshop, I met a number of colleagues around the world, and I became familiar with many Web 2.0 tools such as blogs and wikis. Additionally, I learned how to use several tools for quiz preparation, digital storytelling, and movie-making. I learned

the acronym 'HTML' in this workshop, and created a wiki page of the weekly threads in the email list by using HTML codes (<http://baw07.pbworks.com/Week-6-Threads>). I learned about web-conferencing, and participated in web conferences for the first time in my life; I chatted with people from other countries through voice-over Internet protocol (VOIP) tools, such as Skype. When the session ended, we had a virtual graduation ceremony over a web-conferencing platform, Alado.net. At the end of the ceremony, we were invited to join Webheads in Action (WiA) online community by signing up with the main Yahoo Group email list ([http://groups.yahoo.com/group/evonline2002\\_webheads/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/evonline2002_webheads/)). This is how I became a Webhead, and how I was inspired by Webheads to pursue a doctoral degree that incorporates instructional technology.

Since then, I have been receiving emails and news from Webheads through their Yahoo Group email list. However, during the past few years, before I conducted my study, my graduate coursework had kept me from participating in community activities actively, and I eventually became a *lurker*, receiving emails and occasionally reading them. However, experiencing the learning outcomes of my active participation in my professional life (e.g. becoming more aware of the possible applications of Web 2.0 technologies and feeling confident to explore and experiment with new ones in my own teaching practices) nurtured my interest and curiosity in learning more about this community, and its practice, as to what facilitates these individuals' professional learning, development, and transformation with respect to integrating technology. Also, I wanted to observe and understand how these professionals develop their practice and expertise through mostly virtual tools and environments, which may be considered especially challenging in the absence of shared physical space.

## **Purpose of the Study**

### **Rationale for the Study**

The notion of online communities has attracted researchers as has the design of successful online communities (Palloff & Pratt, 1999; Preece, 2000). However, many online communities have proven to be unsuccessful (Karagiorgi & Lymbouridou, 2009), or they have not evolved fully into a community of practice, as described by Wenger (Hur & Hara, 2007). Johnson (2006) studied Webheads in Action in its first year of existence, in order to determine if the characteristics of this community corresponded to the theory of CoP. He compared the communication, collaboration, documentation, and interaction in this community with nine characteristics of CoPs that make them different from other communities. He found that WiA exhibited characteristics of a community of practice as defined by Wenger.

Johnson's (2006) study contributed to the CoP literature immensely, as he discovered that all the characteristics of Webheads aligned with Wenger's categories, but the necessity of a physically-shared space. His work brought new dimensions to the CoP framework in the sense that online communities of practice may not have a physically-shared space and they would still evolve into a community of practice in the absence of such space. Thus, physical boundaries might not be necessary in a community of practice.

On the other hand, at the time of Johnson's (2006) data collection, which took place between January 2002 and January 2003, the community was still in its emerging and developing stages. Also, computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools used by the community were limited to those that the technology of the time would allow. Moreover, as a newly-established community, their shared history, and repertoire of

resources were also in its developing stages, and they were a relatively small community. In January 1, 2003 there were 62 registered members in the Yahoo Group list. Ten years, later this number has risen to 1012 members (January, 2013).

Additionally, Johnson (2006) used a case-study methodology, but he mainly analyzed text-based data that he collected from asynchronous (e.g. emails to the list-serv) and synchronous messages (e.g. chat logs), the community's website, and an online survey administered during the time of the study (January 2002-January 2003).

Finally, his study focused on identifying characteristics of an online community as well as comparing the CoP theory to this community to determine how much the theory is applicable to online communities. As a result, Johnson neither provided a 'rich and thick' description of this community and its practice, nor did he interview members in depth.

As Wenger (1998b) argues, developing a practice in a shared domain of interest is central to a CoP, and CoPs develop their practice in multiple ways by using multiple tools. CoPs also build a shared repertoire and shared histories of learning. In that sense, studies that focus on communities that are in their emerging stages are unable to document these shared histories and how they develop. Therefore, a long-standing online community such as Webheads, which was considered to be a CoP and in its 9<sup>th</sup> year of existence (at the time I began my study), deserves attention in order to provide in-depth description of how individuals in this community develop their practice, and how they develop their own and each others' expertise with respect to pedagogically-sound integration of technology into English language teaching. Naturally, this was outside of Johnson's focus in his research, as the community was relatively new at the time.

Additionally, in my research, I employ an ethnographic approach by becoming a participant observer in this community's current activities, by incorporating my own experiences and observations in this community with others'. Thus, my ethnographic research – which focuses on this community's culture, its practice, and the participants' learning and building a shared history and repertoire- adds to the literature both on CoPs in general, and on Webheads, more specifically.

The uniqueness of the Webheads community, and the ethnographic approach to an online teacher community of practice are the two important characteristics of this study that make it significant in the second language teacher education and development research with respect to technology. That said, this study aims to fill in the gaps identified above by

- a) studying a long-standing, multi-site community that uses various modes of communication,
- b) employing an ethnographic approach to online communities (aka “netnography” (Kozinets, 2010), and thus providing rich and thick description of the community and its practice,
- c) collecting data from virtual fieldnotes, video- and/or voice-enabled synchronous online interviews (e.g. through Skype), and text-based communications (e.g. emails).

### **Research Questions**

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the main activities (and artifacts and resources related to these activities) carried out by Webheads that help develop their shared practice?

How are these activities organized? What are the characteristics of these artifacts, activities, and resources?

2. Through what forms of engagement do members of WiA develop their shared practice? In what ways does their membership status (newcomer vs. long-term member) play a role in the ways they engage in the community and its shared practice?
3. How are new members introduced to WiA and its practice? How do they become a part of this online community of practice? How do they move from legitimate peripheral participation to full participation?
4. How does participation in WiA help members develop in their understanding of pedagogically-sound integration of technology into language teaching, as perceived by five selected members? What do their learning journeys within this community consist of?

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theories that guide the present study share a commonality in the sense that they emphasize the fact that learning occurs in social contexts and in collaboration with others. One such theory is situated learning (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; J. Lave & Wenger, 1991). According to this theory, learning occurs in socially-situated contexts. In other words, instruction does not lead to ‘learning’ and/or ‘development’ if it is decontextualized. Concepts, individuals’ activities, and the culture they are immersed in are interdependent; one cannot be understood without the others. Individuals co-construct meaning in their activities that take place within a cultural context, in interaction with others. Therefore, learning becomes authentic when it happens in this cultural context, as

authentic activities are defined as “ordinary practices of the culture” (Brown, et al., 1989, p. 34). Participating in such authentic activities, the learner has an opportunity to engage in real-life learning through “cognitive apprenticeship.” Learners gradually enter the culture of practice, and learning is viewed as the process of becoming a full member of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998b). The notions of cognitive apprenticeship (in situated cognition) and legitimate peripheral participation (in communities of practice) suggest that in the process of learning, learners are engaged in an activity under the guidance of more competent others. However, the more competent mentor promotes learning by first modeling, then coaching, and then empowering the learner to continue independently. Thus, “learning, both outside and inside school, advances through collaborative social interaction and the social construction of knowledge” (Brown, et al., 1989, p. 40).

In relation to situated learning, Wenger’s (1998b) community of practice theory suggests that learning occurs through participation in communities of practice. In simple terms, a community of practice is a group of people “who share a concern or a passion for something they do [their shared practice] and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger, n.d.). Members in a community of practice develop a ‘practice’ together through sharing, collaboration, constructing collective knowledge, engaging in a variety of activities and exchanges, building a shared history of learning together, and building resources collectively for the collective use of the community. In a community of practice approach, learning is viewed as a transition from legitimate peripheral participation to full participation within the community of practice, which, in essence, transforms one’s identity.



In line with situated learning and community of practice approach, collaborative apprenticeship (Glazer & Hannafin, 2006; Glazer, Hannafin, & Song, 2005) provides a framework for the interactions between participants in a teacher community. It emphasizes the reciprocal interactions between teacher-leaders and peer-teachers in which teacher-leaders model, scaffold, and coach peer-teachers until they become autonomous and ready to guide and coach others. Glazer et al. (2005) identify four phases in a collaborative apprenticeship: *introduction*, when the teacher-leader is the model; *developmental*, when the teacher-leader scaffolds and coaches, and the peer-teacher collaboratively participates; *proficiency*, when the teacher-leader is there to give feedback and the peer-teacher shares ideas with the peer community; and the *mastery* phase, when the peer-teacher becomes a teacher-leader. They also differentiate collaborative apprenticeships from cognitive apprenticeships in the sense that the former emphasizes “the collaboration and mutual benefits derived by both teacher-leaders and peer-teachers when building a community of practice.[...] peer teachers assume the role of teacher-leaders as they become increasingly knowledgeable and skillful, thus forming a cyclical relationship with other community members” (Glazer, et al., 2005, p. 61). In this way, a collaborative apprenticeship provides an on-going support for professional development, which can also be applied to interactions that lead to learning and development in an online teacher community of practice.

Likewise, from the perspectives of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and activity theory (Engeström, 1987), teacher professional learning is mediated by interactions and collaborations that take place in social contexts. The informal or formal social and professional communities and networks that teachers are involved in are

sources for professional development and learning (K. E. Johnson, 2009). Computer-mediated communication and interaction in an online community can provide a mediational space for the members of this online community (Hawkins, 2004). Moreover, according to activity theory (Engeström, 1987), a human's activities are shaped and transformed within larger social contexts in which the communities they belong to play an important role; communities, and interactions within these communities also affect the mediation and the internalization of a person's learning processes.

Finally, Mishra and Koehler's (2006) technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) is a useful framework for understanding the professional development of teachers in terms of technology in this study. Basing this framework on Shulman's (1987) pedagogical content knowledge, Mishra and Koehler (2006) argue that emerging technologies and the need for teachers' meaningful integration of these technologies into their teaching require another knowledge domain to be added into the pedagogical content knowledge framework: technology. With this new addition, four new knowledge bases occur, and each of them is context-dependent and content-specific. *Technological knowledge* is the knowledge teachers need to acquire in terms of how to operate a particular technology. *Technological content knowledge*, on the other hand, refers to the knowledge of how to transform the content in order to best represent it with the particular technology in use. In addition, *technological pedagogical knowledge* implies knowing which technology to use to address what pedagogical needs of which group of students. Finally, the intersection of all three, *technological pedagogical content knowledge*, occurs when teachers understand all these complex interactions between the

three (e.g. knowing which technology to use for which content and for what pedagogical purposes) and apply this understanding to designing instruction.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Collaborative apprenticeship (CA):* CA is drawn from the principles of situated learning, communities of practice, and cognitive apprenticeship, as a model to be used in order to describe roles, learning, and interactions that take place between teacher-leaders (i.e. experienced teachers), and peer-teachers (i.e. less experienced teachers) (Glazer & Hannafin, 2006). The model has been primarily implemented as a way to promote teachers' technology integration into their teaching practices.

*Community of practice:* A group of people who share an interest, a passion, and diverse levels of expertise in an area; interact, work together and engage in activities to improve in that area; and collaborate over time to create a shared repertoire of resources and activities in their practice (Wenger, 1998b). In different sections of this proposal, I refer to them as physical CoPs, co-located CoPs, or face-to-face CoPs, all of which mean that the communications and interactions in these CoPs primarily occur in physically shared places such as a school context.

*Learning community:* A community of individuals that gather together in order to accomplish a task, develop solutions to a problem, and exchange ideas and sources and act together in order to collaboratively undertake this task.

*Lurker:* An individual who is officially a member of an online community but does not interact with other members, participate in activities, or contribute to the collaboration.

*Netnography*: An ethnographic approach and corresponding method to study online communities (Kozinets, 2010).

*Online community*: A group of people that interact online about a shared interest, need, or for socializing purposes (Preece, 2000).

*Online community of practice*: A community of practice that described above, but primarily communicates through computer-mediated online tools.

*Online ethnography*: Ethnography conducted online to study online cultures and online communities. The term is interchangeably used with netnography in this paper as they are understood the same. However, the term “netnography” is preferred when specific references are made to methods and approaches described by Kozinets (2010)

*Online learning community*: A form of learning community that interacts only by means of Internet. The term is especially used to describe kinds of successful learning environments that need to be created in online courses.

*Professional learning community*: Primarily used to describe a community of teachers working in the same school/workplace that gather together in order to discuss issue pertaining to learning and teaching in their own workplace with an ultimate goal of increasing student achievement (Hord, 1997).

*Virtual community*: synonymous with online community.

*Virtual community of practice*: synonymous with online community of practice.

*Webheads vs. webheads, or a Webhead vs. a webhead*: Throughout this manuscript, I capitalize the first letter of this word in order to refer to the community; thus “Webheads” refer to the entire community. When I use it in singular form with a capital first letter, I refer to an identity (e.g. “Who is a Webhead?” “How do you know

you are a Webhead?") On the other hand, I use these words with the first letter in lowercase, to refer to members or a member in this community as individuals (e.g. "a Sudanese webhead"; "she was involved in collaborations with other webheads" etc.).

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

In this study, I employed a netnographic approach to study an online community, and I myself assumed a participant observer role in the community for about a year. I acknowledge my role as a researcher, a participant, and a once-active Webhead. My background with this community helped increase the comfort level of the community members, especially those whom I contacted individually to help my study as an informant. In addition, I believe that it enabled me to make sound interpretations of my experiences, observations, and members' stories, as they resonated with mine. In that sense, I believe I was able to provide both an emic (insider) and an etic (outsider) perspective on the culture and practice of this community. Its online nature makes the community interactions and portals complex and difficult-to-locate; therefore, prior familiarity with the online community is an asset rather than a problem in online ethnography.

As in any other type of qualitative design, the findings of this study cannot be generalized. In other words, generalization should not be viewed as the aim of qualitative research. Rather, in a qualitative design, the researcher aims to provide a rich and thick description of the phenomenon (Geertz, 1973) in order to increase the transferability of the study findings to other contexts (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). In this regard, I also provide a rich and thick description of the Webheads community and its practice in light of the data I collect and my experiences throughout my online fieldwork. To this end, I

triangulated my data sources to increase credibility and gain different perspectives through different types of data. However, because it is difficult to manage large amounts of data available online, I limited the data, the number of participants, and my time in the field. Although such limiting would also lead to the fact that I might have missed other participants' stories or experiences, and other available data, it helped me provide more focused descriptions and interpretations.

Additionally, the members in this online community of practice might have emerged from previous communities, and/or might have led to the creation/emergence of other communities. This is a natural characteristic of a community of practice in the sense that CoPs are everywhere and one could belong to various CoPs at the same time (Wenger, 1998b). In line with this, in members' own personal and professional lives, there are probably other circumstances and communities that facilitate their professional learning and development. Therefore, as would be in natural contexts, findings cannot and should not be interpreted as the fact that participation in this online community of practice led to individuals' learning. Qualitative research does not examine causal relationships between phenomena. For these reasons, it is assumed that members' professional learning with respect to the pedagogically-sound technology integration into teaching is mediated and affected by their engagement and their learning experiences within other communities and learning environments as well as through their engagement with the Webheads community.

Narratives and lived experiences of the members of this community constitute a form of self-reported data; thus, I was only able to capture as much as participants revealed about themselves and their stories. In addition, I analyzed this data and other

forms of data that I collected in this study in light of my own lived experiences, level of expertise, my social contexts, and my understandings. Another researcher might interpret the data in a different way in light of his/her own experiences and understandings in life (Patton, 2002). These are some of the well known characteristics of any qualitative study (Creswell, 2007; Geertz, 1973; Patton, 2002; Wolcott, 1999). Although, from a quantitative standpoint, these characteristics might be seen as ‘limitations’, they are embraced as necessary qualities that make a study “qualitative.” Still, I took some steps to enhance the dependability in this study. Once I transcribed the interviews, I sent them to the interviewees for a member-check (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Patton, 2002). This is a common procedure to ensure that there are not any misunderstandings or misinterpretations of what the interviewee wants to convey. In addition, I triangulated my data sources (fieldnotes, interviews, screenshots and archival data) and checked my understandings and analysis across these multiple data sources while providing a rich and thick description of the community.

Last but not least, although it would be ideal in quantitative design, random sampling is not an ideal procedure in qualitative research. In a qualitative study, it is important to select individuals purposefully by following certain criteria identified by the researcher, because they are “information rich and illuminative... they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest” (Patton, 2002, p. 40). Although this contributes to the fact that the findings are not generalizable, purposefully selected participants are expected to provide the most informative insight into the phenomenon or the case under focus. For these reasons, I used a purposeful sampling procedure in this study.

## **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of this study. I have first provided a statement of the problem, which was followed by a description of the Webheads in Action online community that was explored in this study. While describing the community, I have also provided a detailed explanation of my personal background with this community. Then, I have proceeded with the purpose of my study by providing a rationale and stating my research questions. Following the purpose, I have presented an overview of the theories that guide this study. Finally, I have provided definitions for the key terms that I used throughout this manuscript, as well as limitations and delimitations of this study.



## CHAPTER 2

### LINKING WEBHEADS TO THE LITERATURE

*“We read to know that we are not alone”* (William Nicholson)

In this chapter, in order to situate the Webheads community and their practice to the existing literature and theoretical frameworks, I first review the literature with respect to community-based perspectives and models for teacher professional and development. I specifically focus on the differences, commonalities, and relationships between face-to-face and online versions of communities, learning communities, and communities of practice. At the end of this section, I also present my synthesis of these relationships. After reviewing these community-based models, I proceed by discussing the existing literature on technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK). I focus on the development of the framework, as well as the studies conducted with pre-service and in-service teachers that have used this framework. At the end of this chapter, I present my understanding of the significance of this study, and the ways in which this study fills the gaps identified in the existing literature with respect to online communities of practice and TPACK.

#### **Community-based Perspectives and Models for Teacher Professional Learning and Development**

The concept of teacher learning is different from ‘training’ or ‘education.’ Training is more concerned with equipping teachers with hands-on, ‘one-shot’ tools to make them effective teachers, whereas education is concerned with holistically

developing teachers both in the subject matter and general educational issues, and helping teachers develop higher-level thinking processes (Richards & Nunan, 1990). However, both of these terms centralize and emphasize the role of educators in this process, not the role of teachers. The concept of teacher learning, on the other hand, is more process-oriented, developmental and centered around the teacher. It considers the teacher as an active learner in teaching/learning process, and it is derived from the idea that learning takes place throughout the teacher's professional career (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, n.d.).

Contemporary views approach teacher learning from a social and situated perspective (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Situated learning approach, built on assumptions of Vygotsky's social constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978), emphasizes the socially-constructed nature of learning, which suggests that individuals construct knowledge through interactions with others in social contexts, as well as learning in practice (J. Lave & Wenger, 1991). As Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) also point out, what we know is situated in the activity, context and culture that we are in. Therefore, teacher learning cannot be separated from teacher's teaching practices and the school contexts and cultures where this teaching takes place. In other words, sociocultural environment and interactions that teachers are engaged in the school context play an important role in shaping their learning (Freeman & Johnson, 1998).

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) identify three leading conceptions of teacher learning: knowledge-for-practice, knowledge-in-practice and knowledge-of-practice. Knowledge-for-practice concerns the formal knowledge and theory generated by the university-based researchers for teachers to improve their practices and become better teachers. On the other hand, knowledge-in-practice, also called practical knowledge, is

related with teacher knowledge developed in practice or through reflections on practice. However, knowledge-of-practice has a different focus and emphasizes collaboration between teachers. This conception of teacher learning is not a combination or separation of the first two conceptions, but a different view on teacher learning that places a strong emphasis on teachers working and learning collaboratively in local or broader communities of inquiry to construct knowledge and “to transform teaching, learning and schooling” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 278). Therefore, teacher collaboration is viewed as a significant contributor to teacher learning. Darling-Hammond (1998) also points out the importance of collaboration in teacher learning by asserting that “teachers learn best by studying, doing, and reflecting; by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what they see” (p. 8).

These relatively recent understandings of teacher learning have facilitated new models for teacher professional development. One such model has been the learning community model.

### **Learning Communities and Professional Learning Communities**

The key idea in a learning community approach can be described as a group of learners whose aim is to improve collective understanding and knowledge, and in this way, to help improve individual understanding and develop knowledge (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1994). As such, in a learning community, there is a move from collective knowledge to individual knowledge, and members learn together and from each other. Bielaczyc and Collins (1999) assert that there are certain principles to be considered when designing effective learning communities of students in a classroom. According to these authors, a group of learners is a learning community especially a) when there is a

diverse level of expertise, in that the levels of expertise and capabilities complement each other; b) when there are multiple ways to participate in the community, in the sense that community members will have a chance to show their expertise and knowledge one way or another; c) when members of the community negotiate and share; and d) when members work together to create resources and tools for the community to use to further their understanding.

Although the learning community approach was first used to accommodate the need for a new understanding of classroom teaching and learning, it was also accepted as a new form of professional development that gave rise to the notion of professional learning communities (DuFour, 2004; Hord, 1997). In line with the learning community approach, in a professional learning community, teachers interact regularly, share expertise, and construct knowledge together to improve their own learning as well as their students' learning.

According to Louis, Marks and Kruse (1996), there are five distinct characteristics of teacher professional learning communities. In such communities, there is *reflective dialogue* among teachers; they work together and reflect on their own practices. This helps them *deprivatize their practices* as they share and discuss them in presence of their colleagues. In addition, there is a *collective focus on student learning* as teachers are directed towards the main goal of improving student learning and achievement. In the meantime, in these communities teachers *collaborate*, and through this collaboration, they contribute to the improvement of each other's instructional practices. Finally, the existence of *shared norms and values* among the members

contributes to the sense of community and enables a teacher learning community to remain cohesive.

As it would occur in a learning community approach, a professional learning community also necessitates the diversity of expertise, and values the concept of learning from each other (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). There is a culture of inquiry in such communities as well as a culture of learning. Furthermore, Hord (1997) argues that in order to create and sustain a professional learning community, it is necessary to have a supportive atmosphere in the school where there are collegial, respectful, trustworthy, positive and caring relationships among teachers and principals. Additionally, Louis et al. (1996) point out that time to meet and talk, and teachers' openness to improvement matter in this attempt. Similarly, Roberts and Pruitt (2003) indicate that effective orientation and acculturation of the new teachers to the program, as well as opportunities and time for regular professional development meetings and activities, are necessary for the success and the maintenance of a professional learning community in a school.

Creating professional learning communities in schools have several benefits in terms of teacher learning as well as student learning. With the support of such communities, Hord (1997) claims that teachers' work is no longer viewed as an isolated profession; teacher learning and development are considered ongoing and aim at student achievement; all the professionals in the school share the responsibility for student learning; and teachers are more satisfied with and committed to their jobs. As teachers are more professionally renewed, motivated and work collaboratively, students show low dropout rate, higher academic achievement and there is a decrease in terms of the difference in achievement between students. As teachers see themselves as continuous

learners and inquirers, this not only helps increase student achievement but also makes it possible to restructure schools into learning organizations (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Fullan, 1995; Vescio, Ross & Adams, 2008). As a result, the professional learning community model in school settings has received significant support. However, emerging technologies and online networks enable such learning communities to be created beyond the limits of time and space that are sometimes difficult to arrange in a physical school setting (Harasim, Hiltz, Teles, & Turoff, 1995). This has given rise to the concept of online learning communities.

### **Online Learning Communities**

As traditional face-to-face classrooms are supplemented or even replaced by online classrooms to a considerable extent, the question of how to create effective learning environments in online courses has become a concern. While students tend to build a sense of community and belonging relatively easily when they share a physical space and communicate face-to-face, creating a learning community in an online learning environment requires extra effort and special attention on the part of the instructor (Palloff & Pratt, 1999). Yet, as would be encountered in a face-to-face setting, sharing the same 'online space' does not necessarily make an online group of learners into an online learning community.

An online learning community is considered to have similar characteristics to other face-to-face learning communities. However, in the absence of a physical space, shared goals and purposes play a more critical role in the creation of a learning community online (Kowch & Schwier, 1998). To be able to talk about a learning community in an online environment, collaboration and interaction among members is

necessary (Hiltz, 1998). In an online group, initial attempts need to be made to create a sense of community within the group (Rovai, 2002). As such, social dimensions of an online learning environment should be considered (Preece, 2000). Facilitating social relationships and learners' social presence over the online platform contribute to the sense of community; otherwise, members can easily feel isolated and as an outsider, which decreases the degree of their contribution to and collaboration within the community (Wegerif, 1998). In a similar vein, an online learning community necessitates supportive relationships among its members that contributes to and results from having a sense of community within the group (Anderson, 2004).

In order to create a learning community online, there are special considerations and strategies to be employed, and these strategies are mostly derived from the affordances and strategic uses of the asynchronous and synchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools. Palloff and Pratt (2007) suggest that dialogue and inquiry among members be encouraged through authentic learning experiences, encouraging teamwork, and making use of peer evaluations and peer feedback. Likewise, Rovai (2002) states that tasks in an online environment should be designed in a way that initiates interaction among members, so the online environment should not be seen as an isolated, self-study area.

In addition to interactions at the academic level, Misanchuk and Anderson (2001) argue that there is a need for communication at the personal level for an online group to evolve into an online learning community. They state that when learners in an online course "seek each other's counsel for other areas of their life (job change, which elective course to take next, family issues), this is the point at which we feel they are comfortable

as a community” (Misanchuk & Anderson, 2001, p. 5). Wegerif (1998) also points out that carefully structured exercises and a warm-up period during the initial phases, where members introduce each other through the use of an electronic discussion board for example, can be employed to build such social interactions and help members get to know each other at the personal level. Schrum and Hong (2002) also recommend encouraging members to provide short biographical information about themselves, and, if possible, an initial face-to-face or synchronous meeting at the beginning and a few other meetings throughout the online course. Finally, according to Brindley, Walti, and Blaschke (2009) constant monitoring, and feedback from peers as well as moderators is crucial in creating learning communities online.

### **Online Teacher Communities**

Teachers have also started using teacher networks and forums available online for professional learning and development purposes (Harasim, et al., 1995). Preece (2000) states that an ‘online community’ (not necessarily an online ‘learning’ community) consists of a) *people*, engaging in some forms of social interaction “to satisfy their own needs or perform special roles, such as leading or moderating” (p. 10); b) a shared *purpose*, which can be “an interest, need, information exchange, or service” (p.10); c) *policies* that govern or organize peoples’ interaction, and may or may not be explicitly stated; and d) *computer systems*, in order to mediate the communication and interactions among the participants. What seems to be different in this definition from the previously stated ‘learning’ community is the characteristic of the *purpose* that is not centered towards an ultimate goal for constructing collective learning and/or building collective knowledge and practice in an area of expertise. This distinction also applies to online



communities of teachers; they may or may not be centered on constructing collective learning and practice.

Not surprisingly, there seem to be relatively fewer studies about online teacher communities than about online learning communities in online courses, and professional learning communities in school settings. One popular form of online networks consists of email discussion groups used among teachers. Riding (2001) argues that such email discussion groups create opportunities for reflection and idea sharing which help teachers' professional development in an informal, yet effective, way. He observed that teachers in their email discussion group especially utilized it when schools are in session, and in order to "share resources and ideas, to ask about examination, to talk about professional issues, to advertise things and jobs" (Riding, 2001, p. 289). Likewise, Hur and Brush (2009) examined three large online teacher communities with a total of 9,300 members at the time of the study. While two of these communities mainly utilized a discussion forum where teachers posted messages and shared lesson plans and resources, one utilized weblogs. Through an analysis of web-postings and voluntary-based interviews, they identified that teachers participated in these communities to share emotions, utilize the advantage of online environments, overcome feelings of isolation, and to feel a sense of togetherness.

Hur and Hara's study (2007) examined an online teacher community that exhibited some characteristics of an online learning community, in the sense that there was a variety of activities and tasks to be undertaken by the members such as maintaining a website, monitoring webboards, and designing offline workshops. There were also various means of communication utilized while carrying out these activities and tasks.

What seemed to be interesting about this community was the proportion of the number of members who actively contributed to these activities, 45 of the 87,000 total members, at the time of the study. Moreover, in their study, the researchers analyzed several factors that affect sustainability of an online teacher community: the support factors being “having the autonomy, having a sense of ownership, acknowledging values of participation, providing online and offline interaction, providing an easy way to use technology systems, helping novice teachers become confident educators, assisting in overcoming teacher isolation, and meeting teachers’ individual needs” and hindrance factors being “teachers’ lack of confidence, previous negative experience in online communities, lack of technological support, and discouraging teachers’ active learning” (Hur & Hara, 2007, p. 254).

One last study to include in this section in relation to online teacher communities comes from Karagiorgi and Lymbouridou (2009). In order to share ideas about a textbook project for the public schools in Cyprus, an online community was created by the project coordinator for the teachers. It not only aimed to provide ongoing support and communication among its members, but also to help the members to become familiar with online interaction. Toward this end, participants were expected to engage in professional discourse through a discussion forum. However, the researchers state that their community failed to develop into a ‘community of practice’ due to several reasons such as technical frustrations of the participants, not identifying with the community, and inadequate facilitation and administration. Thus, they concluded that, in an online community, expectations and roles of participation should clearly be identified, developing a collective identity as a community through interactions and sharing should

be emphasized, administration and facilitation of the group by expert moderators is necessary, and technical concerns should be addressed and considered while designing the community interactions.

While these studies provide insights into the advantages of these online communities for teachers, it seems that the communities explored in these studies used basic forms of asynchronous communication (email discussion groups, discussion forums) and a few used more recent technologies (weblogs). One can assume that the more complex the technology required to participate in a community is, the more expertise with the technology the teachers will need to have. Moreover, technological complexity and lack of technical support may cause these communities to fall apart, and not survive long enough to develop shared history and practice over time. Therefore, in an online teacher community, technology may be a challenge –unless the actual purpose of the community is to learn about how to use technology and its applications. Additionally, as the level of technological complexity increases, the level of active participation by members would decrease depending on their comfort with technology. Also, another reason for online communities to fall apart is the availability, accessibility and usability of those technologies that would compensate the absence of shared physical spaces. Therefore, the success of an online community of teachers may also depend on technological advances and availability.

### **Communities of Practice**

**The framework.** Rooted in situated learning theory (Brown, et al., 1989; J. Lave & Wenger, 1991), the community of practice (CoP) framework was developed by Wenger (1998b) in order to explain adult learning, primarily in organizational settings.

He describes CoPs as “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger, n.d., p. 1). According to Wenger (1998a), a community of practice differs from a community of interest or a geographical community (i.e. neighborhood) “neither of which implies a shared practice” (p. 2). To this end, he emphasizes three characteristics that are crucial in a CoP: the domain, the community, and the practice. *Domain* is the area of interest that members share, and are committed to; it also involves problems and issues related with this area. *Community*, on the other hand, is viewed as “a group of people who interact, learn together, build relationships, and in the process develop a sense of belonging and mutual commitment” (Wenger, 1998b, p. 34); members in this group engage in joint activities within their domain. Finally, *practice* refers to what community members do in interaction with each other; it involves not only the activities they do together such as exploring ideas together and sharing information, but also the products and artifacts they create together such as documents, tools, websites, articles, theories, etc. (Wenger, 1998b). In a CoP, practice also “embodies a certain way of behaving, a perspective on problems and ideas, a thinking style, and even in many cases an ethical stance. In this sense, a practice is a sort of mini-culture that binds the community together” (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 39). A community does not yield to a community of practice without a shared practice, and not all practices can be considered to give rise to a community; therefore, both *community* and *practice* are crucial for such communities and that is what differentiates them from other communities, networks, or groups (Wenger, et al., 2002).

There are three key components of practice as it is developed in a community (Wenger, 1998b). A CoP develops its practice around a *joint enterprise*, which is continuously negotiated and transformed mutually and collectively by the members of the community. Members in a CoP develop their practice in *mutual engagement* and thus develop relationships that help them evolve into a social entity. Diversity in expertise is appreciated in communities of practice; it is actually what enables members to sustain mutual engagement (Wenger, 1998b). Members mutually engage because their contributions to the practice of the community are complimentary to each other. Finally in the process, they develop a *shared repertoire* of resources, artifacts, products, stories, and histories of learning over time. More specifically, Wenger (1998a) notes that, in their active stage (i.e. while developing a practice), there are typical activities that members of a CoP engage in such as “engaging in joint activities, creating artifacts, adapting to changing circumstances, renewing interest, commitment, and relationships” (p. 3).

Learning in a community of practice is socially and collectively constructed and viewed as a process of identity transformation (Wenger, 1998b). Learning changes who we are and how we see ourselves; “it is an experience of identity... a process of becoming – to become a certain person, or conversely, to avoid becoming a certain person” (Wenger, 1998b, p. 215). Because CoP theory is based on situated learning, learning in a CoP is also seen as moving from legitimate peripheral participation toward “full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community” (J. Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29). Through this process, the member becomes able to perform new activities and tasks, develop new understandings, and at the same time contribute to the development of the community’s practice and collective knowledge. Thus, not only do

the new members (i.e. novices) learn from old members, but everybody learns from each other. While new members (i.e. legitimate peripheral participants) gradually become full participants, newer members join the community and go through the process; this way, new members replace old-timers, and the community reproduces itself (Barab & Duffy, 2000).

There are conditions to be supported in order for the new members move from legitimate peripheral participation towards full participation. In this sense, Lave and Wenger (1991) assert that it is crucial for the new members to have full access to community resources, other members, and opportunities for participation. Also, they need to get involved in meaningful, situated, and productive activities. Participation in these activities is a way of learning. Moreover, they need to learn the discourse of this community; they need to learn to speak like a full participant, and they need to learn how to talk about the practice. Last but not least, it is important for the existing members to see the value of apprenticing the new members, and invest on their learning. They should also acknowledge that there is a lot to learn from them, as old-timers introduce and orient new members to the community and its practice. As Lave and Wenger (1991) points out “everyone’s participation is legitimately peripheral in some respect...everyone can be considered a “newcomer” to the future of a changing community” (p. 117, quotations in original).

Although communities of practice emerge naturally, Wenger, et al. (2002) suggest seven principles of cultivating them in order to invite interaction and participation, and to attract participants, which can enable the community to stay alive. The first of these principles is to *design for evolution*. Since the CoPs are not created from scratch, the

design elements should strive for community development, as well as attracting new members and new interests. The second has to do with *opening a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives*. In a good community design, it is necessary to be able to understand the community and its design from both an insider's perspective and an outsider's perspective, which helps members "see the possibilities" (Wenger, et al., 2002, p. 54). Another principle they suggest is to *invite different levels of participation*, which emphasizes the importance of diversity and variety in cultivating learning and different forms of engagement. Moreover, Wenger, et al. state that it is important to *develop both public and private spaces*. They argue that dynamic communities have both public and private events to strengthen the ties and relationships among members, and "good community events allow time for people to network informally" (p. 59). In addition, *focusing on value* is necessary in community design. Wenger et al. indicate that since participation in communities is voluntary, it is important for members to focus on an activity that is valuable to them. The sixth principle is to *combine familiarity and excitement*, in the sense that a successful community makes members feel at home as well as offer enough interest to both existing and new members. Finally, Wenger et al. suggest *creating a rhythm for the community*. In a dynamic community, there are regular events that are held that give tempo to the interactions between the members. They argue that "when that beat is strong and rhythmic, the community has a sense of movement and liveliness... The events give the community a beat around which other activities find their rhythm" (p. 62-63). They stress that it is important to find the right rhythm; if it is too fast, then members might become overwhelmed and may no longer participate; if it is too slow, members may also not interact enough and bind together.

CoP has also been recognized as a strong framework to understand teacher learning and design teacher professional development activities (Putnam & Borko, 2000). In this attempt, Palincsar, Magnusson, Marano, Ford, and Brown (1998) intentionally designed a community of practice of science teachers with 18 teachers that they recruited, and then tried to apply the ideas and principles of CoP theory to this community. Although all were science teachers, they were diverse in their expertise and teaching levels. The researchers state that the teachers were motivated towards increasing their classroom practice, and that “inquiry-based science teaching” (p. 7) was their joint enterprise. Palincsar et al. conclude that the teachers who participated in this project reported potential benefits of a CoP to their professional development. For example, they stated that they learned from each other’s’ experiences in teaching, and that the CoP met not only their professional needs but also their social needs. Therefore, the researchers claim that although in its basic form, the CoP framework characterizes CoPs as naturally emerging, they may need some structuring and designing in the service of teacher professional development because they claim that “the contexts which teachers generally work are not conducive to the natural flourishing of communities of practice” (Palincsar, et al., 1998, p. 17).

**Collaborative apprenticeships.** Derived from the CoP framework, Glazer and Hannafin (2006) offers a model for collaborative apprenticeships (CAs) for situated professional development of teachers in school settings. These apprenticeships are essentially similar to a cognitive apprenticeship (Brown, et al., 1989), in the sense that they aim at providing a model for learning that would occur between a novice and an expert teacher. What is different in their model is that mutual engagement, shared



repertoire, and joint enterprise are as central to this model as they are to communities of practice. That is, there is a reciprocal interaction and learning between the novice and the expert, rather than a one-way transfer of knowledge from the expert to the novice. Also, this model was essentially developed to promote teachers' technology integration into their teaching practices (Glazer, et al., 2005).

In this model, they refer to the experienced teachers as 'teacher leaders' and less experienced teachers as 'peer teachers'. In a CA, reciprocal interactions between the teacher leaders and the peer teachers play a central role as they ensure mutual engagement. The central view of learning in CAs resonates with legitimate peripheral participants' movement towards full participation. However, Glazer and Hannafin (2006) and Glazer et al. (2005) describe the phases that teachers go through in this process while integrating technology into their practice, in a more structured and detailed way. In this regard, they identify four phases for peer teachers to become teacher-leaders in technology integration: introduction, developmental, proficiency, mastery. These phases are summarized below in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1  
Glazer and Hannafin's (2006) phases and roles to promote CAs for professional learning in teaching communities

<i><b>Phase</b></i>	<i><b>Teacher-leader roles</b></i>	<i><b>Peer-teacher roles</b></i>	<i><b>Collaborative partnerships</b></i>
Introduction	Promotes and models use of strategies in workshop or classroom environments	Observes and participates in learning applications of new methods	Discuss and reflect on teaching and learning experience

Table 2.1. (Continued)

Developmental	Provides scaffolding, coaching, and fading to design, develop, and implement learning activities	Acquires skills and strategies in context of participation	Collaboratively design, develop, and implement learning activities
Proficient	Identifies areas for improvement and exploration	Articulates understanding by autonomously designing activities	Share experience and ideas with peer community
Mastery	Observes and participates in learning applications of new methods	Promotes and models use of strategies in workshop or classroom environments	Peer-teacher becomes teacher-leader for design and development of learning applications

As it shown in Table 2.1 above, in a CA, the aim is to help the peer teacher to become a teacher-leader, while providing opportunities for learning for teacher-leaders as well, since teacher-leaders and peer teachers collaboratively design, develop and discuss learning activities. In the process, teacher-leaders' modeling, coaching, and scaffolding play the same key roles, just as they do in a cognitive apprenticeship. However, for these processes to take place, teacher-leaders and peer teachers need to engage in reciprocal interactions. Glazer and Hannafin (2008) report that reciprocal interactions may exhibit themselves in various forms such as story-telling, sharing ideas, brainstorming, problem-solving, etc. Some of the factors that may inhibit or facilitate reciprocal interactions to occur include affect, beliefs, environment, culture, cognition and personality. For example, in their study, some teachers were not able to go beyond the introduction level

because of lack of time (environment), and some teachers achieved more as they took more responsibility for their learning (personality).

Overall, collaborative apprenticeships can be seen as an implementation of a community of practice approach for promoting teachers' technology integration. However, Glazer and Hannafin's model has been implemented only in physical settings. Therefore, it would be interesting to see how they can be implemented, or how such apprenticeships display themselves, in online teacher communities of practice.

### **Online Communities of Practice**

Although they share the central characteristics with co-located physical communities of practice, online communities of practice (also referred as virtual communities of practice) differ from them in some important aspects (Lai, Pratt, Anderson, & Stigter, 2006). For example, for online CoPs, members may communicate mostly asynchronously, and meet synchronously from time to time. Because they are mediated through the Internet, they may involve many locations. Also, members may not necessarily be working in the same organization but might spread over several organizations.

Lai et al. (2006) argue that the nature of the design, membership, leadership, forms of communication, and necessary technological support make online CoPs distinct from face-to-face CoPs. For example, they claim that it is difficult for an online community of practice to emerge naturally, so it needs to be formed. Also, membership in an online CoP is more open to people in various locations with much more diverse expertise in the shared domain. The form of communication is mainly computer-mediated in the online CoP, which necessitates the need for technological support for the members

to actively participate in the community activities and function in the community. All these reasons, according to Lai et al. (2006), may lead to the development of the community in a more expanded timeframe, and to the need of having leaders and moderators for the community to be able to function in the computer-mediated environment.

As previously stated, although a community of practice necessitates various forms of communication, engagement, and interaction, it is challenging to build them online within technological constraints, and to expect these online communities to develop their practice over time. When creating their online CoP for teachers, TAPPED IN (TI) ([www.tappedin.org](http://www.tappedin.org)), for example, Schlager et al. (2002) also considered these constraints with respect to teachers' access to advanced computer technology and high-bandwidth Internet as well as the availability of technological support. Moreover, when Schlager et al. wrote about their project, TI was in existence for 3 years already, but they described it as "approaching adolescence as a CoP – showing strong signs of maturity, but still forming its own identity and not quite ready to sustain itself" (p. 15). As an attempt to support the development of online communities, they suggest that leaders in school settings encourage, facilitate and provide incentives for teachers to engage in professional development activities by means of the Internet. This, to my understanding, suggests an acknowledgement that a community of practice that interacts solely online is difficult to achieve, and online means of communication should be used as complementary ways to facilitate and support face-to-face communities of practice.

Another study describing an attempt to create an online community of practice for pre-service teachers was described by Baran (2007). As an attempt to bring pre-service

mathematics education teachers in an online environment, Baran created and designed a web-based learning environment, Professional Development Circle (PDC). Baran states that the main components of this environment were purposefully created following previously agreed design principles, and for the purposes of the study, participation in the PDC was mandatory. One eye-catching component of this environment, “my videos,” provided access for the pre-service teachers to upload their teaching videos and make them available to other colleagues for discussion. In addition, there was a “library” area where pre-service teachers could upload sources for sharing, and a “forum” that enabled asynchronous communication to take place among the participants. Baran (2007) reports that there were differing impressions about this environment ranging from positive ones, such as the acknowledgement of its contribution to teachers’ professional development, to negative ones, such as complaints about the mandatory nature of participation.

One last study that can be cited in relation to online community of practice was conducted by C. M. Johnson (2006) on the Webheads in Action (WiA), the community of focus in the present study. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Johnson studied WiA during its first year of establishment, from January 2002 to January 2003. His main focus was to understand how much WiA exhibited the characteristics proposed in the CoP framework, as well as how much the CoP framework was able to explain and give insights to online communities of practice. He primarily collected data from asynchronous email communications through the Yahoo Group email list, and synchronous chat communications through chats held in TAPPED IN. He concluded that WiA exhibited all the characteristics of CoPs, but in terms of location, it exhibited differences, as location

in an online community of practice is diverse and distributed over various networks and platforms.

### **Summary of the Community-based Perspectives and Models**

As can be seen in the review of existing literature with respect to community-based perspectives and models, there seems to be a general agreement among researchers that evolving as an online community of practice is more difficult than evolving as a face-to-face community of practice. Moreover, most of the existing research captures the initial phases of such communities, as they are purposefully established in order to study the outcomes.

In addition, studies that are conducted on existing communities seem to use the terms online communities, online learning communities, and online communities of practice in an overlapping way. However, I find that they are different from each other when viewed from a CoP perspective. I summarize how different and similar these communities are to each other in Table 2.2. below.

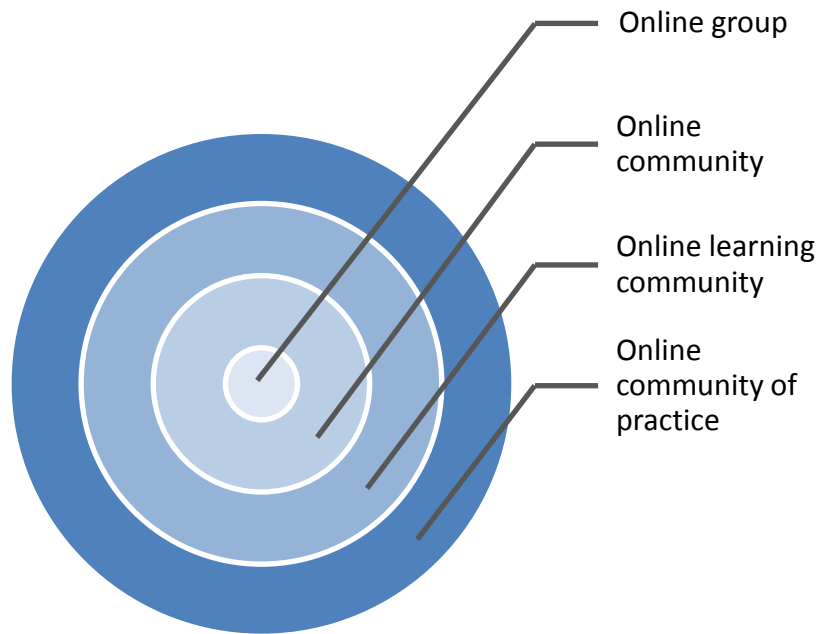
Table 2.2  
Comparison of characteristics of online communities, online learning communities, and online communities of practice

	<i>Online community</i>	<i>Online learning community</i>	<i>Online communities of practice</i>
Goal	Sharing interests, socializing, information exchange	Learning in collaboration, socializing	Developing a practice and whatever it entails
Social presence	Necessary	Necessary	Necessary

Table 2.2. (Continued)

Ways of communicating	Not necessarily diverse, mostly asynchronous	Diverse; asynchronous and synchronous	Diverse; asynchronous and synchronous
Membership style and expertise	Does not matter to the success of the community	Does matter to the success of the community to some extent, and better if diverse	Diversity of membership and expertise crucial to the development of practice
Orientation	Interest-oriented, need-oriented	Task-oriented	Practice-oriented

As can be seen from Table 2.2 above, an online group forms the basis of these communities; that is, all these communities essentially are formed around an online group of people. Social interactions and shared interests help these groups evolve into an online community, but they are not necessarily oriented towards learning or collaboratively doing a task or solving a problem. In this sense, I would say that an online learning community and an online community of practice are already an online community, but not vice versa. Moreover, what differentiates an online learning community from an online community of practice is the notion of practice, which constitutes not only learning processes and outcomes within a CoP, but also denotes a more prolonged, collaborative, and productive exchange between members. These exchanges include not only professional but also social elements that naturally occur during a shared history of learning. In this sense, an online community of practice also exhibits characteristics of an online learning community but not vice versa. The Figure 2.1 below also illustrates my view on the relationships between these three concepts.



*Figure 2.1.* My synthesis of the relationships among the various forms of online communities

It can be understood from the Figure 2.1 above that an online community of practice presupposes an online learning community. Therefore, one can see all the features of an online learning community in an online CoP. However, there are additional features unique to an online CoP such as developing a practice. This relationship can also be observed between an online community and online learning community. An online learning community presupposes an online community, but there is an additional “learning” feature in the former, which is not necessarily part of the latter.

### **Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)**

The shared domain of interest of Webheads in Action can be described as how to use and integrate technology, specifically CMC and Web 2.0 tools, into English language teaching. Members of WiA are teachers, who interact regularly to improve their expertise



in integrating technology into their practice in pedagogically sound ways. Therefore, the technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) framework provides a useful understanding of how such integration occurs. In this section, I will discuss the TPACK framework and its underlying assumptions, its implementation in studies with pre-service and in-service teachers, and how it helps us understand meaningful technology integration into teaching.

### **Development of the Framework**

Teacher knowledge was initially theorized as constituted by three important elements: content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986, 1987). Content knowledge refers to knowledge of the subject that teachers need to teach, and pedagogical knowledge concerns the knowledge of how students learn. Pedagogical content knowledge constitutes knowledge of how to teach a particular content/subject to a particular group of students considering their pedagogical and learning needs. However, with advances in technology, the inclusion of technology in classrooms, and the new generation of students who are considered “digital natives” (Prensky, 2001) because they are born into a computerized world, teachers need to integrate technology into their teaching. However, “the fact that a technology is innovative and popular does not make it an educational technology” (Mishra & Koehler, 2009, p. 15). Therefore, knowledge of how to use technology effectively for meaningful and successful student learning, as well as knowledge of technology itself, has become another crucial component of what constitutes teacher knowledge in 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching.

Expanding upon Shulman's theory of pedagogical content knowledge, Mishra and Koehler (2006) conceptualized and developed technological pedagogical content knowledge, formerly known as TPACK and later reabbreviated as TPACK (Thompson & Mishra, 2007). TPACK is used as a framework for understanding, explaining and suggesting ways for effective technology integration for student learning, and effective integration of pedagogically-sound uses of technology into teacher education programs.

According to Mishra and Koehler (2007), teaching is an ill-structured discipline, which involves complex processes and interactions within the domains that it is composed of, such as pedagogy and content. They argue that emerging technologies and the need to integrate these technologies into classrooms further complicate teaching. However, teaching with technology does not necessarily make teaching effective and innovative. Therefore, how to teach with technology effectively is considered as a unique body of knowledge that needs to be acquired by teachers (C. Angeli & Valanides, 2009).

The term technological pedagogical content knowledge was first proposed by Pierson (2001) to define effective technology integration. After studying three teachers of different levels of expertise both in teaching and technology use, she concludes that another component called *technological knowledge* should be included in Shulman's model for pedagogical content knowledge. Mishra and Koehler (2006) further conceptualized and clarified the construct by paying attention to the definitions and constituents of each component in the model. In addition to Shulman's content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge, the model (Figure 1) they proposed included *technological knowledge*, *technological content knowledge*, *technological pedagogical knowledge*, and *technological pedagogical content*

knowledge (Koehler, Mishra & Yahya, 2004; Koehler & Mishra, 2008; Mishra & Koehler, 2006).

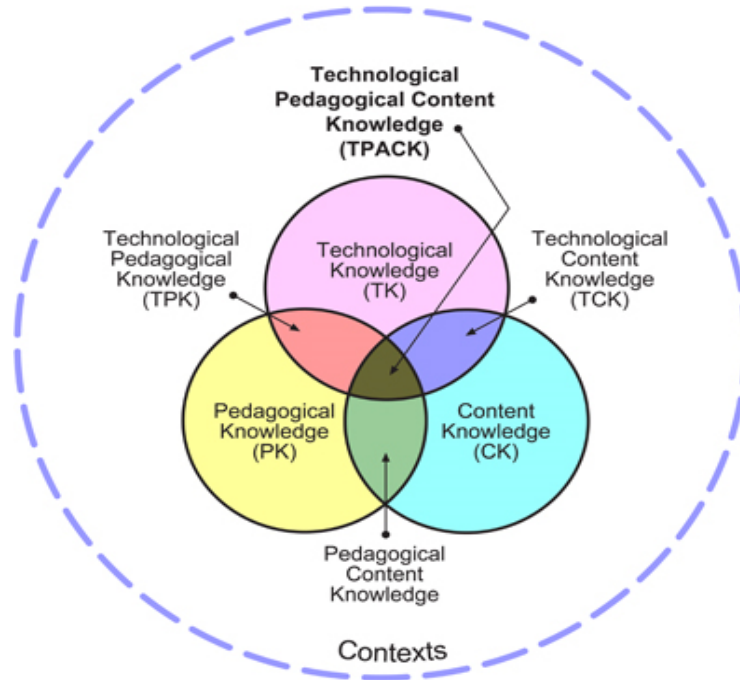


Figure 2.2 The model representing the components of technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) (Retrieved from [www.tpck.org](http://www.tpck.org) )

Mishra and Koehler (2006) define *technological knowledge* as knowledge about technologies that includes acquisition of skills required to operate these technologies, such as knowing how to use or operate a computer, how to prepare a presentation using Microsoft PowerPoint, etc. *Technological content knowledge*, on the other hand, is the knowledge of the subject matter and how the nature of this subject matter can change with the application of technology. For instance, using blogging in the second/foreign language writing classrooms changes the purpose of writing into “publishing”, and the nature of text that the learner writes becomes more interactive with the possibility of including hyperlinks and images to go along with the text. Thus, a teacher who considers

this alteration needs to appropriately modify the content as well as the methodology of the lesson. Furthermore, the intersection between technology and pedagogy, called *technological pedagogical knowledge*, represents the knowledge of how students learn (pedagogy) and how this informs how to teach with certain technologies. Finally, the intersection between all these constructs, including the ones introduced by Shulman (1986, 1987) earlier, is *technological pedagogical content knowledge*, which refers to the kind of knowledge that is different from a technology expert, and that is needed for effective integration of technology into classroom teaching. According to Mishra and Koehler (2006), it is

“the basis of good teaching with technology and requires an understanding of the representation of concepts using technologies; pedagogical techniques that use technologies in constructive ways to teach content; knowledge of what makes concepts difficult or easy to learn and how technology can help redress some of the problems that students face; knowledge of students’ prior knowledge and theories of epistemology; and knowledge of how technologies can be used to build on existing knowledge and to develop new epistemologies or strengthen old ones.” (p. 1029)

As the context is not included in this initial definition of the framework, Reeve (2008) recommended that knowledge of “context” be included in the TPACK framework as teachers need to be familiar with the context in order to successfully implement technology into the teaching/learning process. Furthermore, Kelly (2008) elaborated more on the inclusion of the context into the model, and thus explained in more detail what constitutes context. He identified five elements in the context: teacher knowledge,

skills and dispositions; physical features of the classroom; cognitive, experiential, physical, psychological, and social characteristics of students and teacher; demographic characteristics of students and teacher; and school philosophy and expectations. He suggested that all these aspects of the context be taken into account in the TPACK model as they shape teachers' effective teaching with technology. Similarly, such contextual elements are among the factors affecting teachers' use of technology (Mumtaz, 2000) suggesting that although teachers may be competent and knowledgeable enough to effectively integrate technology into their teaching, contextual factors may prevent them from doing so.

Another important consideration in this model is that the constituents of knowledge bases in all these components and the intersections in this model should be explored and identified in content-specific contexts (Koehler & Mishra, 2008). Moreover, different activity types in different subject matter areas also require different types of knowledge in all the components and intersections of this model (Hofer & Swan, 2008; Van Olphen, Hofer, & Harris, 2009).

### **Developing Pre-service and In-service Teachers' TPACK**

TPACK does not develop in itself or through traditional one-shot courses/workshops for technology training, because of the rapid changes in technological advances, software tools that are not specifically designed for educational purposes, the situated nature of teaching and learning, and the focus in these workshops being on "what" rather than "how" (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Moreover, new views on teacher learning suggest that teacher learning is embedded in teaching context and teaching

practice, and that traditional approaches to teacher education that did not emphasize such situated and contextual learning have been ineffective (Putnam & Borko, 2000).

Inspired by a situated learning (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991) and a project-based learning approach (Blumenfeld et al., 1991), Punya Mishra, Matthew Koehler and their research group designed a series of studies with pre-service teachers, in-service teachers and the university faculty members who participated in a graduate level educational technology course where the instructors adopted a *learning-technology-by-design* approach creating a *community of designers* (Bruce, 2007; Koehler & Mishra, 2005a, 2005b, 2008; Koehler, Mishra, & Yahya, 2007; Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Mishra, Koehler, & Zhao, 2007; Mishra, Peruski, & Koehler, 2007). In this approach, teachers in collaborative teams focus on pedagogical problems or issues that could occur in daily teaching practices, and create technology solutions to these pedagogical problems (Koehler & Mishra, 2005a). Teachers, first, start from the problem identified in the authentic task, and set a goal before they explore ways to use technology. This way, they not only learn about the technology within a context, but also improve their reasoning skills about when to use technology, when not to, and how. The researchers discovered that such an approach was an effective way for developing teachers' TPACK as it helped them see the complex relationships between technology, pedagogy, and content as a unified whole. Moreover, in this approach, teachers start from the problem identified in the task and set a goal before they explore and learn about the technology. This way, they not only learn about the technology within a context, but also improve their reasoning skills about the technology and its affordances within an

authentic task in a more natural way that they would also face in their actual teaching contexts and practices.

In a similar vein, Angeli and Valanides (2005) designed an experiment with preservice teachers in a science methods course that they taught. In the first phase of the experiment they followed a case-based teaching methodology where preservice teachers discussed and reflected on the use of information communication technology (ICT) tools in classroom teaching. They also had separate lab session where the preservice teachers had a chance to learn about several ICT tools, and develop some ICT-enhanced activities described in the cases that they discussed. During the second and third phases of the experiment (each phase corresponds to a semester), they used an instructional systems design (ISD) model, where they gave more explicit instruction on pedagogical issues such as constructivist learning, and exemplified ISD lessons where they explicitly modeled how to incorporate ICT tools and pedagogy. At the end of each semester they assessed the ICT-enhanced lesson plans of the preservice teachers through an assessment instrument they developed. They found that the teachers significantly outperformed at the end of the phases two and three than the phase one. Finally, they conclude that explicit instruction and modeling was more effective than case-based methodology in helping preservice teachers develop a pedagogical reasoning when integrating technology.

Furthermore, Angeli and Valanides (2009) further developed the term ICT-TPCK as a branch of TPACK. In their model, they propose that ICT-TPCK is the knowledge base that represents the intersection between ICT, pedagogy, content, learners, and context.

Moreover, they also offer a model called Technology mapping (TM) to guide teacher thinking when designing technology-enhanced learning. TM is based on situated nature of teachers' thinking, learning and teaching and proposes that teachers consider ICT tool affordances, representations, learners, and pedagogy at the same time in a complex manner to transform content. They believe that this mapping can inform teacher education programs that prepare preservice teachers, teacher professional development programs that prepare inservice teachers, curriculum developers and teachers themselves in their attempts to design technology-enhanced lessons.

Pierson (2007) conceptualizes another pedagogical planning model to guide preservice and inservice teachers' thinking when they plan to integrate technology into their classroom. Centered around a series of questions considering the content, technology, learners and the context, the model urges the teacher to start from the goals and objectives of the lesson centered in the model. She asserts that this model is an effective tool to be used in preservice teacher education programs to help preservice teachers to design technology-based lessons in a pedagogically sound way.

In developing preservice teachers' TPACK, Niess (2005; 2008) believes that preservice teacher education programs should be arranged in a way that preservice teachers gain declarative, procedural, schematic and strategic ways of knowing and thinking involved in TPACK. In order to achieve this, she suggests that learning how to teach with technology be integrated into subject matter methods courses in teacher education programs, and learning about the technology be a part of these courses. She asserts that in such courses, diversity of student learning styles and needs should be understood, and all the other instructional arrangements from designing the learning



environments to planning the instructional strategies, and from classroom management strategies to differentiated assessment strategies should be made in a way to accommodate these diverse styles and meet these diverse needs. She then proposes several activities that can be incorporated in these methods courses. These activities include creating student research groups that conduct focused observations and interviews in multiple classrooms in which technology is integrated, collaborative study groups that work collaboratively in every phases of designing technology-enhanced instruction, and field experiences where preservice teachers are required to teach with technology through micro-teaching. In addition to these strategies, she also believes that preservice teachers should learn how to develop and design a technology-enhanced lesson starting from the ultimate goals and objectives of the overall unit in a lesson. Then, they should learn how to plan and sequence their instruction considering students background knowledge and the affordances/constraints of the technology they are planning to integrate, as well as how to scaffold and assess student learning.

Similarly, Cavin (2007) explored the use of microteaching lesson study to develop TPACK in a group of preservice teachers in a mathematics program. In this approach, preservice teachers again work collaboratively in groups. Together they develop a lesson with a specific goal. Then, one of the group members microteaches the lesson, and the lesson is videotaped. Next, as a group they watch the lesson, reflect on the effectiveness of the lesson, and decide what further adaptations or modifications to the lesson plan are necessary. However, in this study, the students being taught through the microteaching lesson were other preservice teachers rather than students in an actual K-12 classroom. Still, Cavin found out that this approach was effective in developing preservice teachers'

TPACK. The preservice teachers in the study had used the technological tools primarily for arithmetic calculations at the beginning stages of the study; however, at the later stages, it was evident that the preservice teachers developed more specific pedagogical strategies in using the technology. Cavin (2007) concludes that microteaching lesson study is a possible teaching strategy that can be incorporated into teacher education programs to provide opportunities for situated learning experiences to preservice teachers in effective integration of technology into teaching.

Another study in relation to the integration of technology into teaching in a pedagogically sound way comes from (Hughes, 2005). She adopted a multiple-case embedded research design with four inservice teachers. She conducted three life-history interviews with and three direct observations of each participant. These interviews and observations were triangulated by field notes and handouts/materials used by the teachers during their instruction. After the cross-case analyses, she found that past technology learning experiences had a crucial role in shaping teachers' interpretation of the value of technology as an educational tool, the use of technology in the classroom, and developing a technology-supported pedagogy. Therefore, she also proposes that collaborative, subject-specific inquiry groups can be used as an approach to develop and support inservice teachers' ability to learn to effectively integrate technology into their classroom teaching. She believes that such groups provide teachers an opportunity to share knowledge and questions, connect their learning and knowledge to their immediate contexts, and encourages teachers' active engagement in collaborative professional development.

In order to support inservice teachers for effective technology integration, (Ehman, Bonk, & Yamagata-Lynch, 2005) implemented a professional development model of Teacher Institute for Curriculum Knowledge about Integration of Technology (TICKIT). They describe that the model adopts a situated, collaborative, (social)constructivist, critical reflective, practice-oriented, continuous, and lifelong learning approach to professional development. They also argue that, these should be essential considerations when planning support groups for in-service teachers.

Last but not least, the most recent approach to developing teachers' TPACK seems to be the "learning activity types" approach (Harris & Hofer, 2009; Harris, Mishra, & Koehler, 2009). This approach sets the raising awareness of learning types included in a specific subject matter as one of the important first steps in the development of TPACK in teachers. They argue that initially determining the activity types makes it easy for the teachers "to match particular activities to specific content-based learning goals and standards, and, more important, to interpret and implement these activities in ways that are congruent with the disciplinary roots of the disciplinary-based content that students are learning" (Harris, et al., 2009, p. 403). Moreover, learning activity types is an instructional planning tool to guide teachers to plan. One such activity in the field of second/ world language teaching, for example, is creating a newsletter in the target language which can be done using a wiki (Van Olphen, Hofer, & Harris, 2009).

Overall, as can be seen from this review of how TPACK is implemented in teacher development and education, most studies of how teachers learn to integrate technology in pedagogically sound ways have typically been conducted in physically co-located communities. In this sense, the present study will shed light on how this can be

achieved in a different context: an online CoP, through online interactions. To my knowledge, there has been no attempt in the literature yet, to examine the role of an online CoP on the development of teachers' technological pedagogical content knowledge, and how collaboration and engagement in the development of practice in such an online CoP help develop teachers' TPACK. The study should provide teachers and teacher educators with insights of how to engage in authentic technology learning through collaboration in an online CoP.

### **Significance of the Study**

In many cases in the existing literature, the online communities that were studied did not develop a shared repertoire of resources and activities and develop a shared practice. There are many studies that acknowledge the fact that their communities failed to survive or evolve into an online community of practice, or the fact that participants had lower levels of participation because of technical support. Because of these, this study aims to shed light on how much difference it makes when the shared domain of interest of an online community is technology integration.

Moreover, the existing literature focuses mostly on how to design effective communities of practice and/or online CoPs. However, without understanding how an online CoP develops its practice, and whether or not the ways of developing it are different from those physically co-located CoPs, it is not easy to make improvements in the design of such communities. Because of this, there is a need to locate and explore exemplary online CoPs in detail. Uniquely, the community that is explored in this study, Webheads in Action, exhibits several characteristics of online communities of practice. Therefore, the community and its culture could provide a model for how practice is

developed and how professional learning is achieved in an online CoP for several reasons: a) it is an online community of practice, b) it uses a variety of synchronous and asynchronous web-based applications and communication tools, c) it is relatively small, d) participation is free and voluntary, e) the interest of the group is exploring and learning the uses and applications of these technologies in language teaching, so while technology is a means for professional learning, it is also the domain of professional development among this community, f) it has been active since 2002, g) there is a visible mobility among the members from legitimate peripheral participation to full participation and vice versa, h) most of the activities and products of the community are co-constructed by members, i) participants are from all around the world, j) there seem to be diverse ways of communication and participation, k) they mutually engage in several activities and participate in several events.

Last but not least, the study is likely to provide insights into how online collaboration among teachers is achieved. Furthermore, it aims to shed light on how such collaboration in an online CoP promotes teacher professional development in terms of effective technology integration while teachers collaboratively experiment emergent technologies in situated contexts. As such, I also hope that this study may give rise to the application of similar models as an online complement in professional learning communities in school settings.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I have first reviewed the existing literature with respect to community-based perspectives and models for teacher professional learning and development. I have mainly focused my attention on concepts of communities, learning

communities, and communities of practice, and their premises for teacher professional learning and development. I have then reviewed the existing literature on technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) by summarizing studies on how the framework was developed, how it was being implemented in teacher education settings, and how it is used to inform and understand such knowledge development in pre-service and in-service teachers. Because Webheads is a unique community of practice that primarily communicates online, and their shared domain of interest is exploring pedagogical uses of technology in English language teaching, the notions of community of practice and technological pedagogical content knowledge help us understand how these two can be achieved in an online environment. In other words, it is important to understand how TPACK is developed in an online CoP whose shared practice and interest is pedagogically-sound technology integration into teaching. At the end of this chapter, I have also presented the significance of this study, and in what ways this study will fill the gaps identified in the existing literature with respect to the role of online communities of practice in developing ESL/EFL teachers' TPACK.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE FIELD INSIDE THE SCREEN

*“What we call our data are really our own constructions of other people’s constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to” (Geertz, 1973)*

Kozinets (2002) defines the field experience of a netnographer happening ‘behind’ the screen. To me, it felt more of ‘inside’ the screen as soon I realized that I was there, in that rich culture, trying to find my way in the connected cyber-wires of this community. Therefore, I have organized this chapter to describe in detail the data collection and analysis methods that I employed in this study. I first begin by restating my purpose and research questions for conducting this study. Next, I explain the research approach, netnography, in comparison to in-person ethnography, and similarities and differences between the two approaches. Then, I present my rationale for selecting Webheads in Action (WiA) online community of practice as my research ‘field.’ Finally, I describe my data collection methods and data analysis techniques, and conclude the chapter by discussing ethical considerations, issues of trustworthiness, and limitations of this study.

#### **Research Questions**

Wenger (1998b) asserts that there are three components important to a community of practice (CoP): domain, community, and practice. *Domain* refers to the area of interest shared by the members, while *community* refers to the group of people who engage in joint activities, and interact with each other regularly, while pursuing their interest in this

domain. *Practice*, on the other hand, includes all the resources a community creates in relation to a domain. Wenger (1998) also views practice in a CoP as a “source of community coherence” (p. 73), which suggests that the development of a practice is what makes a community a ‘community of practice’. He asserts that there are three dimensions of practice as a source of community coherence: mutual engagement, a joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire. Practice is developed over time and it must be understood as a learning process. While members develop their practice, they develop shared histories of learning. In this process, the forms and ways of their engagement and participation in the community change and evolve, and they continuously negotiate and tune their enterprise. All these result in the transformation of their identities, which is considered as the essential characteristic of individuals’ learning in a CoP: identity transformation.

In line with these characteristics that are central to CoPs, in the present study, I wanted to understand, and describe what the practice of Webheads in Action (WiA) entails, how members in WiA develop this practice, how a person becomes a member and is oriented towards this practice, and how members’ participation and engagement in the development of this practice shape their learning with respect to pedagogically-sound integration of technology into language teaching. In order to achieve this overarching goal, I specifically sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the main activities (and artifacts and resources related to these activities) carried out by Webheads that help develop their shared practice? How are these activities organized? What are the characteristics of these artifacts, activities, and resources?



2. Through what forms of engagement do members of WiA develop their shared practice? In what ways does their membership status (newcomer vs. long-term member) play a role in the ways they engage in the community and its shared practice?
3. How are new members introduced to WiA and its practice? How do they become a part of this online community of practice? How do they move from legitimate peripheral participation to full participation?
4. How does participation in WiA help members develop in their understanding of pedagogically-sound integration of technology into language teaching, as perceived by five selected members? What do their learning journeys within this community consist of?

### **Methodology: Introducing Netnography**

In this study, I used an ethnographic approach into an online community, which is also known as online ethnography (Markham, 2005), virtual ethnography (Hine, 2000), or “netnography” (Kozinets, 2010). However, in order to provide an overview of ethnographic approaches and practices, I will begin by discussing ethnography conducted in physical settings before proceeding with ethnography conducted in online settings.

Ethnography is a qualitative approach that focuses on a culture-sharing group in order to find shared patterns of beliefs, values, and behaviors among the members of this group (Creswell, 2007). The assumption that guides ethnographic inquiry is that “any human group of people interacting together for a period of time will evolve a culture” (Patton, 2002, p. 81). The ethnographic researcher immerses him/herself into the daily lives of this group, and the primary method of data collection is through participant

observation, which suggests that the researcher becomes a member of the group as s/he participates in the day-to-day activities of the group and observes the group extensively. To do this, the ethnographer goes to the place where the group works and lives, and conducts fieldwork (Wolcott, 1999), collecting a wide variety of materials about this group (including field notes, and archival data), conducting observations, and interviewing people formally and informally. At the end, the ethnographer attempts to “understand and convey their [the group’s] reality through ‘thick’, detailed, nuanced, historically-curious and culturally-grounded interpretation and deep description of a social world that is familiar to its participants but strange to others”(Kozinets, 2010). The ethnographer should actively participate in the community’s daily life and activities and “cannot and should not attempt to be a fly on the wall” (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995), and the ethnographer’s task is “not to determine ‘the truth’ but to reveal the multiple truths apparent in others’ lives” (Emerson, et al., 1995, p. 3, quotation in original).

According to Patton (2002), there are several advantages of participant observation. First of all, participant observation allows observing the group of people directly in their natural interactive context. Also, such firsthand experience enables the researcher to be more oriented towards being open and not occupied with prejudgments about the group. Third, since the researcher holds both an outsider and an insider position, s/he is able to see the things that regular members may not be aware of, or has never really paid attention to in their daily routines. A fourth advantage is the chance that the researcher captures things that people would not be willing to talk about in an interview. This allows the researcher to have a more comprehensive understanding than relying only on interviews. Finally, in collecting data through participant observation, the

researcher has an opportunity to reflect on his/her own experiences in the community studied, and these interpretations and reflections of the culture of this community can better inform the final analysis of the data collected.

The case study approach and ethnography have commonalities in the sense that the group or the community studied in the ethnography can be considered a case in itself (Creswell, 2007). Also, both approaches use multiple sources of data including observations, documents, archival data, and interviews (Yin, 2009). According to Creswell (2007), what differentiates between the two is the primary goal of the researcher: while the ethnographer tries to understand how a certain culture or a certain cultural phenomenon works and is developed within a community, the case study researcher is interested in how an issue or a problem displays itself in a case or across cases.

Online ethnographic research has been more recently adopted by researchers, over the last two decades (Baym, 2000; Hine, 2000; Kendall, 2002; Kozinets, 1998; Markham, 1998). Among these researchers (and others), Kozinets (2010) was the one who has provided the most detailed and specific “procedural guidelines to take a researcher through the steps necessary to conduct an ethnography of an online community or culture (p. 5). For this reason, I followed his guidelines and implemented his methodology in this study.

Netnography is an ethnographic approach, based on participant-observational research, to study communities that exist entirely online. According to Kozinets (2010) it “uses computer-mediated communications as a source of data to arrive at the ethnographic understanding and representation of a cultural or communal phenomenon”

(p. 60). In this sense, netnography still uses an ethnographic lens to understand online communities and can be considered a branch of ethnography. Therefore, as would occur in any ethnography, netnography also makes use of participant observation, interviews, archival data, elicited data, and other forms of data available to the researcher. What essentially differentiates netnography from ethnography is the fact that in the former the researcher collects data through online interactions, whereas in the latter, the researcher collects data through in-person, face-to-face interactions (Kozinets, 2010)

Depending on the advances in technology and the affordances of available technologies, netnographic field-sites can be diverse. While online field-sites such as bulletin boards or forums, list-servs, and linked web-pages provide asynchronous communication data, chat-rooms, online networked video game playspaces (such as *World of Warcraft*), and virtual worlds (such as *Second Life*) provide synchronous communication data. Moreover, current social media technology also allows blogs, video blogs (i.e. vlogs), microblogs (such as *Twitter*), wikis (such as *Wikipedia*), social content aggregators (such as *del.icio.us*), and social networking sites (such as *MySpace* and *Facebook*) to be spaces where a netnographer can collect data (Kozinets, 2010).

### **Sources of Data in Netnography**

Similar to ethnography, in a netnographic study, data come primarily from four sources: archival data, elicited data, interviews, and fieldnotes (Kozinets, 2010). Archival data in netnography can present itself in the form of webpages and wikis, or archived textual communication already present years before the researcher enters the community, which allows the data “to be unaffected by the actions of the netnographer”(Kozinets, 2010, p. 104). Such archival data also provide easy-to-obtain observational data to the

netnographer. Archival data can also include audiovisual, graphical, and photographic data. However, the large amount of available archival data presents a challenge to the netnographer with respect to the selection, sorting, limitation and analysis of the data.

In addition to archival data, netnography also makes use of elicited data (Kozinets, 2010). In this case, elicited data is mostly in the form of asynchronous communication between the researcher and the participants. Postings to a research forum created by the researcher, email communication between the researcher and the participants, and comments to a blog entry created by the researcher can be considered forms of elicited data in netnography.

Interviews also play a significant role in netnographic research. Although they can be considered another type of elicited data, Kozinets (2010) pays special attention to interviews as a separate category in the sense that they could still be done face-to-face with the use of a video-enabled voice-over internet protocol (VoIP) such as Skype. Use of such technology enables the researcher to make use of the social cues available in the interview context, and to get a sense of the participant's identity (ethnicity, gender, age, etc.). Also, an online interview through textual communication takes much more time than a face-to-face interview (Markham, 1998).

A final source of data that informs netnography is the fieldnote data (Kozinets, 2010). However, in netnography, the nature of the fieldsite and the researcher's participation are different from those one usually associates with ethnography. In in-person ethnography, it is the ethnographer who provides a unique access to the fieldsite; therefore, it may be considered that there is no contribution of an ethnographer to the study of a publicly accessible online fieldsite. However, Kozinets (2010) argues that the

contribution of netnography is still significant since it adds “valuable interpretive insight, by building, through careful focus and analysis, what is available publicly on the Internet into a known and respected body of codified knowledge” (p. 113). Although anyone can access a publicly available site or a community and the interactions of the members (e.g. members in an online forum), the researcher’s interpretation is the paramount contribution in netnography. Therefore, Kozinets emphasizes the significant role of reflective observational fieldnotes in netnography. While the researcher takes notes of what is seen on the screen, s/he also interprets it and takes notes of what s/he experiences her/himself. Kozinets (2010) indicates that “although many of the on-screen manifestations of the ‘events’ that transpire through online interaction can be captured through screen captures and data downloads, what your fieldnotes should strive to capture are your own impressions as a culture and community member, the subjective meanings of interactions and events as they fold over time” (p. 115). Therefore, the netnographer should also record his/her own experiences along with his/her observations while participating in the online community events and activities, in order to understand the lived experience of a regular member in this community.

### **The ‘Field’ Boundaries in Netnography**

Ethnography and netnography are based on the same fundamental orientations. However, the nature of the online fieldsite in the latter changes the nature of the research approach, data collection methods, and the representation of the data. Thus, while netnography offers advantages in terms of the amount and availability of data, it presents challenges and issues that the netnographer should be aware of. For instance, Markham (2005) argues that in online ethnography, how the researcher defines the boundaries of

the field presents challenges for the researcher. While the field in ethnography is where the researcher is co-present in a physical space with the community, in online ethnography the field is determined in line with the discursive interactions that occur among members; thus, this compels the online ethnographer to make important decisions as to what interaction to include and what not to include while determining the 'field'. Moreover, according to Markham (2005), in the online environment, the other person is interpreted as much as the textual communication allows in many circumstances. She argues that this prevents the researcher from using contextual factors and their roles on individuals' behaviors while interpreting the data. For these reasons, she suggests that the online ethnographer consider these issues, and design his/her study and questions accordingly.

### **Why a Netnography of *Webheads in Action*?**

Online ethnography has been a research approach that has mostly been applied in sociology, communication, and anthropology. Most netnographies has been conducted in the field of marketing. Most of these studies also investigated either a single site as an online community, or a phenomenon across multiple online sites/communities, and mainly through analyzing textual data, as opposed to including oral interviews. For example, one of the first users of online ethnographic approach was Correll (1995). She studied an electronic lesbian bar, called *Lesbian Café*, which is essentially a computer-based bulletin board. Although the community existed online, Correll collected data through both online and face-to-face means. In her entirely online fieldwork, Markham (1998) vividly illustrated her lived experiences while conducting online research through textual communication. Her work focused on what it meant to go or to be online – the

real experience in the virtual space, and her data constituted synchronous or asynchronous textual data. Moreover, Baym (2000) studied an online soap opera forum site, *rec.art.tv.soaps*, analyzing thousands of messages posted about one specific soap opera at the time, *All My Children*, in order to discover the culture created among the members in this forum. She also distributed a survey to the participants in this forum. Similarly, Kendall (2002) provided an account of a virtual 'pub'. In her work, she investigated masculinity and online relationships as displayed on a particular chat forum, called *BlueSky*, for which she used the metaphor *pub* to describe the social world of this space. Her work again illustrates an example of online ethnography that used a single site as the field (as opposed to a multi-site community) to study representation of certain phenomena as it is displayed on this single site. Her data also came from textual communication and interactions produced in that site. One particular study that uses multiple sites to investigate particular phenomena came from boyd (2008). In her study, which was carried out over two and a half years, she investigated American teen sociality studying teenagers' behaviors across two social networking sites: *MySpace* and *Facebook*. In that sense, users of these two sites constituted the 'community' that she explored. Therefore, she collected both online and offline data, conducting online and offline observations, as well as in-person interviews with users. Last but not least, Boellstorff (2008) studied *Second Life*, a virtual world. His work aims at providing a portrait of *Second Life*, focusing on the culture and everyday life this virtual world.

Moreover, netnographic research that has been applied in the field of marketing also seems to follow the single-site, or phenomenon-across-multiple-sites approaches with a focus on text-based communication data. To name a few of these studies, for



example, Kozinets (1997) investigated the *Star Trek* fans and community to understand how fan cultures and communities are created. Kozinets and Handelman (1998) explored the subjective meaning of boycott participation through an analysis of “cyber-interviews” (p. 475) and postings through eleven UseNet newsgroups. Using individual wedding planning sites, and forums as their field sites, Nelson and Otnes (2005) analyzed postings to investigate cross-cultural ambivalence in wedding message boards. Likewise, Thomas and Peters (2011) conducted netnography on the postings on *Brides.com* to understand the consumer behaviors of brides-to-be while deciding on their wedding dresses. Negra, Mzoughi, and Bouhleb (2008) studied ‘e-procrastination’, a consumer behavior trait in online purchasing. Hamilton and Hewer (2009) investigated the members’ salsa experience through postings on an international online dance forum, called *Salsaforum*. As can be seen, the list of studies that employ netnography as a textual analysis methodology of postings on online forums or message boards can be extended.

In my review of previous research, netnography or online ethnography has not been applied into field of education when compared to the other aforementioned fields. For example, O’Reilly, Rahinel, Foster and Patterson (2007) suggested that netnography could be used as a way of connecting megaclasses in marketing education programs at large universities. Another study I located –as it pertains to education- came from Janta, Lugosi and Brown (2012). Studying the postings in an online forum designed for doctoral students, they investigated the doctoral students’ coping strategies with loneliness and isolation.

Considering these tendencies in online ethnographic or netnographic research, a netnography of *Webheads in Action* contributed to this research realm in many ways.

Webheads in Action (WiA) is an online community of practice that was created by ESL/EFL teachers and teacher educators as part of Electronic Village Online (EVO) workshops sponsored by TESOL Computer-Assisted Language Learning Interest Section (CALL-IS) in 2002. Although it was first proposed as a 6-week online workshop only, the group did not disband, and have survived until today. This community of education professionals is distributed over multiple sites, and members communicate through various CMC technologies (miscellaneous wikis, Yahoo Groups, Tapped In, Twitter, Google Hangout (beginning in January 2013), Skype, Facebook, etc.). They also regularly and collaboratively organize professional development activities that are carried out entirely online. Therefore, studying this multi-site educational community through synchronous and asynchronous multimodal data collection methods as well as participant observation, is not only unique in the field of education and applied linguistics, but also among existing netnography research.

### **Choosing *Webheads in Action* as the Fieldsite**

There are several reasons that have informed my decision to select WiA as the community of focus in this study. All these reasons have evolved over time since my first meeting with Webheads through my own experiences, and informal, un-systematic observations. My first reason is my familiarity with the community. I participated in the BaW'07 workshop, and this was how I became familiar with this community. I would describe myself as relatively active during that 6-week workshop because I contributed to the weekly discussions, engaged in activities, synchronously participated live sessions, and created online content (archived Yahoo Group messages on the workshop wiki, <http://baw07.pbworks.com/w/page/5828499/Week%206%20Threads>). Since then, I have

been a part of the group but because of various reasons, my level of participation gradually decreased. Currently, I would describe myself as a lurker who is not contributing to the exchanges occurring via the main Yahoo Group email list, but I am still receiving emails and reviewing them from time to time if the subject of the message interests me. Because of my previous involvement with this community, I also had access to the key informants, and the coordinators of this community. Moreover, in March 2010, I had a chance to informally meet a few webheads face-to-face during the TESOL 2010 Convention in Boston. Therefore, I was not a complete stranger to this community, which helped me identify and become familiar with the spaces used by the community and the main activities organized by them during my fieldwork.

The second main reason for my choice of this community was the domain of interest and the members' professions. Webheads are, in essence, my colleagues. That is, they are also dedicated teachers and teacher educators in the EFL and ESL profession, with a passion for the integration of CMC tools and web-based technologies into language teaching. My sharing their interests and being a part of the same profession not only made the community more interesting to me, but also enabled me to have a chance of offering some contribution to the community. By conducting research on this community, I am not only 'taking' but also 'giving', a key component of the idea of participant observation.

The other reasons that were influential in my selection of the Webheads community are as follows:

1. WiA is a relatively large community with established history and repertoire. At the beginning of my study, they had been around for almost ten years. The large

number of email exchanges in the main evonline2002 Yahoo Group also showed the continued exchange and interaction among members, which is important to an online community of practice.

2. It has been established that WiA is a community of practice (C. M. Johnson, 2006). Although other studies have been conducted with this community and its members, to my knowledge, no other studies have offered an ethnographic perspective into the culture and practice of this community.
3. Webheads, as their shared domain of interest suggests, are familiar with online technologies such as video-enabled VoIPs (Skype, Yahoo Messenger), emails, blogs, and wikis because all these technology tools are explored during the annual online BaW workshops. This would enable me to collect various forms of data without being concerned about participants' comfort level with the use of the technology used in the data collection, and/or its potential negative effects on the participants.
4. Because of the various technology tools explored and used by Webheads, they are not bound by communicating through a single electronic list, online forum, or a message board. This would enable me to collect data beyond mere textual data, such as audiovisual data. It would also help me further explore how various means of communication and interaction sustain an online community and its practice.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

### **Online Participant Observation**

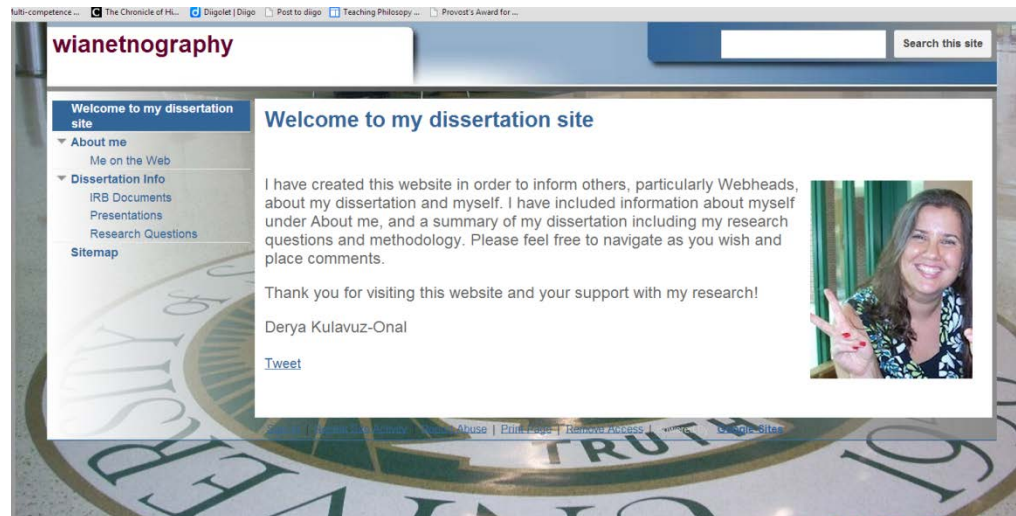
My main method of data collection in this study was participant observation conducted entirely online, which I also call my 'online fieldwork.' Practically, my engagement in the 'field' lasted one year beginning in January 2011 (with my registration to the BaW2011 workshop), and ending at the end of December 2011 (with my interview with Vance Stevens). My 'engagement in the field,' overall, was comprised of visiting the online spaces of the community, observing synchronous and asynchronous interactions, participating actively in some of the activities and interacting with others, as well as contributing to the discussion in those activities. Throughout my online fieldwork, I took reflective observational fieldnotes of my experiences as a participant in the main activities, as well as my observations of participants' interactions, their experiences of these activities, and some of the community's artifacts (such as wikis, blogs, community logos, articles, etc.).

**Making decisions online.** Before I began this study, I had planned more structured data collection procedures. For example, I had thought I would examine only one data source per one research question, such as the email data only for the engagement patterns (Research Question 2). I had somehow envisioned that one data source would reveal information to one specific question, as if a community is not a unified whole but would display a different cultural pattern in different activities. After beginning my fieldwork, I soon realized that the interactions that I was observing in other activities also revealed engagement patterns in this community. Moreover, I wanted to interview insiders in this community in order to inform my Research Question 4. However, what I

discovered in our interviews also informed my understandings of how new members were oriented towards the practice of this community. Therefore, while ‘in the field,’ my initial plans changed. I conducted my fieldwork in a more holistic, naturally emerging manner, keeping in mind that all the data sources I collected would variously inform multiple research questions.

Initially I had wanted to look at the history of this community as well. However, it turned out that a 10-year online community is a very old community in the information technology age (considering that everything changes quickly; technologies as well as communities that these technologies create disband, evolve, or break up quickly). Their practice had evolved considerably due to technological advances; many links to their previous activities were now broken (for example some images on BaW2007 workshop wiki are not active now); some of the technologies they used in the past no longer exist (such as Alado.net, which was the web-conferencing platform in BaW2007), and the community had grown to become much larger. Therefore, I limited my engagement in the ‘field’ mostly to the activities happening concurrently during my fieldwork with occasional reference and engagement to previous activities. For example, not surprisingly, my previous engagement with the community helped inform some of my discoveries during my fieldwork. Also, because one recently organized activity was considered to be a continuation of Webheads in Action Online Convergences, I visited those previously-created wikis, and observed some of the recorded sessions to inform my understanding of how they had evolved into a continuous weekly event (i.e. Learning2gether events). All in all, however, I focused on the present practices of the community rather than the activities throughout the history.

*Entering the field.* Before I began engaging in fieldwork, as can be seen in Figure 3.1 below, I prepared a dissertation website to share with the community as suggested by Kozinets (2010) (<https://sites.google.com/site/wianetnography/>).



*Figure 3.1.* A screenshot of the home page of my dissertation site. I shared this site with the Webheads community as a reference site for members to be informed about my research, and to ethically disclose my identity as a researcher in the community.

In order to present myself as a researcher conducting a netnography of this community, on this site, I included information about myself, my background, and social media links for following me online (e.g. My Facebook and Twitter accounts), information about my study and data collection procedures, and informed consent approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of South Florida (Appendix B). This website served as a source of information that the community members could refer to at their convenience. I have also been updating this site from time to time with materials from presentations related to this study that I have delivered as “works in progress.” Moreover, as a courtesy to the community, I am planning to share the final copy of my dissertation through this site (when it is approved), so that this way I can give back to the community.

I entered 'the field' as I began engaging in fieldwork by participating in BaW2011 workshop during the first week of the workshop. I conducted my first visit to the BaW2011 wiki on Wednesday, January 12, 2011, which was also the first time I began taking fieldnotes about my observations and experiences.

*Setting the boundaries of the field.* Determining an online fieldsite in a distributed multi-site global online community was challenging. It was not possible to determine it with physical boundaries of a website, as Webheads could not claim one. I felt like 'they were all over the place.' To explain, as boyd (2009) observed, "the boundaries of a project emerge when the ethnographer decides which questions to focus on based on patterns and observations." (p. 30). Therefore, I revisited my questions, and decided on restricting the boundaries of this study by focusing only on the main activities of this community. In that sense, I chose to focus my observations and participation to *BaW2011* workshop first, because it was going to happen for a limited time and only once. Soon after the workshop ended, I switched my focus to the *evonline2002* email list, through which I discovered a newly organized activity that happened every Sunday: the *Learning2gether* events. Although, according to my initial plans, emails were going to constitute archival data in my study, I soon discovered that the *evonline2002* Yahoo Group email list also played an important role in this community. BaW participants graduated as a Webhead at the end of the BaW workshop and were invited to register with the *evonline2002* email list, which meant that they would be able to follow and contribute to the technology-advanced interactions in this list. Also I observed that there were approximately five email exchanges a day on this list, and the list had always been active through this online space since 2002. Therefore, I began to view emails as a 'main



activity’ as well, and as I read them, I took an observational stance to the emails. I not only archived these emails that were exchanged throughout my fieldwork, but also from time to time, I took reflective observational fieldnotes on what I read and observed in these emails. Therefore, in my fieldwork, BaW2011, Learning2gether events (with reference to their connection to previously-held WiAOC) and the evonline2002 Yahoo Group determined the boundaries for my online participant observation.

***Balancing active participation.*** Throughout my fieldwork, I kept Kozinets’ suggestion of ‘not dominating the discussion’ as this would intrude with the researcher’s balancing an insider and outsider views, and may result in ‘going native.’ Therefore, I found myself asking the same question to myself throughout my fieldwork in order to balance my participation: “Am I dominating the discussion?” Because this community was not based on a single website or platform, I had to follow different strategies and participation patterns for different kinds of activities throughout my study. Moreover, Garcia, Standlee, Bechkoff, and Yan Cui (2009) suggest that the researcher conducting an online ethnography needs to be more than a lurker and “should experience the online site the same way that the actual participants routinely experience it” (p. 60). Although, before entering the field, I thought this adequately explained the extent and the point of how much a netnographer should participate in an online community, soon after entering the field, I realized that it was difficult to pinpoint what exactly a ‘routine experience’ of ‘actual’ participants meant in this online community, which showed me that this definition was blurry. There seemed to be various participation patterns in this community varying from activity to activity, and participant to participant, perhaps because it was a long-standing, continuously evolving community distributed over

multiple spaces. During my fieldwork, for example, I noticed that some participants were not as active in the email list as they would be in EVO sessions, or in collaborations. While some participants were more visibly active in the past (during my initial engagement, for example), they had been lurking for a while for various reasons when I entered the field. For example, Mary, one of my informants in the interviews, was a very active member during BaW2007; she had also moderated other EVO sessions, worked on collaborative projects with other webheads, but she sent an email message to the evonline2002 list once or twice during my fieldwork.) Therefore, I decided that there was not one typical participation pattern, and from my observations, I sensed that the community welcomed all these participation patterns. In other words, a Webhead did not necessarily mean a person interacting with the community, sitting in front of the computer, 24/7, but rather it could mean someone who selectively decides which activities to join (or not) as s/he considers relevant, applicable to his/her context, or congruent with his/her schedule. In addition, as was suggested by Kozinets (2010), I also tried to avoid becoming an ‘insider,’ who has “strong social ties to the online community as well as deep identification with, aptitude in, and understanding of the core consumption activity” (p. 34), in order to keep an outsider perspective as well.

Therefore, throughout my fieldwork, I decided to experience a variety of different participation and engagement patterns. For example, during my BaW participation, I tried to be a moderate level participant. In that workshop, participants are offered a variety of readings, tasks, etc., but they are welcomed to do everything at their own pace, even if this necessitates lurking, or more asynchronous participation, or following the syllabus after the workshop ends, since the workshop wiki and other materials/resources remained

on the Internet. Therefore, assuming all these different roles, I sometimes lurked in the workshop by just reading the emails, or doing the readings, visiting the links, etc. but not interacting with the other participants very often. Also, sometimes I participated live sessions synchronously and interacted with others through chat window; and sometimes I watched other live sessions from the recordings.

As for Learning2gether events, which were also held synchronously but recorded and archived on a wiki, it was possible to participate in these events both synchronously and asynchronously. Therefore, I wanted to experience both ways. They were also held through different platforms: one was on Second Life (SL) for example, which affected my participation differently, because of my inexperience with this platform. I tried to participate in a couple sessions that were held in platforms other than Elluminate, to experience them differently. Also, it seemed like not everybody was participating in these sessions every week; participants tend to choose what interests them, and whether or not they could participate synchronously because of the time in their places (for example, it was usually 7 am on Sunday mornings in my location). Therefore, naturally, my interest and availability affected my synchronous participation as well. Furthermore, latecomers were also welcomed in these live sessions, so I purposefully logged in late to a couple of them, to experience the session from a latecomer's view.

Also, my initial strategy to balance my active participation in the live sessions was realized through interacting through the chat window rather than talking on the microphone when I wanted to make a comment. The reason was because I thought that when somebody talks, everybody hears, so the participant becomes more visible, which would dominate the discussion more, as opposed to interacting through the chat window.

When somebody interacts in the chat window, it is not always visible to everybody; as others respond, a participant's comment on the chat window disappears in a minute. Although this strategy worked in BaW live sessions, it did not work in Learning2gether sessions. In my first synchronous Learning2gether session, after I wrote a comment on the chat window, I was invited by the session moderator to take the microphone and talk. As a courtesy, I did not refuse, or pretend that I did not have a microphone. I talked and I participated more actively than I planned to. This experience taught me that, in some live sessions, as in the case of Learning2gether events, the expectation was to contribute to the discussion orally, perhaps because there were fewer participants. In that sense, I felt that I had to 'follow the custom' of these sessions in this community, and to be prepared to experience it more actively. This affected my participation in the next sessions that I attended towards more of an active participation.

As far as the evonline2002 email list is concerned, for a long while, I did not initiate any discussion. I simply followed the emails, visited links or resources shared, observed and took fieldnotes in order to understand the function of emails in this community. Moreover, I also reflected on my own learning experiences through lurking in these emails. In that sense, I kept my visibility to the community through the email list at a minimum. However, for example, when a number of invisible participants also joined the celebration of the new year, I sent a 'happy new year' message as well. A few participants sent surveys to complete for their research, or vote requests for an award, or comment requests for their students' blogs, wikis, etc. I responded to these requests, which is a very common practice in these emails, as more people tend to reply. A few times, a member asked for suggestions for a technology tool, I offered my opinion as

well, along with other members. The only time that I dominated a discussion was for my research purposes (where I foregrounded my identity as a researcher rather than a webhead). Towards the end of my fieldwork, I posted the following message to the evonline2002 email list and asked a question to the members: “Who is a Webhead?”

“All Dear Webheads,

I’ve been meaning to open this discussion for a while. As you may already know, I have been doing an online ethnography of the Webheads community by observing, participating, doing interviews, and taking fieldnotes. Throughout this time, I have become curious to know YOUR definitions of yourselves as a Webhead. And as part of my research, I wanted to open a discussion about this. I’d appreciate if you join the discussion and help me better analyzed how this is perceived by you individually.

Here are my questions: So, rather than defining the community in general terms, I am interested in how you would define yourselves as a Webhead. What is it that you do/feel that makes you a Webhead? Is it being a part of this community? Participating in the activities of the community? Having a role in the community? More than these? Less than these? How would you define yourself as a Webhead? And how would you expect somebody to act if they say they are a Webhead? Looking forward to reading your perspectives, and thank you very much in advance!” (Msg. 28521, Oct. 17, 2011)

As can be seen from my email above, although I initiated a discussion, I tried to do it for research purposes, to again balance my active participation in this thread. I tried to sound not too friendly, not too distant either, in order not for others to see me as a Webhead

(though everybody already had their own definitions of a Webhead). Overall, eight Webheads contributed to the discussion offering their views and the thread generated 20 emails, including my responses to the contributors. In my responses, I followed up with their responses, prompting other question. I was not sure how many responses I would get as participants contributing to the email list seemed to vary and unpredictable (although key people, such as Vance Stevens, would interact more regularly than others). Also, after these eight participants responded and I replied to them with a few follow-up questions, the discussion seemed to become a focus group discussion with only these respondents. Although I created this thread with my initial email on October 17, 2011, the last email in the thread was posted on October 30, 2011. This also exemplifies, how a discussion that would take around an hour most in a face-to-face environment, might last about two weeks in an asynchronous online environment. This feature of online interactions eventually affected my initial plan for the duration of my fieldwork.

***Duration of my online fieldwork and leaving the field.*** Although I had initially planned for six months of fieldwork, my fieldwork ended up lasting an entire year -12 months. There were various reasons for this change. First of all, my offline life still continued as it was. Because I did not change any places, my professional life (e.g. teaching classes), and my personal, family life still continued the same. Therefore, I was not able to immerse myself fully in the community (e.g. logging into the community sites and participating in the activities on a daily basis). Also, it was not always easy to arrange my time for the synchronous events, since my local time sometimes was too early, or too late for the event, or the activity would take place during a weekday at about when I would be teaching.

Moreover, in the middle of my fieldwork, I had to leave for Turkey for two months, where I did not have a reliable internet connection to watch live sessions, or to participate synchronously. Although I still archived the emails sent during that time for later analysis, I ended up ‘leaving the field’ for a while during the month of July, and then ‘returning to the field’ in August, when I came back to Tampa. This was an interesting experience, giving me different insights as to how it feels like conducting online fieldwork. Although it is possible to conduct the fieldwork with the same online community, no matter where the researcher is physically located, the logistics (e.g. technology and the local time) of that physical location should be considered if ‘leaving the field’ is not an option.

Additionally, to make up for the times I was not able to participate, I extended my fieldwork until the end of October, the time when I took my last fieldnote. However, when I wanted to conduct an interview with Vance, he asked to turn it into a Learning2gether event. I wanted to comply, and the only date that was available on the Learning2gether calendar (as the other slots were either taken, or did not work for me), meant that we ended up conducting the session on December 26, 2011. In that sense, in practice, my engagement with the community, their activities, and its members spread out over one year. Therefore, as Kendall (2009) also experienced, these reasons, and my ongoing relationship with the community and some of the members (e.g. I am connected with them through Facebook and Twitter) “complicated the ‘end date’” (p. 23) of my research. Although I took my last fieldnote around the middle of October, I was able to conduct my interview with the community founder about two months after that.

However, after this interview, my engagement with the community activities did not continue. For example, although I continued to receive email messages from the evonline2002 email list, I no longer read or responded to them. Additionally, I also did not register myself to either BaW2012 or BaW2013, and, apart from the presentation I gave on Learning2gether, I have not participated in any other Learning2gether session synchronously, or watched any asynchronously, since the final interview with Vance Stevens, on December 26, 2011. Therefore, I consider this date as the date of my exit from the field.

**Taking fieldnotes.** During my fieldwork, I took fieldnotes of both textual (e.g. email) and non-textual data (e.g. live sessions, design of the wikis), describing my observations. Also, following Kozinets' recommendations about the crucial role of fieldnotes in netnography, I inscribed my own experiences, and engagement with the community, as well as my reflections. In that sense, my fieldnotes also acted as my research journal.

While taking fieldnotes in real-time, as I was engaging in an activity or a site of the community, I took notes on an A4 size notebook, writing by hand in front of the computer (See Appendix C for sample hand-written fieldnotes). During asynchronous participation, it was easy to take detailed fieldnotes even in these notebooks. Therefore, overall, my hand-written fieldnotes looked much more detailed than quick notes. I filled one and a half A4 size notebook, resulting in a total of 190 pages. Later, I typed these fieldnotes in MS Word into my pre-prepared fieldnote sheets which ended up consisting of a total of 110 pages of typed fieldnotes (see Appendix D, for a sample of typed fieldnotes).



I began taking fieldnotes on January 12, 2011, and the last time I took fieldnotes was October 17, 2011. While taking fieldnotes, I wrote down the beginning and the ending time of my fieldnote-taking chunks, in order to further understand how much time I spent ‘in the field’ engaging in participant observation. Table 3.1 below shows the frequency of my fieldnotes in terms of times (days) and total hours per month. The table only shows the time I spent while engaging in the field, taking hand-written fieldnotes.

Table 3.1  
The amount of time I spent taking fieldnotes in the field

<i>Months</i>	<i>Times</i>	<i>Total Hours</i>
January	6 times (i.e. on 6 different dates)	12 hours
February	11 times	13 hours
March	8 times	13 hours
April	6 times	12 hours
May	3 times	3 hours
June	4 times	5 hours
July	-	-
August	4 times	11 hours
September	6 times	11 hours
October	2 times	2 hours
<i>Total</i>	<i>50 times</i>	<i>82 hours</i>

This table shows that I took fieldnotes and engaged in participant observation on 50 different days during my fieldwork with an average of about five and a half days a month. As is showed, on average, I spent one and a half hours on each of these 50 different days, and took about four pages of hand-written fieldnotes on each of these days.

### **Online Interviews**

In addition to online participant observation, I also interviewed nine webheads in order to be better informed about the background and organization of BaW workshops

and Learning2gether events, and individual members' learning journeys and experiences throughout their participation in this community.

**Deciding on the informants.** There were two key informants I knew I wanted to interview: Vance Stevens<sup>1</sup> and Teresa Almeida d'Eca. Vance is one of the co-founders in this community, and has been very active in the community since then, initiating various efforts such as the WiAOC conferences and the Learning2gether events. Therefore, I wanted to gain a better understanding of the background of these events from his point of view. Also, Teresa was one of the co-founders and all-time coordinators of the BaW workshops, together with Dafne Gonzalez. Because Dafne had health concerns during the time of my fieldwork, I ended up having a one-to-one interview about the BaW workshops just with Teresa.

In addition to the BaW coordinators, I also wanted to get perspectives of BaW2011 moderators. I sent an email to all nine moderators to request a focus group interview. I received responses from only two of them, and because we were not able to arrange a time that worked for all of us, I ended up interviewing Mohammed (a pseudonym) and Heather (a pseudonym) individually on different days and times.

In order to gain insider's perspective, I had also planned to interview five webheads. Before beginning the study I only wanted to recruit five long-term, active members according to a set of criteria I developed. Soon after I began my fieldwork, I started discovering various participation patterns and realizing how 'active participation' in this community would yield a variety of meanings. Therefore, I then wanted to look

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<sup>1</sup> In order to give credit to these key individuals in the formation and sustainment of this community, and maintaining some of the sites the community uses, as well as organizing the BaW workshops and Learning2gether events, I use these individuals' real names throughout this dissertation, with their permission. Those names that are not indicated as a (pseudonym) at various points in this dissertation are real names of these individuals.

for diversity among my informants in terms of their experiences, background and participation in this community. I also wanted to select these informants among members who I thought would be comfortable talking to me because of our previous connections during BaW2007, TESOL 2010 conference. Three informants, Nancy, Megan, and Hessa (all pseudonyms) were such connections. I met the other two informants Amal and Beren during my fieldwork. All in all, I followed a purposeful sampling procedure in selecting my informants (Patton, 1990, 2002).

In addition to the reasons above, I thought each of these individuals would bring a different perspective. Nancy was a long-term member, who seemed to be active and visible to the others in the community since I met her in BaW2007. I was also able to meet her face-to-face during TESOL 2010 Convention. She had some interesting roles in the community that had emerged naturally over the years, which I discovered during my fieldwork. Also, her name kept appearing in the emails and in the activities of the community. She had been teaching English for many years, and teaching with technology relatively more recently than her teaching with English. She is an American residing in the US.

I met Megan in BaW2007. We had things in common (e.g. raising a daughter around the same age, keeping a blog about our daughters, etc.). Although we did not interact regularly or undertook a project together, we had kept in touch through Facebook, blogs, and other Web 2.0 technologies. We finally met face-to-face during TESOL 2010, had lunch and dinner together, and attended a few sessions together. Therefore, I had established a face-to-face connection with her as well. Interestingly, during my fieldwork, she almost never contributed to the emails, which made me think

that she perhaps left the community. However, meanwhile, her name appeared among the coordinators of other EVO sessions, and she was one of those actively presenting with other webheads at TESOL, volunteering in the EV, etc. over the years. Therefore, many webheads knew her face-to-face, and she was in touch with many of them. That triggered my curiosity and I chose to interview her. She is an American residing in Japan.

Amal was a very unique informant in my study, because she just emerged as an informant during my fieldwork, as one of the most active participants of BaW2011 (which she joined as a new member of the community), who continued this active participation in the evonline2002 and Learning2gether events after BaW2011. Therefore, she was not a long-term member when I interviewed her, but was actively participating in the community activities during my fieldwork. I wanted to interview her because of this active involvement, and because I had already observed her interactions to a great extent during my fieldwork. She had already started collaborating with others, interacting in the evonline2002 email list, and participating and presenting in Learning2gether events. In that sense, I wanted to capture, perhaps in more 'real-time', her evolution from a new member to a full participant over that year. I have never met with Amal face-to-face. She is from Egypt, a country that I had no connections with. For these reasons, I wanted to know more about Amal's story.

I knew Hessa from BaW2007, as she was one of the moderators of this event. I was impressed by her friendliness, active involvement, and technology expertise, even though she had three young kids, and was living in Sudan, a country considered a limited-technology environment. In that sense, her name always stayed with me since BaW2007. Although I had engaged in synchronous interaction a couple times during my

participation in BaW2007, I have not met her face-to-face. However, she did not seem to be very much involved during my fieldwork. Then, we received a long email from her one day, stating all the reasons why she had not been very active, but lurking mostly, in the community for a long time. Also, during my interview with Teresa, she mentioned that Hessa had recently finished her PhD, which was inspired by her involvement with Webheads, and had found a position as a CALL specialist in Saudi Arabia thanks to her involvement with Webheads. I was very much impressed by this story. For all these reasons, I wanted to hear Hessa's story.

Beren and I are both from Turkey, but her name was never familiar to me. During my fieldwork, she sent emails a few times, but she did not seem to be a very active participant in the evonline2002 email list. One day, she sent an email asking others to contribute to her MA thesis, which was on online professional development, and she wanted to know about Webheads' experiences. A lot of participants responded to her request, including me. Also, some of the well-known webheads also seemed to know her, as they were trying to recruit support in the email list for her study. This attracted my attention. Although I did not see her often in the emails, she seemed to be known by webheads. I thought this would bring another level of diversity to my pool of informants, and I wanted to know her story and perspectives. I wrote her an email, introduced myself and my research, and requested to interview her. She graciously accepted. This was how we met.

To sum up, each informant was located in different places, their engagement and their history with the community differed, and I happened to know them differently. In

the Table 3.2 below, I give an overview of these informants with respect to the characteristics of each that I explained above.

Table 3.2.  
Overview of the informants

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>How &amp; When We met</i>	<i>Initial Reasons for Selection</i>
Vance	Abu Dhabi	Through BaW2007 but did not have direct contact before my fieldwork	Co-founder of the community; coordinator of the Learning2gether events
Teresa	Portugal	Through BaW2007; had contact with her a few times before my fieldwork	One of the first workshop members; all-time co-coordinator of the BaW workshops
Mohammed	Morocco	BaW2011 workshop; did not have direct contact before the interview	BaW2011 moderator
Heather	France	BaW2011 workshop; did not have direct contact before the interview	BaW2011 moderator
Nancy	United States	Through BaW2007; also met face-to-face in TESOL2010	Long-term member active member; seemed to have certain emergent duties in the community; active in the emails & TESOL Electronic Village (EV)
Megan	Japan	Through BaW2007; also met face-to-face in TESOL 2010; kept in touch through social media	Long-term member; not active in the emails, but collaborating with others in presentations and offering other EVO sessions
Amal	Egypt	During BaW2011; did not have direct contact before then	First-time Webhead during my fieldwork; active in the all main activities I participated
Hessa	Saudi Arabia	During BaW2007; interacted during that time; did not interact after that	Long-term member since 2005; originally from a limited-technology environment (Sudan); PhD and a new career as a CALL specialist because of Webheads
Beren	Turkey	Met during my fieldwork, through an email she sent to the evonline2002 email list	Active in other EVO sessions; some long-term members seemed to know her well; doing research with Webheads

**Conducting the interviews.** In order to establish a personal connection and tone in my emails, I approached each informant individually to solicit their voluntary participation. After they accepted my request, we arranged a time and I sent my interview questions to the informants through email, so that they could take a look at my questions beforehand. While my questions for the BaW coordinators and BaW moderators (Appendix E) aimed at understanding how these workshops are organized, my questions for the five informants (Appendix F) took more of a narrative approach, as I wanted to know their histories with Webheads, in order to understand how they learn with Webheads, what their participation looks like, and how their participation and engagement with this community further informs their technology integration practice and their TPACK development. These interview questions took a narrative approach because narratives reveal important information about and insight into how individuals experience their world (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

My interview with Vance turned into a Learning2gether event on Elluminate, where a few other participants were going to be present. Because I thought that the session would have a panel or a presentation look, I created themes to go over with Vance and other voluntary participants during the session. Under each theme, I also had a few prompting questions for each theme to have the conversation started, and to give an overview of what I wanted to know about these sessions. (Appendix G). I did share these themes and prompts with Vance, but I did not share them with others who were present in the session, since I did not know who would be present before the session. However, on

the session announcement, the community was informed that the session was going to be an interview with Vance about the background of Learning2gether events.

Except for the Learning2gether interview, I conducted all the interviews on Skype. During the interviews, I left the decision to activate their webcams to the participants. I did not specifically ask them to activate their webcams, thinking that if they wished and were comfortable to do so, they would. Only two of the participants activated their webcams from the start of the interview with their own will. I conducted the other interviews through the audio-only feature of Skype.

I conducted one interview with each informant. The interviews ranged from 36 minutes to 86 minutes, with a total of 10 hours. I recorded the interviews via Audacity audio editing and recording software. I transcribed five of them myself and had the remaining four transcribed by trained transcribers. We all used Express Scribe transcription software, freely available online (<http://www.nch.com.au/scribe/index.html>). The interviews yielded 177 typed pages.

### **Archived Data**

Throughout my fieldwork, it was difficult to pinpoint what data to archive, what not to archive, because everything was already accessible through Internet, and because all the activities that I was engaged as a participant observer were already archived. In that sense, what I archived for myself were screenshots from my observations, in order to capture what a wiki, or a site that I observed looked like at the time of my observation. Also, I printed out one article published by Teresa about BaW workshops and her involvement with Webheads, which was used as a reading material during the last week of BaW2011. Additionally, for further coding and content analysis, I copied and pasted



all the evonline2002 email interactions that occurred between January 1, and October 30, 2011, into MS Word. This yielded around a total of 1600 emails, around 1000 pages. Other than these, I signed up for a social bookmarking account, Diigo, which I learned from Webheads. On this account, I bookmarked the links to Webheads' sites and activities, in order to have access to them from one place when necessary.

### **Data Analysis**

In a qualitative research project, "data collection, data analysis, and report writing are not distinct steps" (Creswell, 2007, p. 152). Thus, while I was collecting data for this study, I constantly engaged in a reflexive and analytical period that further informed my coding and analysis of the data I had.

### **Analyzing the Main Activities**

In general, across my data, I followed an inductive analysis approach by coding, categorizing, and themeing (Charmaz, 2006; Duff, 2008; Saldana, 2009) by reading through the data, and annotating and memoing on the margins (Appendix H and I). While doing so, I applied a culture analysis lens following Moran's (2001) framework of products, practices, perspectives, persons, and communities, in order to better understand the culture of Webheads in Action online community of practice. In Moran's framework, all these dimensions are interrelated, intersecting, and interacting with each other in complex ways. Although, for example, it is usually difficult to talk about only the cultural products, or only the practices, etc., Moran offers this framework for foreign/second language teachers when integrating culture in their language classes for developing students' intercultural awareness and understanding. While teaching this framework to my students in a graduate class, I made connections between teaching about culture and

studying the culture of WiA focusing on products, practices, perspectives, and the people in this community. In that sense some of the questions that I asked myself in this process were: “What are some of the practices in this community?” “What products can be identified with these practices?” “Who are involved in these practices?” “What perspectives are communicated through these practices and products?” etc. Applying this framework as an analytical lens in this process, I examined my written annotations in the margins for any information that characterized the organization and function of each of the three main activities (BaW workshops, Learning2gether events, the evonline2002 Yahoo Group), in terms of products, practices, perspectives, and people associated with each. In doing so, I also incorporated my own experiences and understandings of each activity (categorizing them as “my experience”).

Additionally, because email interactions were not a structured, organized activity in the sense of BaW workshops and Learning2gether events, but were based on textual interactions, I followed an inductive content analysis approach (Elo & Kyngas, 2008) to discover the forms of engagement in this textual data, and to understand the content of the emails. By doing so, I aimed to create a coding scheme for participant’s engagement in this community’s practice. Following Charmaz’s (2006) initial coding approach, I annotated the first 200 emails, and as I was annotating, patterns started to emerge. As can be seen in the Figure 3.2 below, I was engaged in a cyclical process. While reading the email data, I was creating my codes according to the patterns emerged. I created a Word document for myself to write down these patterns as they emerged and I constantly checked to revise and categorize my codes as I continued to read (Appendix J). Throughout this process, I also consistently revisited my research questions and

theoretical frameworks (i.e. CoP and TPACK). I read and coded the data in this manner, until a time when no new codes were appearing. I read and coded the first half of the data this way, until no new codes started to appear, and finalized my coding scheme.

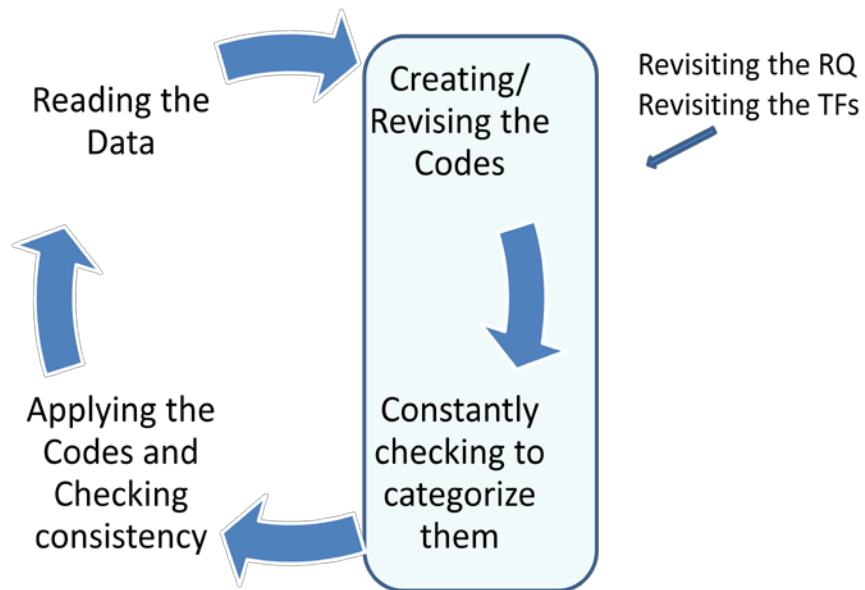


Figure 3.2. My cyclical process to create a coding scheme for the email data.

At the end of this process, two major engagement patterns emerged in the data: community-oriented and practice-oriented engagement. *Community-oriented pattern* indicated engagement in discussions/practices/discourse oriented towards building and developing the sense of community among members, and they were not directly related with technology (Appendix K). This pattern revealed seven different forms of engagement: 1) support, 2) collaboration on community events, artifacts, and projects, 3) enhancing professional development, 4) new member orientation, 5) socializing, 6) connecting the local to the global, and 7) fostering community discourse and identity.

The *practice-oriented pattern* revealed engagement oriented towards the practice of this community that could be described as “exploring pedagogical uses of web-based or other types of technologies in English language teaching” (Appendix L). Because of

this, I used the components of the TPACK framework as my codes to make sense of the data in terms of mediation of TPACK while technology-related interaction took place in the emails. Because there are seven components of the framework, I had seven main categories: technology; pedagogy; content; technology and pedagogy; technology and content; pedagogy and content; and technology, pedagogy, and content. Because the category *technology* appeared much more frequently than others, as I read the emails, I divided it into sub-categories, which yielded six sub-categories: seeking help with technology (T1); technical trouble-shooting and problem-solving (T2); sample technology use (T3); discussing affordances of technologies (T4); sharing technology resources; (T5); technology updates (T6).

Because the practice of this community entailed exploring web-based technologies as they apply to language teaching, I wanted to have a sense of how much their interactions in these emails centered on such practice-oriented engagement and how this would mediate each other's technology learning. Therefore, I decided to look for the frequency of the practice-oriented codes on a partial amount of email data. Before determining the frequency of the practice-oriented codes, I first wanted to see if these practice-oriented codes made sense to others, and to check the inter-rater reliability. I trained three different coders: two of them together in one sitting for two hours, and one of them at a separate time again in one sitting for about two hours. In both meetings, I first explained my codes to them, going over the descriptions and examples in the coding scheme. Then, we coded a sample of five emails together as I demonstrated them how I would code. After that, I gave them ten pages of emails and we coded individually for about half an hour. Once we finished our individual coding, we checked and discussed

our codes until we reached an agreement. At the end of this training, I gave each one of them 100 pages of emails (a total of 300 pages) from the remaining half of the emails that I had not yet coded (a total of 500 pages). As my coders coded these emails individually over two to three weeks, I coded them myself concurrently as well. After that, I gathered the coded emails back and checked for consistency with my own coding.

The results showed that out of the 444 email segments that I coded, 162 did not match with my coders. In other words, for 162 segments in these 300 pages of emails, my coders and I used different codes to label the segment. This meant that, with this process, we were able to reach 63% agreement. I later studied those segments with divergent results deliberately, to have a sense of the possible sources of these discrepancies. What I realized was that this happened because my coders had no engagement with this community, and it became evident that for this reason, they did not understand the messages the same way I did. My codes reflected my extensive observations, participation, interactions with the community members, and my engagement with this community and its practice. However, they did not have my background, neither with this community nor with its practice, or the technologies they used. The most discrepancies, for example, occurred in terms of T3 (Sample technology use) and T5 (sharing technology resources). There were times that I coded a shared link as sample technology use because it was something created by the member who sent the email, which would act as a sample use of that technology for me. In contrast, my coders, naturally, did not know that the link indicated that person's own use of this technology as they were not familiar with the person. Also, embedded codes or double codes (when a statement or a segment in the email could go into more than one category) were also problematic.

Sometimes they missed some codes that I found embedded within others, or I coded a segment with two codes as I found it was relevant for both categories, but they coded the same segment with only one of these codes.

This process, overall, was an important discovery for me. My experience throughout this process taught me that perhaps interrater reliability in this case was not applicable, because my coders had to perceive and experience this community and their interactions the way I did, in order to make sense of the data more or less the same way that I did. This aim also seemed to be in contrast with qualitative research principles and, in particular, with ethnography. In support of my experience and stance, Armstrong, Gosling, Weinman, and Marteau (1997) also found in their study that inter-rater reliability is not really relevant in some types of qualitative research, because of the “inherent subjectivity” that is “freely acknowledged in qualitative research,” and the fact that “all accounts are unique” (p. 605). They also pointed out that “all analysis is a form of interpretation and interpretation involves a dialogue between researcher and data in which the researcher’s own views have important effects” (p. 605). Therefore, after seeing that my coders and I interpreted the data in a different way, and realizing that it was going to be impossible to find another person who had the same views and experiences with the community and who had the same understanding of the TPACK framework, I accepted 63% agreement as a reasonable outcome for my purposes. All in all, because I was the one who was going to use the information in this data to understand this community, I decided to rely on my own codes and understandings to interpret the interactions in the email data.

## **Analyzing the Interviews with the Individual Members**

In my interviews with five members of this community I wanted to learn about their learning journeys with this community. Therefore, I again analyzed my interview data inductively, searching for shared categories and themes among these journeys, emerging in the data (Chapter 7). After reading, rereading, and annotating each of their transcriptions, I came up with four themes to describe each learning journeys in a coherent manner: 1) joining Webheads, 2) contributions and collaborations, 3) technology use before and after Webheads, and 4) their definitions of a Webhead.

Later, in an attempt to understand and interpret similar patterns and experiences in their learning journeys, I conducted a cross-case analysis (Yin, 2009) among the learning journeys of these members (Chapter 7). This analysis revealed seven themes across these five cases: 1) centrality of BaW workshops, 2) from technology consumers to technology leaders, 3) the essence of contribution: interaction, 4) learning while lurking, 5) the attraction of interculturality; 6) meaning of membership; 7) constructing a global experience from the eye of a local.

## **Ethical Considerations**

Although information posted online becomes public knowledge for the most part, ethical issues should still be considered when using this knowledge for research purposes (Kozinets, 2010). Therefore, especially in a study (such as netnography) that uses online data, transparency and self-disclosure are necessary in order to observe ethical considerations. Following Kozinets' suggestions, I observed the procedures below to be able to conduct an ethical netnography.

First of all, I wrote an email to Vance Stevens describing my study, purpose, and study procedures in order to get his approval. I further wrote an email to Teresa, as she was another key person in this community to inform her about my research. Both were pleased to hear about my study and strongly encouraged my involvement in the community as a netnographer.

Also, as I described earlier on page 78, I created a dissertation website by using a Google site to display information about my study publicly for the community members. This publicly accessible site gave participants an opportunity to obtain information about this study at their own convenience, and helped me ensure self-disclosure, as recommended by Kozinets (2010).

In order to ensure anonymity in the text-based communication data that I collected through the evonline2002 email list, the BaW2011 email list, and the archival data available in the community websites, I deleted the names of the participants from the email content. I also used pseudonyms for my informants (other than the two key individuals, Vance and Teresa). Moreover, when there were other members' names in the emails that I used as examples throughout, I referred to them as [Name], or as a webhead from a certain origin or place (e.g. a Brazilian webhead).

Finally, as a courtesy to the members of this online community, I am planning to make a copy of my dissertation publicly available upon completion. This way, I plan to return the contribution they make to my study.



## **Trustworthiness**

### **Credibility**

In order to enhance the credibility in this study, I triangulated my data sources, data collection methods, and data analysis (Patton, 1999, 2002). I collected archival data (e.g. screenshots), elicited data (e.g. interviews), email communication data, and observational data in the form of fieldnotes. My data collection procedures included my observations, interviews with others, and my own reflections. In my analysis, I used a variety of analytical perspectives in line with the theoretical frameworks that I used in this study. Moreover, I triangulated my analysis across the data to achieve a broader understanding of the culture of this community, “checking findings against others sources and perspectives” (Patton, 2002, p. 563).

### **Dependability**

In this study, I believe I addressed the issue of dependability by keeping memos and reflections, and by providing detailed descriptions of how I collected data and analyzed each source of data. In addition, I followed a member-checking procedure (Patton, 2002) by sending the transcriptions to the interviewees, and asked them to confirm what they have said.

### **Transferability**

A qualitative researcher does not intend to generalize findings in a study; thus, in this study, I did not aim for generalizability. Rather, it is important for the reader to see if the phenomenon in a particular context can transfer to another context (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Therefore, the rich and thick descriptions of my data collections, analysis, and of this online community of practice that I provide throughout this dissertation

(Chapters 3-8) enhances transferability of this study and its relevance in contexts beyond itself (Schram, 2003; cited in Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Ultimately, a researcher who wants to conduct a similar study of another community is likely to transfer my procedures to his/her own context as applicable. On the other hand, it should also be acknowledged that each community has its unique culture, and each ethnography, therefore, has unique findings that pertain to this culture and community. Moreover, writing of ethnography is influenced by the ethnographer herself. Therefore, Richardson (2000) suggests other ways of evaluating ethnography, rather than transferability of the findings to other cultures and communities. She suggests five criteria: *substantive contribution*, the degree of contribution of the piece to our understanding of social life; *aesthetic merit*, the degree of the creative analytical practices opening up the text, inviting interpretive responses; *reflexivity*, the degree of the author's subjectivity as the producer and the product of the text; *impact*, the degree of the text to influence the readers emotionally and intellectually and to generate new questions; and *expressing a reality*, the degree of the text to embody a sense of lived experience and to be a "credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the real" (Richardson, 2000, p. 254). From this point of view, in this study, as well as in this dissertation, I paid attention to representing the culture of the Webheads community as much detail as possible, in the light of my observations and experiences. In doing so, I believe I also managed to achieve reflexivity by not only providing my own reflections and interpretations of those experiences and observations, but also describing my background with this community and how I grew an interest for studying this community ethnographically. As would happen in any ethnographic writing,

I acknowledge my own voice in constructing of this ethnography of the Webheads community.

### **My Role as the Researcher**

As I explained before, I first got to know *Webheads in Action* when I participated in the Becoming a Webhead workshop in 2007. During this workshop, I actively involved with the community through the activities organized in this workshop. This previous engagement gave me an opportunity not to ‘get lost’ in cyberspace, as I tried to find out the spaces of this community that scattered around. In addition, being familiar to the community and conducting participant observation practices enabled me to provide both an emic (insider) perspective and an etic (outsider) perspective in this study. My status in this community allowed me to make sound and informed interpretations of the data and my observations. This was particularly clear to me when my coders and I had discrepancies in our coding of the same data. They did not have the insider knowledge that I held about this community, and thus could not understand a lot of the references in the data. Also, my previous involvement with the community helped me avoid being considered a complete stranger which would, otherwise, have complicated ethical and practical issues.

On the other hand, I do acknowledge my bias about the role of participation in this community on teachers’ professional learning because I myself experienced positive outcomes. However, by interviewing others about their own experiences, I believe I balanced that to some extent. Also, more than providing a cause-and-effect relationship about the effect of participation in this community on teachers’ learning to teach with technology, my purpose has been to understand and describe how this learning occurs.

## **Limitations**

This study is a netnographic study to explore and understand the issues and phenomena unique to the online community of focus. For this reason, the results of this study cannot be generalized to other cases and/or to the population of all online community members. Also, although I attempted to find similarities in their experiences with this community, it should be acknowledged that every individual in this study has their own perspectives and lived experiences with the community that are difficult to generalize to all the members of the community registered in the evonline2002 email list.

The members in this online CoP are probably also members of several other CoPs in their professional lives. Therefore, their professional learning as regards to pedagogically-sound technology integration into teaching might be mediated and affected by their engagement in these learning experiences as well. Their narratives and lived experiences within this community might only account for a part of it. In addition, I interpret each of their accounts by relying on the self-reported data provided by the participants. I can only know and describe here what they have told me in my interviews with them.

Hermeneutics is a key approach to data analysis in qualitative research. It “reminds us that what something means depends on the cultural context in which it was originally created as well as the cultural context within which it is subsequently interpreted” (Patton, 2002, p. 113). Along this line, from the hermeneutic theory, “one can only interpret the meaning of something from some perspective, a certain standpoint, a praxis, or a situational context, whether one is reporting on one’s own findings or reporting the perspectives of people being studied (and thus reporting their standpoint and

perspective)” (Patton, 2002, p. 115). As such, I analyzed the data in this study through my own eyes and mind, in the light of my own lived experiences, level of expertise, my social contexts, and my understandings, filtering all of this through the culture and social contexts of the community that I studied. Had another researcher conducted this study with this community or another, s/he could have interpreted the data in a different way, or his/her findings might have differed in the light of his/her own experiences and understandings in life.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I have provided a detailed description of my research design focusing on my research questions, research approach, the community, data collection and analysis methods. Additionally, I have presented a discussion of how I conducted an ethical netnography, and how I ensured trustworthiness. I finished this chapter by presenting the potential limitations of this study.

## CHAPTER 4

### WEBHEADS' PRACTICE: BECOMING A WEBHEAD

*“Webheads is a world-wide, cross-cultural, and vibrant online-community of educators with an open enrollment for anyone who wants to join. [...] These educators also display a deep warmth and dedication to helping others. They are evolutionary and enterprising scholars who are harmonious and know how to have a lot of fun.”* (A description of Webheads from [webheadsinaction.org](http://webheadsinaction.org), Fieldnotes, Aug. 10, 2011)

As I embarked upon my journey with Webheads in 2007, I think I was still holding just an ear of an elephant or its tail, maybe its leg, to understand the whole elephant. When my systematic fieldwork started in January 2011, I began to gain a fuller picture of this community, starting to realize that this elephant was larger than it had originally looked from my limited perspective. Therefore, I ended up being selective about the online spaces and the activities around which I centered my fieldwork.

During my netnographic fieldwork, I observed that there are three major activities that are central to Webheads' practice: 1) Becoming a Webhead (BaW) annual workshops, 2) The evoonline2002 Yahoo Group, 3) Learning2gether Weekly Sunday Sessions (as a continuation of Webheads in Action Online Convergence (WiAOC)). These activities were the most obvious and salient community activities during my fieldwork, and I center my cultural analysis on these activities, my experiences/observations and information that I collected from my participants, and my participants' opinions about and experiences with these activities. In the following two chapters, I will describe each activity in detail through my findings and discoveries

during my fieldwork, focusing on artifacts, practices, perspectives and meanings that characterize each in various ways. In this chapter, I begin with presenting my findings about the Becoming a Webhead (BaW) annual workshops.

### **Becoming a Webhead (BaW) Annual Workshops**

#### **Background**

As I indicated before, I was introduced to the Webheads community and its practice through a Becoming a Webhead (BaW) workshop in 2007. Throughout the years that I distanced myself from the community (2008-2011), these workshops were still offered each year as part of Electronic Village Online (EVO) sessions, as always. Before my fieldwork, I did not know about the background of these workshops.

Although some members originally became in touch through a student-teacher network in 1998, WiA first emerged as a teacher-only online community at the end of an EVO session in 2002, entitled *Webheads in Action: Community Formation Online and its Role in Language Teaching*. After this workshop, Webheads did not disband and continued to interact through the original Yahoo Group created for that workshop, the *evonline2002*. As the group gradually grew into a community of English language professionals, who worked towards developing their expertise in web-based, computer-mediated technologies and their applications in English language teaching, it became difficult to orient new members to the *evonline2002* because they were novice in these technologies and their applications. Having become Webheads after the original workshop in 2002 and having experienced the challenges of learning to teach and catching up with these technologies, Teresa Almeida d'Eca and Dafne Gonzalez began to think that a “back-to-basics” workshop is needed, especially for the new members.

Therefore, as Teresa explained in our interview, the main idea behind the BaW workshops was to orient new members to the Webheads community in order for them to better keep up with the community and its practice:

“I felt that the Webheads in Action were evolving too fast and maybe in a way that was keeping new participants, new members away, because they felt intimidated. They felt that we were kind of veterans and gurus, and so on, and did not feel comfortable in joining us, because they thought we knew it all. This was the feedback we were getting from people, and members, who knew other people were interested but would not join because of these reasons. Dafne and I thought a back-to-basics workshop, of the type we had in January 2002, would be good [...] and the name [*Becoming a Webhead*] came from Dafne.” (Teresa Interview)

As can be understood from Teresa’s statements, the idea behind the BaW workshops emerged as the existing members wanted to expand their community to others. However, it was difficult for the existing members to orient new members exclusively through the email list, because they were engaged with more advanced discussions about technology. This brought the online workshops back, but with a different name: “Becoming a Webhead.” This new name implied a transition to a new identity for the new participants; as they learned to teach English with meaningful technology integration, they became Webheads. In my opinion, the name of the workshop also indicates that the transition to Webhead-ness does not happen on its own, and there are certain processes and characteristics behind it, which are all delivered directly or indirectly in this workshop. As participants engage in the activities of the workshop and interact with new and old members, they are oriented to the practice and eventually become a Webhead. For



example, sharing, helping and interacting are important constructs to Webheads, and this is modeled during these workshops. In other words, one is not born a Webhead, but s/he 'becomes' one, and this workshop is what this 'becoming' entails. As would happen in any other community of practice, members go through an identity transition towards becoming a Webhead.

Since January 2004, BaW workshops have been offered each year. The content and the design of the workshop has been kept similar to the 2002 workshop, introducing participants to web-based tools that can be used and repurposed for English language teaching. It also shows the new members the ropes to becoming a Webhead, by orienting them to the practices and interests of the community members who have already experimented with these web-based tools not only in this community but also in their own teaching. In our interview, Teresa also mentioned that, according to her records, by the time BaW2011 ended, there had been about 2500 people who had participated in these 8 annual workshops (including BaW2004), representing 98 countries all over the world. Some of the participants continued their involvement with the larger community (Webheads in Action) after the workshops were over, while others did not.

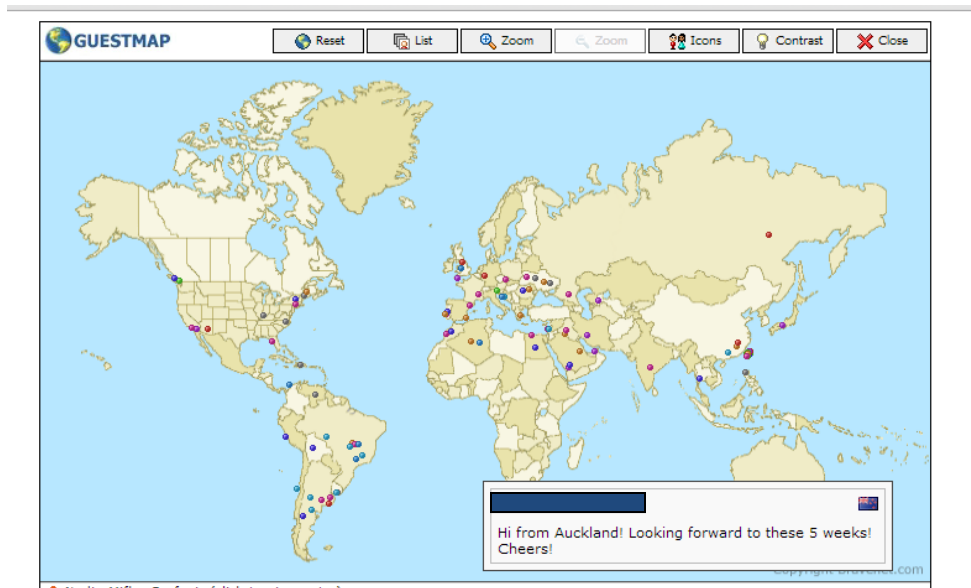
### **BaW Workshop Content and Design**

Similar to the past workshops, BaW2011 started on January 10 and ended on February 23, 2011, lasting for five weeks. Though in the past it always lasted for 6 weeks, all the EVO workshops lasted for five weeks in 2011, because the TESOL Convention was held a week earlier in 2011, which caused this change in EVO sessions timeline.

I decided to start my fieldwork, or ‘enter the field’ by engaging in the BaW workshop first. The reason was because these workshops only last for a certain period of time and they only happen once a year. Therefore, I registered myself to the BaW2011 email list on Sunday, January 9, 2011, and then received the confirmation email with general information about the workshop and links.

**BaW wiki.** As it had been before, the central venue for the workshop content and activities was a wiki created on pbworks.com, an open access free wiki service (<http://baw2011.pbworks.com>). It included all the materials and information needed for the five weeks, and was co-constructed by the coordinators (Teresa and Dafne) and ten moderators (two per week) prior to the beginning of this workshop, and was modified as necessary throughout the workshop. In that sense, the design of BaW workshops resembles an online course, except the that all the work is carried out on a voluntary basis, through open access services, and without a grading system.

On the front page of the wiki, we, as participants, were invited to pin ourselves to an online interactive map (Figure 4.1), which allowed coordinators and moderators as well as us, the participants, to gain a sense of where each participant was located, as well as the geographic diversity that existed in this workshop. At the same time, it gave us a chance to experiment and have hands-on practice with this web-based technology while developing an idea of how it might be used in online teaching to build a sense of community among participants. Meanwhile, from this very first moment, we already began actively contributing to the construction of the main workshop wiki.



*Figure 4.1.* A screenshot of the interactive map of BaW2011 wiki. This map shows some of the participants spread around the world.

As can be seen in Figure 4.1 above, what was also helpful with respect to community building was that when we clicked on the various dots, we were able to see which participant was there and read their short introduction and greeting. From this moment, as a BaW participant myself, by seeing an example in practice, I further learned that Bravenet Guest Maps was a free web-based technology that can be embedded in a wiki easily. In other words, by participating in this workshop, I was able to see and experiment with the open access web-based tools that are used in online teaching and communication, and their affordances.

As was the case in the past, the workshop followed a weekly syllabus as would be expected from any online course. The wiki was created as the central venue and all the information and links to the content and activities could be found on this wiki by visiting them on the sidebar (Figure 4.2)



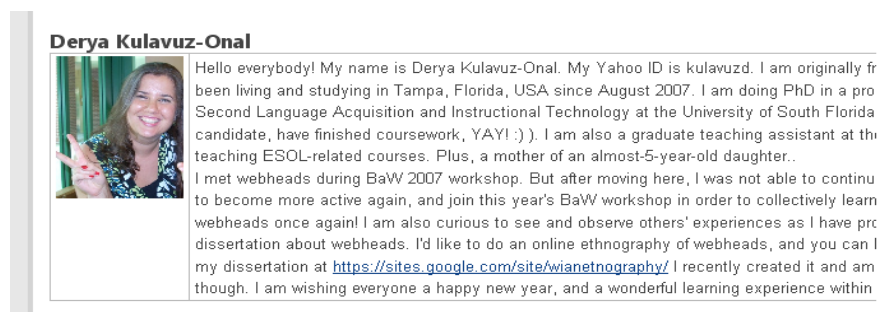
Figure 4.2. A screenshot of the BaW2011 wiki sidebar

As can be seen on this sidebar, activities were designed on a weekly basis, and there were links to the other workshop resources such as readings, live sessions, tutorials, etc. As Teresa also confirmed in our interview, there were participant pages to give the participants a chance to contribute to the workshop wiki content, showcase their work throughout the workshop, and experiment with wikis (e.g. playground page).

Similar to previous BaW workshops, the purpose of the first week was for participants to get acquainted with the main communication tools, such as the BaW2011 Yahoo Groups email list, and introduce ourselves to the others. Moreover, the first-week readings overviewed internet etiquette (i.e. netiquette), and strategies and suggestions on how to be a successful online learner. These first-week activities set the tone and attitudes

expected during the following weeks. I had requested to receive daily digest emails, and I immediately observed a tremendous flow of emails beginning this first week, participants asking questions, briefly introducing themselves to others.

As part of the first week activities, we were supposed to introduce ourselves to others through the email list, as well as copy and paste this introduction on the Participants' Profiles page on the wiki. When I visited this page, some participants had already contributed their own introductions, so I read a few examples first. Meanwhile, the coordinators had also created a template to make it easy for us to include our information. I immediately hit the 'edit' to write my introduction, but then I realized it had been a while since I last edited a wiki page that I forgot how to upload my photo. I felt frustrated, but my frustration did not last long since I was able to find instructions on how to upload a photo on the top of the page, thanks to our moderators. As can be seen in Figure 4.3 below, I finally was able to upload my photo, and wrote my introduction, using this opportunity to disclose my identity as a netnographer at the same time.

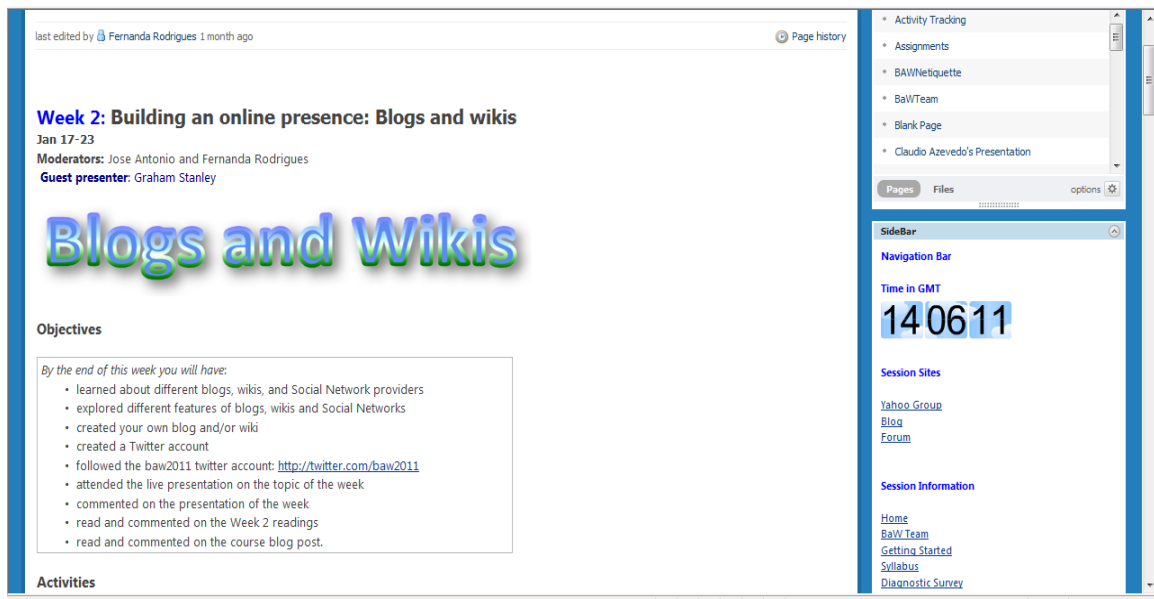


*Figure 4.3.* A screenshot of my introduction on the Participants' Profiles page on BaW2011 wiki.

This experience taught me that these workshops are designed for both novices, who would consider themselves as knowing nothing about technology, and those of us who

consider ourselves as knowledgeable about technology. I realize that there is learning potential for all of us in this Webheads' activity.

After this first week, as illustrated on a screenshot of week 2 activities in Figure 4.4 below, each week had a different technology focus and had its own page on the wiki. In BaW2011, participants had a chance to explore blogs and wikis during week 2, and they experimented with various synchronous and asynchronous voice, text, and chat tools, such as Twitter and Skype, in week 3. The main topic for week 4 was online exercise creators such as Hot Potatoes and Script-O, while during the fifth and final week, participants learned about blended learning. These topics and the sequence were similar to what was offered in BaW2007. However, I soon realized that the actual



*Figure 4.4.* A screenshot of Week 2 Activities page on BaW2011 wiki. This week's activities centered on Blogs and Wikis and their applications, integration into English language teaching.

technologies used, or introduced, this year (or what could be done with each) showed differences, because of the new emergent technologies. For example, in 2007, Twitter or

Facebook had not been developed or commonly used yet, so we did not explore them in any of the weeks during BaW2007. This again contributed to my impression that there is always a learning experience for everybody in these workshops, regardless of their prior experience in teaching with technology.

Depending on the content of the week, on the wiki page of a particular week, participants were provided with

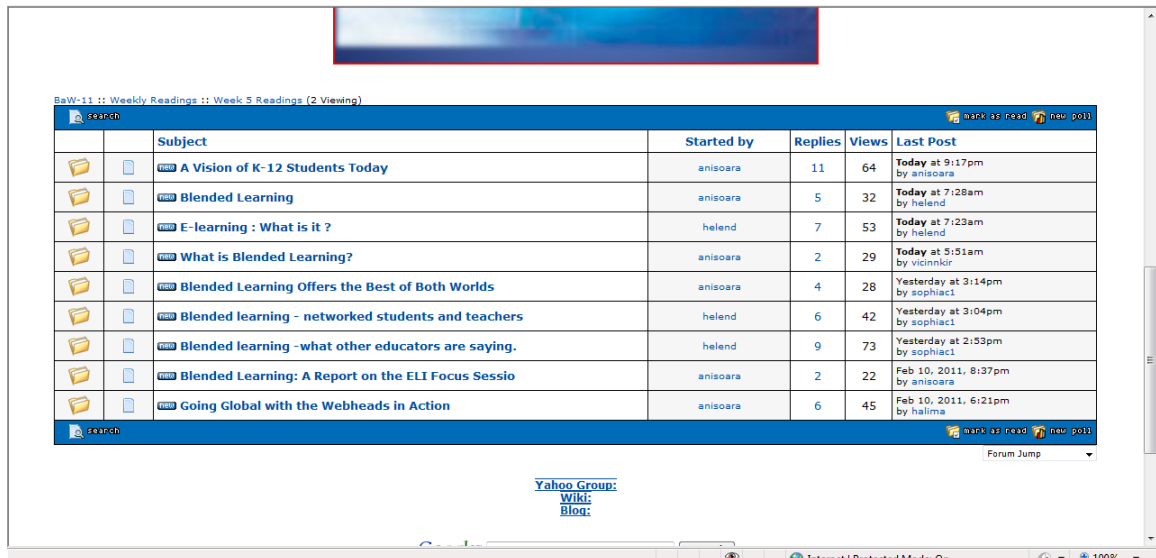
- a) objectives of the week, (e.g. “By the end of this week you will have commented on the presentation of the week” (Fieldnotes, Jan. 27, 2011)),
- b) activities/tasks to be completed by the participants for that week (e.g. “Post your intros to the BaW11 Yahoo Group email list, and then copy and paste it to the Participants’ Profiles page on the wiki” (Fieldnotes, Jan 14, 2011)),
- c) suggested readings, and videos relevant to the topic of the week,
- d) useful links to the relevant technologies and Web 2.0 tools (e.g. platforms, such as Blogger, where participants can create a blog account, on a week on blogs)

Most of the tasks to be completed each week aimed at providing opportunities for participants to start using these Web 2.0 tools themselves. For example, as I also experienced myself, when participants were asked to “post intros to the BaW11 Yahoo Group email list, and then copy and paste it to the Participants’ Profiles page on the wiki”, they experimented with editing a page on a wiki themselves, which could be useful if and when they used wikis in their own classes. In other words, they first learn to use online tools themselves, with the support of a community, before using them with their students. Moreover, as illustrated from an excerpt from my fieldnotes about a week 1

reading below, the workshop content and readings could be used as resources for our own teaching.

“The title of the article is “what makes a successful online student?” It gives advice to participants as to what to do in order to be able to keep up with the workshop. It reminds them that an online course is a more convenient not an easier way. At this moment, I also began to think that I can use these articles in the future in my own online courses, in order to orient my own students to some basics of online learning and share some hints with them.” (Fieldnotes, Jan. 20, 2011)

**BaW forum.** In BaW2011, an online forum through a separate online forum service, Proboards.com, was created for the discussion of the readings. As shown in Figure 4.5, this forum was used for the participants to discuss their reflections on the readings under separate weeks and threads. Although in BaW2007, we used the email



*Figure 4.5.* A screenshot from the online forum page created for the Week 5 readings. As there were a lot of readings for that week, the moderators created one thread for each and participants commented on those they read. As everything was on voluntary basis, participants were not required to read all of them at the same time.




list to discuss the readings, this serves as a good example of how BaW workshops are designed in a way to utilize and illustrate the uses of new technologies. Although the use of online forums are not the topic of any week during this workshop, it apparently models for participants the idea of how to use free online forum services in online or blended courses. Although I was familiar with online forum sites (in my own experience), I was not familiar with this particular online forum service, and it did not occur to me earlier that I could incorporate it if I were to teach online, using free tools. As I indicated in my fieldnotes below, this also gave me an idea that by incorporating these open access tools, one can design online courses or workshops with all the affordances of a Learning Management System without the need of subscribing to a costly one, such as Blackboard.

“Proboards, which is a forum service provider is again a free service. The design of this whole workshop is a form of a learning management system (LMS) such as Blackboard, but this one is completely free. The only difference I feel is the fact that not everything is at one place, and you have to know all these other tools, and combine them together. The wiki here serves as the central place. All the other places are available through links in the sidebar from this wiki. For example, we do have a forum area that serves like a discussion board in an LMS. Here, we also have Elluminate virtual room available for all Webheads. So, all these show me how to create an online course management system by using free tools available on the Internet. But it is important to have one central place and everything is linked from there. However, I think it is also important to see such examples for teachers to think of these possibilities on the internet, to be aware of


these tools, and know how to use each of them separately.” (Fieldnotes, Feb. 20, 2011)

**BaW live sessions.** Another common practice during the workshop was the weekly live sessions. As also happened in BaW2007, each week, there was a guest speaker invited to conduct a synchronous session over Elluminate<sup>2</sup>, to which Webheads have free access through a virtual room provided by a grant from LearningTimes.net. or a similar web-conferencing platform. On the wiki, there was a separate page for Live Sessions on which participants could find information about each speaker, the content of their talk, date and time in Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), and the link to participate (Figure 4.6).

**Week 1**

Speaker	Speaker's Bio	Venue and Time in GMT
 BJ Berquist	BJ Berquist is an art teacher at the Loysville Youth Development Center, a residential male juvenile <a href="#">correctional facility</a> in central Pennsylvania, USA. She was involved in the planning of the Civil Rights Forum held in TAPPED IN in May, 1998, leads several discussions at TAPPED IN, and is a Help Desk volunteer. BJ is an Associate Educator at TAPPED IN and edits the Tapis Newsletter and the Events Calendar. Look at <a href="http://www.tappedin.org/info/members/bj.html">http://www.tappedin.org/info/members/bj.html</a> to learn more about what she does at TAPPED IN and to see her smiling face!	<a href="#">Tapped In</a>  Tour: Wednesday, Jan. 12 16:00 - 17:00 pm GMT  <a href="#">Session page</a> <a href="#">Leave comments on blog</a>

**Week 2**

Speaker	Speaker's Bio	Venue and Time in GMT
 Graham Stanley	Graham Stanley works for the British Council, as social media consultant for English Language Innovation, UK and as a teacher at the Young Learner Centre in Barcelona, Spain. He also teaches at the school of Tourism of the University of Ramon Llull in Barcelona. He has a M. Ed. in ELT & Educational Technology and is particularly interested in the application of emerging technologies to language learning and teaching.	<a href="#">Elluminate</a>  Tuesday, Jan. 18 20:00 GMT  <a href="#">Session Page</a>  <a href="#">Leave comments on blog</a>

**Week 3**

Speaker	Speaker's Bio	Venue and Time in GMT

**Week 4**

Speaker	Speaker's Bio	Venue and Time in GMT

**Navigation and Sidebar:**

- Diagnostic Survey
- Live Sessions
- Tools
- Readings
- Videos - Tutorials
- Graduation
- Graduation Party
- Weekly Activities
- ACENDA
- Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4
- Participant pages
  - Participant profiles
  - Participant profiles page 2
  - Playground
  - Participant productions
  - Penballing Projects - Find
  - Final Reflections
- Help pages
  - Doubts **new!**
  - Glossary
  - Hints
  - Elluminate-Tutorial
  - BAW Netiquette

Figure 4.6. A screenshot from the main Live Sessions page on BaW2011 wiki.

<sup>2</sup> In 2007, there was another web-conferencing platform, Alado.net, used for these live sessions, which is no longer available.

After each presentation, the moderator of that week created a separate “session page” on the wiki and put a link to this page from the “live sessions” (Figure 4.7)

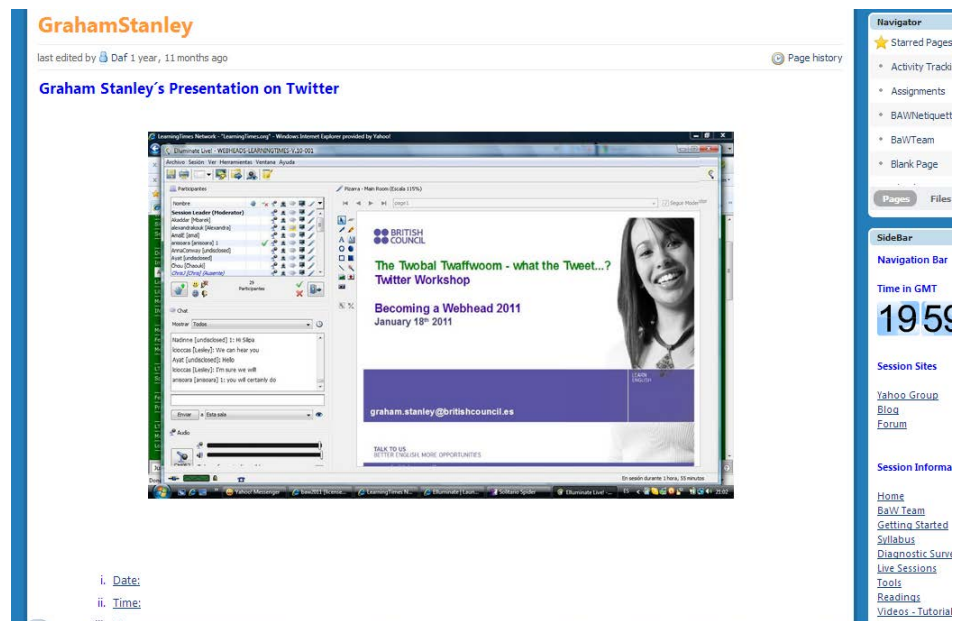


Figure 4.7. Sample page for the Week 2 live session. The full page can be visited at <http://baw2011.pbworks.com/w/page/35098816/GrahamStanley>

On session pages, participants could find information on who participated in this live session (synchronous presentations conducted by the guest speakers of the week), slides used during the session, the link to the session recording, and sample screenshots from the session. In this year’s workshop, most of the guest speakers were also Webheads that contributed to email interactions throughout my fieldwork.

A typical live session conducted by a guest speaker seemed to be very interactive. For example, one that I attended synchronously was by Rita Zeinstejer, from Rosario, Argentina, who seemed to be a long-time Webhead; I was familiar with her name previously. Her session centered on various Google applications and how they could be used in the language classroom (Figure 4.8). The weekly moderators were present during

the session, and Teresa, the coordinator, began the session by giving instructions on how to use Elluminate. This was followed by an introduction of the presenter. I saw the information on the first slide that said “Google Certified Teacher”. Apparently, Rita was very experienced in Google applications in the classroom as she also held this certificate from a place named Google Teacher Academy.

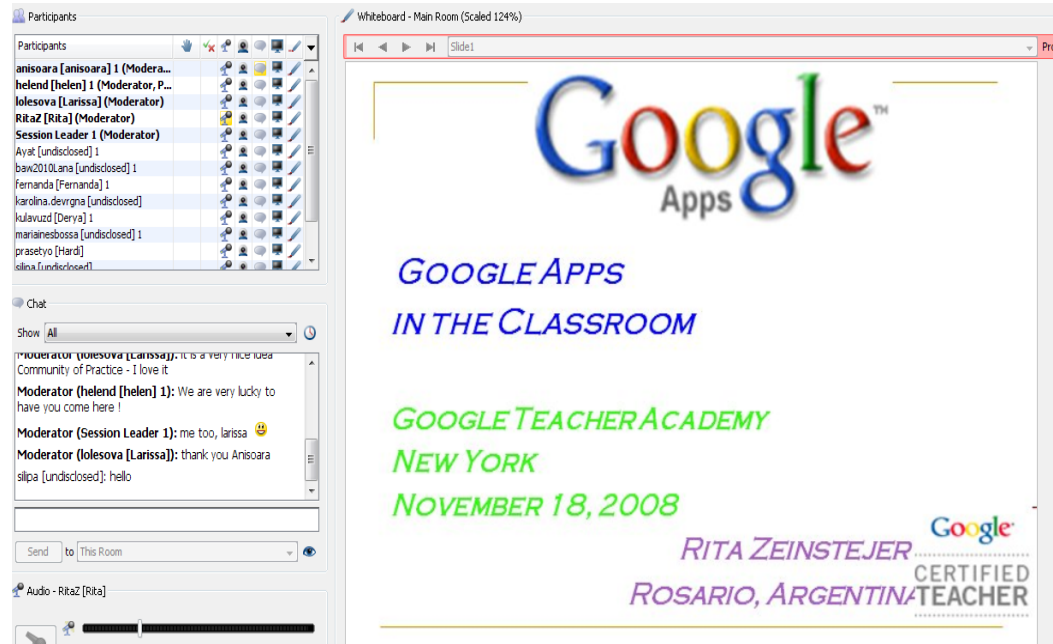


Figure 4.8. A screenshot from Rita’s live session on Google Apps. The session page can be visited at <http://baw2011.pbworks.com/w/page/36149717/RitaZeinstejer>

During the session, while most of the time Rita spoke through the microphone going over her presentation slides, participants interacted continuously on the chat window. They also addressed questions to Rita over the chat window from time to time. When Rita asked a question, participants, in return, answered her through the chat window as well. The chat window was also used to make comments on the content of the session (See Appendix M for the complete chat log of the session). It was casual in a way, as some participants just jumped into the sessions as their schedules and time zones permitted.

This looked typical to me in this global workshop. However, each time a participant entered the room, the moderator and others welcomed the participant, displaying their awareness of the joining participants. This welcome sometimes appeared to be in the participant's mother tongue. For example, during this session, when a participant with a nickname "Philfrance" entered the session, Teresa welcomed him with a "bonjour", knowing that he was a participant from France.

Once again, during this session, although I felt I already knew a lot about Google applications, I realized that there were various applications that I was unaware of. Moreover, Rita gave ideas and examples as to how learners as well as teachers could use those applications for various purposes. She also shared her own uses and projects she carried out with these applications with her own students. These all gave me new ideas of how to utilize them for my own personal use as well as teaching practices. Meanwhile, as can be seen from an excerpt from my fieldnotes below, my learning, as a participant in the live session, was not only limited to the content of the presentation that the presenter delivered.

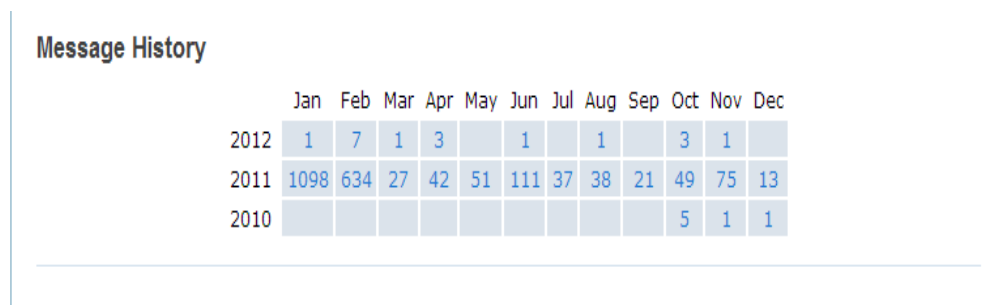
"Now Rita talks about Google Earth, and asks us how as teachers we can integrate this into our classes. Participants give answers through the chat window. Their answers are mostly about using it for virtual tours of places in the world. I have done this for my personal uses, but not in the classroom. Something to consider in the future.. Some said that it can be embedded into other Google applications. One talks about Littour; this is the first time I hear about this tool (something worth exploring later!). Next applications she talks about are Google Mobile, Google Lit, Google Groups. I am unfamiliar to Google Mobile and Google Lit.

Again she gives ideas on what students can do, and what teachers can do with it. She then talks about Google Maps. She asks participants how we can integrate maps into our ESL lessons. People say in the chat area that it can be used for lesson on giving directions. Teresa raised her hand and took the microphone. And explained how she used it once with her elementary students. Through Yahoo Messenger, she connected with several Webheads and had her students interview them. Then students pinned these Webheads on a map and created a speech bubble for each person in which they provided brief information about him/her that they got from their interviews. Another application mentioned in the session is Google News. Then she provides us a web tour of the page. I had not known this function in Elluminate. She opened this page and the participants were able to navigate through the website, scroll down or up, with their own wish. It was good to learn about it. I might later explore and find how to activate this on Elluminate.” (Fieldnotes, Feb. 11, 2011)

Because of the lively and interactive nature of these sessions, we learned from each other even though the session lasted about an hour. Through the content of this session, interactions that occurred throughout the session, and the way the presenter used Elluminate, I became aware of other Google applications, enriched my repertoire of ideas on how to integrate these applications, and learned new functions of Elluminate.

**BaW Yahoo Group email list.** I experienced that each workshop communication tool had a different function throughout the workshop. While Elluminate was used for live sessions, a blog was created for participants to reflect on the live sessions. The wiki was the central workshop area, and an online forum board was used for the discussion of

the weekly readings. Apart from these, BaW2011 Yahoo Group email list remained the main communication tool among participants. Participants exchanged not only professional but also personal emails through this email list, with a total of 1732 emails during January and February. After the workshop ended, the email exchanges dropped off considerably, and with the beginning of the following year’s workshop and the new email list created for that workshop, the previous workshop email list was no longer used. The Figure 4.9 below, a screenshot of the current message history on BaW2011 Yahoo Group email list, illustrates this fact.



*Figure 4.9.* Message history on BaW2011 Yahoo Group page. It shows the frequency of messages per month.

As I observed, in addition to other functions (such as reminders, announcements, weekly introductions and closings), the BaW2011 Yahoo Group email list was especially used for technical support and general communication outside the main focus of the workshop. For example, during BaW2011, current events that affected some of the BaW participants (particularly the protests in Tunisia and Egyptian revolution) were the topic of some of the emails. During those times, participants sent each other encouraging emails to show support of their cause (e.g. “My warmest congratulations to Egyptian BaWers and all Egyptians and the freedom lovers all over the world for the success of their revolution and toppling” (Mohammed, Email, Feb. 11, 2011)). Additionally, at

times, as can be seen in the example below, participants sent emails expressing feelings of frustration or that expressed being overwhelmed, which received replies with emotional support from the moderators and other participants.

“Dear BaWers and Moderators,

Wallwishers and Vokies turn out to be another reliable supplies [resources] in my teaching conditions [context]. What do I need to do to sign in, are these tools free, etc.? However, I have become really sort of exhausted, as it seems to me. So, if I am not be able to do the last tasks, please don’t blame me. The course is terrific indeed but the content is hard for me.” (A participant from Russia, Feb. 10, 2011)

“Do not worry, you have been a terrific webhead these weeks. Just put the rest of the tools on your list for later. Once things settle down, you can try them one at a time at your own pace. Remember, you can always ask questions to use, we never stop being Webheads.” (A moderator’s reply, Feb. 10, 2011)

“It is really simple and quick. Just follow the instructions Yoon posted in one of previous letters. I paste them in for you here.” (A participant’s reply, Feb 10, 2011)

As can be seen from these messages, not only the moderators but also the participants assume a helping role. Meanwhile, the moderator’s statement “we never stop being Webheads” is particularly interesting in that it refers to a cultural value of Webheads and how it is important for them to continue helping others or never getting tired of responding to questions.

**Graduating as Webheads.** One of the unique characteristics of BaW workshops is the fact that participants graduate as Webheads at the end of the final week of the



workshop. At that time, they are invited to register with the main Webheads Yahoo Group email list, [evoonline2002](mailto:evoonline2002), to be able to continue interacting with the larger Webheads community. During BaW2011, there was a synchronous virtual ‘graduation party’ that took place on Elluminate, on February 13, 2011 at 1500 GMT. Two separate pages were created on the BaW2011 wiki: one for graduation (<http://baw2011.pbworks.com/w/page/36021103/Graduation>) and another one for the virtual graduation party (<http://baw2011participants.pbworks.com/w/page/36016084/GraduationParty>). On the graduation page (Figure 4.10), the agenda for the graduation party was available, and we followed this agenda throughout the synchronous party.

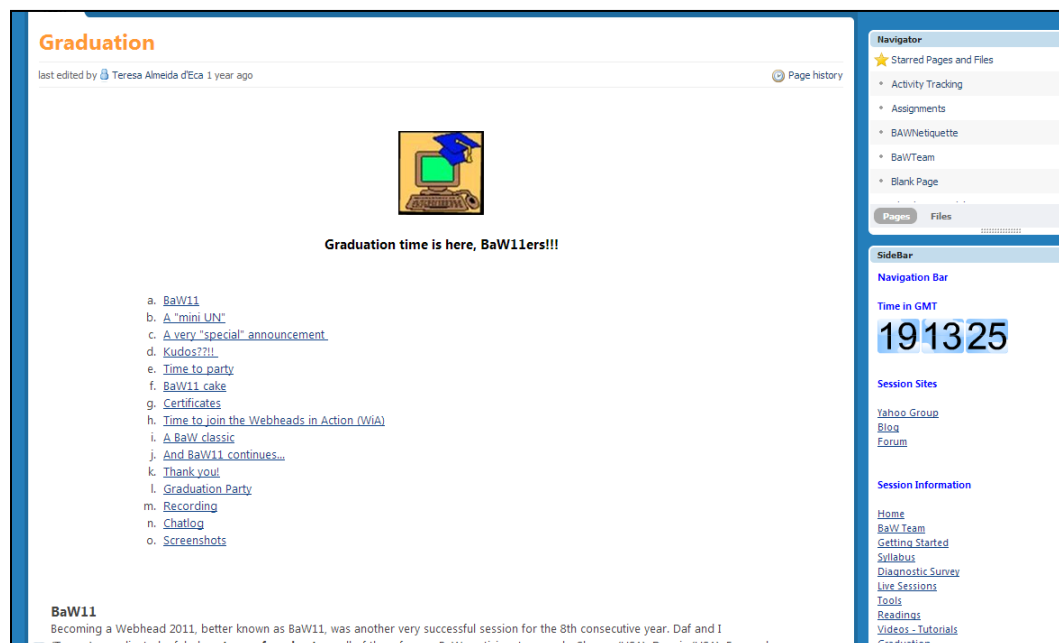
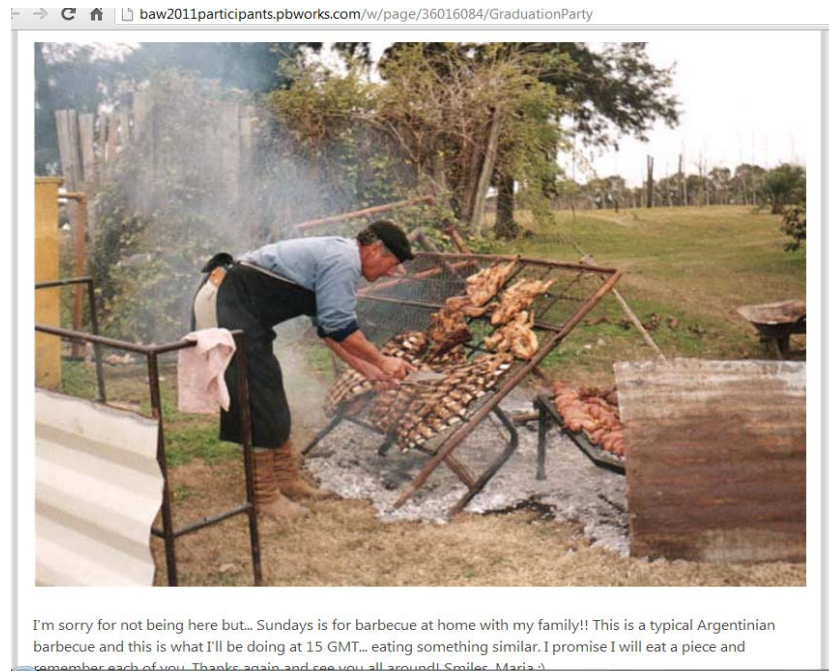


Figure 4.10. Screenshot from the graduation page on BaW2011 wiki.

On the graduation party page, on the other hand, participants were able to contribute to the page by writing messages and posting images of ‘what they would bring with them to

the party'. Not surprisingly, many of the participants chose to 'bring' some famous dishes from their countries, one of their favorite culture-specific recipes, or locally-produced wine, flowers, chocolate, or fruits. Also, those who were not able to attend the party sent messages about graduation through this page. This page again helped us feel the spirit of the global community and learn some culture-specific food from other cultures. For example, one participant from Argentina was not able to attend because she had a family barbecue every Sunday afternoon that she had to attend. Because of this, underneath her message, she put a picture of a typical Argentine barbecue (Figure 4.11). This was the first time I had seen such a barbecue, so it was a cultural learning experience for me to go through these pictures on this page as well.



*Figure 4.11.* Argentine barbecue. A screenshot of the image pasted by a BaW participant on the graduation party page on BaW2011 wiki.

A total of 19 people attended the virtual graduation party including Teresa, moderators, and participants. Teresa was the main speaker this time, and she led the graduation party through the agenda provided on the graduation page (Figure 4. 12).

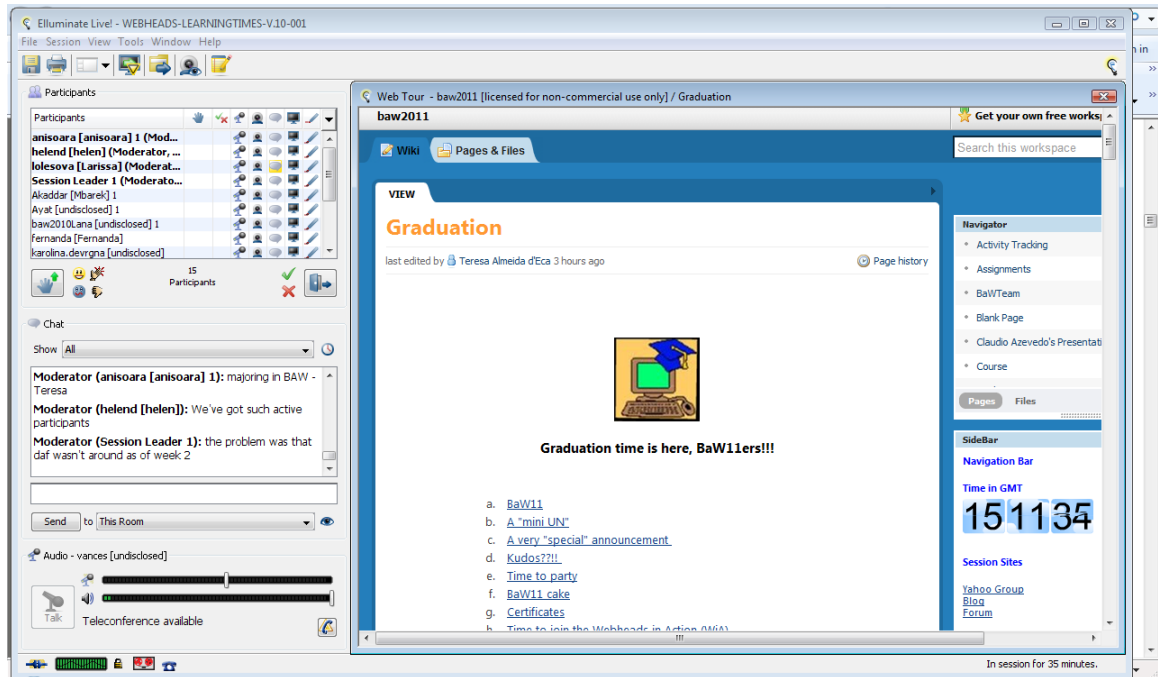
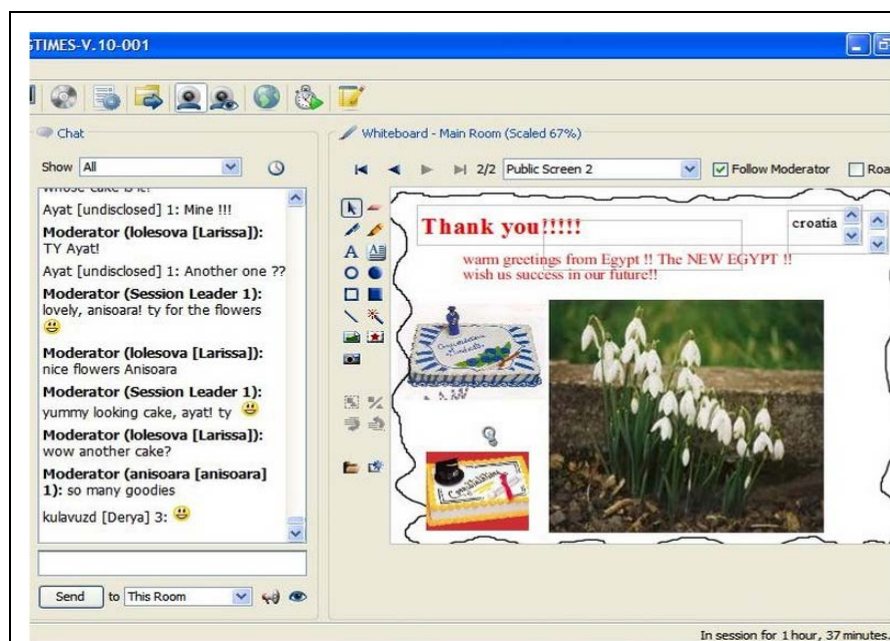


Figure 4.12. A screenshot from the synchronous virtual graduation party.

During the party, participants took turns holding the microphone and reflecting on their experiences about the workshop and their experiences, as well as expressing special thanks to coordinators and moderators. As can be seen from Figure 4.13 below, towards the end of the session, participants collaboratively contributed to the whiteboard on the screen by writing thanks, posting pictures representing thankfulness (e.g. flowers).



*Figure 4.13.* A screenshot participants' contribution to the whiteboard on Elluminate during the graduation party.

Because BaW is carried out with all voluntary efforts, and it is open to everybody with an internet access, there is not certificate provided at the end. As I recall, we were not given any official or unofficial certificate at the end of BaW2007. However, in BaW2011, symbolic certificates electronically signed by Teresa and Dafne were provided for the participants. More interestingly, as seen on Figure 4.14, this time the families of participants were not forgotten either. Because the five-week workshop was so intensive that it required most of us spent a considerable amount of time in front of the computer, neglecting our husbands, wives, and children, BaW coordinators did not forget to appreciate their cooperation as well. This gesture again was a good illustration of the extended family behind this online community. This showed me how Webhead spirit was extended to others, including families of the participants.



*Figure 4.14.* Sample Certificate of Appreciation presented to the neglected family members of the BaW participants. The certificate had three versions: one for “neglected husbands,” one for “neglected wives,” and one for “neglected children.”

As coordinators knew that the five-week workshop took much of the participants’ time, their families’ contribution to this effort were not forgotten. I thought these certificates for the family members helped participants to feel increased sense of belonging to the community.

In a similar vein, during the graduation party, Teresa ‘brought’ a ‘digital’ graduation cake that was made by his husband for BaW2011. As can be seen on Figure 4.15, this graduation cake symbolized the continents represented in this workshop, and key words (to probably symbolize 2011) in the shape of candles: interaction, community, socialization, 56 countries, warmth, “start small”, friendship, sharing, caring, collaboration, motivation.



*Figure 4.15.* The digital BaW2011 graduation cake.

These eleven words summarized the essence of BaW, but in my opinion, they also represented general Webheads values and characteristics. For example, throughout my fieldwork, I came across several examples of collaboration, friendship development, sharing and socialization. I also observed constant interaction within the community through the evonline2002 email list, social network sites, etc. At the same time, the word ‘hugs’ in this digital cake was the way many Webheads closed their emails to each other. In that sense, the graduation cake with the meaningful words chosen also helped participants to transition into being a Webhead.

### **BaW Team**

During my participation in BaW2007, I had noticed that some people were designated as ‘moderators’ during these workshops and some other would call

themselves the ‘coordinators’. At that time, my only understanding of both identities (from my informal observations and participation) was that these people were involved with Webheads before. I I was unaware of the amount of commitment, organizational work, and volunteerism behind these workshops.

During BaW2011, Teresa and Dafne were the coordinators, as they were in BaW2007. Although originally I did not pay attention to the difference between a coordinator and a moderator, during my participant observation, I noticed there is actually a difference, and to my surprise, I learned that Teresa and Dafne were the two names behind the idea of BaW workshops. They got to know each other during the initial workshop in 2002 when Webheads were formed. As they continued interacting with Webheads after that workshop, they developed a friendship. Soon they realized that the newcomers were somewhat ‘lost’ in the advanced technological dialogue and expertise among Webheads, and they came up with the idea of bringing the back-to-basics workshop again. With help from Vance, they started these BaW workshops, and they soon became a phenomenon because they attract many participants and thus they have been offered every year since 2004.

Because Dafne was sick throughout BaW2011, I could only interview Teresa about the history and behind-the-scenes of BaW workshops and the responsibilities of a coordinator. As Teresa pointed out, the coordinators’ main tasks were deciding on the overall syllabus and weekly topics, creating the main wiki and its design, overseeing the workshop, and being present for help throughout the five intensive weeks. In addition, with the 2004 workshop, they soon realized that they needed others to help with moderating these intensive weeks as well. At the beginning, they extended their requests

to other Webheads for their voluntary help with moderating. Later, as I understood it, invitation for moderation had become a carefully considered process, and represented privilege for those who were selected, as Teresa and Dafne started selectively inviting relatively new Webheads who have demonstrated active participation and contribution, and displayed strong enthusiasm throughout a previous workshop. As Teresa indicated, the criteria for the coordinators to extend an invitation to a previous BaW participant reflect Webheads' values such as commitment, sharing, interaction, contribution, and general helpfulness, kindness and friendly attitudes:

“It’s the way they contributed or the volume of activity on their part, because being a moderator implies being really involved at least during that week, being there answering emails in a timely fashion. So their enthusiasm, but also the human element in the sense that they know how to respond, they know how to be understanding to people, they are not aggressive in any way, [...] we are a warm community, and we always answer in a very polite way, and then we like people to have that kind of attitude” (Teresa Interview)

Every year, EVO coordinators receive proposals for EVO online workshops around July and August. Among these proposals, EVO coordinators decide on which ones will be offered as EVO workshops. Some workshops such as BaW and a few others that have been successful and proposed again, seem to be offered regularly. Once the proposal is accepted, the workshop coordinators (Teresa and Dafne, in the case of BaW workshops) start organizing the overall syllabus, and deciding on the web-based tools that will be used in order to carry out the workshop. As every year new technologies



emerge, this seems to be a necessary step. In 2011, for example, Teresa and Dafne added several web-based open-access tools in addition to the central wiki and Yahoo Group email list. They created an online forum board for the discussion of weekly readings, a blog for the summary and discussion of the guest presentations, and a Twitter account for the updates. During my participation in BaW2011, for example, I did not recall the integration of these tools in BaW2007. I remembered that we had used the Yahoo Group email list for almost everything that we were supposed to discuss. However, in 2011, there were separately designated spaces (a blog, a forum, a wiki, email list) for the discussion of different contents. This allowed us to be bombarded with fewer emails daily, and for the moderators/coordinators to create a more organized workshop that was similar to an online course but with open-access tools.

After the organization of the syllabus, as Teresa indicated, she and Dafne send invitations to some of the previous participants who they think that are suited to the moderator criteria that she explained above. In my opinion, it must be a privilege to be invited to moderate BaW, since it also means that your contribution and commitment as a participant was not overlooked and it is valued in this community. Therefore, it is a reward. Additionally, from the moderator's point of view, becoming and serving as a moderator not only helps participants develop their expertise in teaching with technology further, but it also contributes to the practice of the community from a different angle. While these members move from a legitimate peripheral participant to the full participant position in the technology-integrated teaching practice, they also collaboratively help develop the community's collective practice. At the same time, their identity and role in the community also shifts to a more expert position.

As I understand from my interviewees' comments, participants who receive those invitations also seem to be aware of the privilege of being invited to be a moderator. For example, one of my interviewees, Amal (a pseudonym) was very happy and honored to have received this invitation to be a moderator in BaW2012. According to her, this was an important step and success not only in her professional development and career, but also in her involvement with the Webheads community; she felt that her participation, involvement, and contribution was recognized, which encouraged her to be even more involved. Being a moderator, in that sense, is moving a step above in this community of practice. At the same time, from the CoP perspective, with an invitation to become a moderator, participants are given access to other resources of the community, and more opportunities towards full participation in the community of practice.

Once Teresa and Dafne receive confirmation from the moderators, they invite them to the central wiki, and the moderators choose the weeks they want to moderate. Meanwhile, around October, moderators participate in a free 5-week wiki-based moderator e-training organized by the EVO coordinators team. Because this is a wiki-based, asynchronous training, moderators follow the training by completing the assignments and the readings, and commenting on the readings at their own pace. As someone who had only been a BaW participant up to that time, I was not aware of this e-training, and it gave me the sense that people behind these EVO workshops put a great deal of commitment and carefully consider every aspect of these workshops. Knowing that they conduct all this work through voluntary efforts doubled the value of their work in my eyes.

Generally, two moderators moderate each week. As moderators work on their training modules, the two moderators for the same week also collaborate on the content, the guest speakers, and the wiki pages of their own weeks of the workshop. In doing so, they are given flexibility and freedom to design and modify the week as they wish. The previous workshop wikis, which are already available on the internet for free, also become a guiding resource for especially the first-time moderators.

I also learned that during the BaW workshop, BaW moderators and coordinators communicate through a separate Yahoo Group email list behind the scenes. This was of course something I was unaware of as a participant. One of the moderators, Mohammed, told me that this moderators' Yahoo group email list was particularly helpful especially when the moderator of the week does not have a direct answer to a participant's question. In this case, it is common for moderators to discuss the question, or the situation, on this list behind the scenes, and decide how to answer the participant. In my opinion, this is again a carefully considered system that brings a team spirit among moderators and makes them feel connected and supported. At the same time, it helps them to own the workshop as a whole, although each moderator is only responsible of their assigned week practically. On the other hand, it is a separate practice that is, understandably, not available to participants. The moderators' differing levels of expertise and their various locations around the world seem to necessitate such support mechanism for the moderators. Also, it appears that this practice creates a mini-culture in and of itself. Moderators go through certain steps and more explicitly learn the values appreciated within this community, before they begin implicitly or explicitly exhibiting these values during the workshop.

**Moderators' experiences and responsibilities.** During BaW2011, there were a total of 10 moderators (two moderators per week). All these moderators had recently been involved in one or more previous BaW workshops and had continued their engagement with the main Webheads community since then. As I was interested in learning about the procedures of becoming a moderator and the responsibilities of a moderator from an 'insider's perspective, I decided to interview a couple of moderators.

Mohammed from Morocco, who was one of the moderators during week 3 both in BaW2011 and BaW2010, first participated in a BaW2008 and joined Webheads afterwards. By the time he was invited to be a moderator for BaW2011 (for the second time), he had been a Webhead for two and a half years, and the fact that he was invited to be a moderator was a "beautiful surprise":

"In 2010 [for the 2010 workshop], Teresa invited me to join the training of moderators. It was a beautiful surprise for me. It was an email in which she said that she noticed my participation, my active presence along the workshop, and the way I tried to share everything I had. [...] I read it as a reward, to what I have been doing. [...] Many times as a participant, she told me that I was very resourceful. And every time I read somebody's calling for help, I just share resources with him or her. So I think the webhead spirit was operating in me." (Mohammed Interview)

It was my first time getting to know him in BaW2011. During my participation, I did notice his resourcefulness in the sense that he always made himself available not only during his own week, but also during other weeks.

Heather, a British citizen living in France, was a moderator for the second time, and moderated in Week 5 during BaW2011. Interestingly, she joined Webheads by registering herself to the evonline2002 mail list before participating in any workshop. Because this is a free open group, those who try to join through evonline2002 are confirmed to the group without any requirement. This was my second time hearing of a person who found out the Yahoo Group by other means and joined. However, as in the case of Heather and the other person that I know of, those who join the evonline2002 email list without being oriented to the community usually do not contribute very actively unless they already have technology expertise or they are known to other Webheads through other professional connections. For example, those who were usually active or 'visible' in the evonline2002 list during my participant observation were those who were involved in a previous BaW at some point.

While she was registered with the evonline email list, Heather received an email announcing BaW workshops and she decided to participate. She participated both in BaW2007 and BaW2008, but she admitted that she generally "lurked" in the workshops, since there was a lot to learn and it was difficult to keep up with all the information and participate actively at the same time. Once I learned this, I realized why I did not recall her name during my BaW2011 participation. If she was visible and active in BaW2007, my first BaW, I would have likely remembered her name.

She then was determined to participate more actively in BaW2009, and she kept her promise. Her 2009 active participation resulted in an invitation from Teresa to moderate a week in BaW2010. Although she was nervous at the beginning because of not knowing how much commitment was needed, and whether or not she would be

competent enough, she was very enthusiastic to take on the responsibility since she thought that “it was a way of giving back to the community”:

“I had such an interesting time because I’d started doing class blogs and things like that with my pupils, and continually every time I said “oh, could you just have a look at what my pupils have done?” There was always about 10 people at least who leap in and made comments and my pupils were just “wow”, you know, we’ve got people speaking, leaving comments from all over the world. So my pupils were amazed and I thought it [moderating] was a way of giving something back really”

(Heather Interview)

Both moderators received the asynchronous e-training organized by EVO coordinators. They both acknowledged that they learned and shared information about the essentials of e-moderating and e-moderating strategies to follow in these EVO sessions. As Mohammed puts it, moderators learn about e-moderating etiquette and strategies, as well as the EVO history and background.

“We learn many things, for example, how to present the week, the week syllabus, for example, when you start your week, you have to welcome the participants, you have to increase the participation... Techniques for example, to greet everybody in their own language, trying to be as friendly as possible, the ways you have to catch up and to give help and learn not to be aggressive with people... Techniques for communicating with the participants... Also, how to use the platforms, like Tapped-In, WIZIQ,

Illuminate [...] We also understand what is EVO all about, and its history.” (Mohammed Interview)

As Mohammed was explaining these, I started understanding better my observations of the general communicative abilities that moderators demonstrated throughout my participation in BaW2011. Apparently, this did not happen out of the blue, but this training helped them to develop their communication strategies necessary in e-moderation, as it is important for the participants to feel welcomed despite their being inexperienced in the field of technology integration.

For some moderators, as was the case of Mohammed and Heather, it is not the first time receiving that training; therefore, some of the concepts and information may be repetitive. However, because technology used in these EVO sessions may change from year to year, moderators’ training is adapted accordingly. For example, in 2007, synchronous sessions with guest speakers were always held on Alado.net, a web-conferencing platform, which was replaced by Illuminate in the more recent sessions. This change apparently was added to the trainings that both Mohammed and Heather received.

From what Mohammed and Heather told me, I concluded that BaW moderators’ responsibilities were similar to that of online instructors in a formal educational context. However, one major difference is that BaW moderators all work on a voluntary basis. Before the BaW workshop starts, they are responsible for designing the activities and content of their assigned week. Although they use the previous workshops’ wikis as guidance, they are given flexibility to design their week as they wish. They decide on the materials, activities, assignments, and the weekly live session presenter. In these

decisions, new trends in technologies and the moderators' knowledge and experience with these technologies play a role. For example, in BaW2010, Mohammed changed some of the readings, and added Twitter to the week's syllabus for the first time, since his week was about blogs, wikis, and networking. His decision was affected not only by his view on the importance of social media in communication today, but also his personal interest and active involvement in Twitter at the time.

By the time the workshop starts, each week's materials, content, tasks, etc. need to be well-prepared and ready on the wiki. Although, especially during the first week, all moderators are asked to welcome participants in one way or another, the moderators' major responsibilities start with the beginning of their assigned week. Each week's moderators send a welcome-to-the-week message to the participants at the beginning of their assigned week. The welcome message includes brief information about the content, objectives and activities of the week. At the same time, it provides guidelines to the participants on where to find detailed information about the week's activities and the live guest speaker session. During the week, moderators are also expected to send reminders to the participants about week-specific events and activities. Moreover, they are expected to read the email messages on the BaW email list during their assigned week, provide technical help and support accordingly, make sure no participant's email was left unanswered. For example, in my observations, I discovered that especially in the first week, moderators and coordinators paid attention to not leaving any participant introductions unanswered. This continued with providing detailed answers with step-by-step instructions to the technical questions and emails in the following weeks. As both moderators confirmed, if they needed additional help and support during their



moderation, they contacted other moderators and coordinators through the moderator group email list.

I observed that, in addition to being responsive to questions and comments all the time, moderators were very prompt in their replies, and it was not uncommon that they provided additional suggestions and their experiences with several web-based tools even though this was not necessarily an expectation from them. For example, in one email, during week 2, one of the moderators sent a detailed email on further suggestions on how to make blogs and wikis more interactive so that they attract more readers and visitors. Although the week was already on wikis and blogs, it was mostly about how to create a blog and a wiki, and share ideas of how to use it for language teaching purposes. In that sense, to provide additional strategies to these novice technology users was beyond the scope of the week's content and objectives. However, the moderator willingly spent time to share her experiences for those interested.

In addition to their responsibilities in email interaction, moderators are expected to be present during the live sessions, to not only actively participate in the session, but also to moderate the chat window, and to offer help to those who are having technical issues during the session. In one particular instance, for example, the moderators also provided assistance through the email list for a participant who had trouble logging in to Elluminate during a live session. In that sense, moderators used multiple means to offer help and support during their assigned week. Also, when participants complete the weekly readings and write their comments to the group or to the forum, moderators are also expected to respond. As Mohammed told me, although he was also teaching during

that week in his own school, he paid attention to check BaW emails and visit the blog and the forum regularly after he was back from school.

I soon understood that a moderator's job was time and energy-consuming in many ways, especially considering that it was all voluntary. For example, Mohammed indicated that it was difficult for him to respond to participants in email immediately since he is a non-native speaker of English, "I am not acquainted to being active in using English; I only use English for about 15 hours a week only at school. [...] I cannot just write and send an email; I need to do proof-reading, and try to modify before I send an email, and if you answer 10 emails a day (sometimes even more), it is time-consuming". Given the international scope of the community, this could actually apply to other moderators as well. Also, as moderators expressed it, sometimes they need to seek out the solution themselves to provide technical help, and then put it into digestible steps for the participants, before emailing the solution to them. Likewise, Heather also pointed out the challenges of time management during the assigned week: "Because you have to be available, and so you sort of warn of your family. And my husband goes 'oh, no! It's that time of year again', because he knows that there will be an online class on a Sunday or at lunchtime, or you know, I've got to make sure I can spend some time going through emails and also replying." This, at the same time, shows how reasonable to present these family members with the Certificate of Appreciation.

However, all this hard work seems to pay off at the end. As Mohammed and Heather acknowledged, this experience helped them see the other side of the process, and build more self-confidence in terms of teaching with technology and designing online courses. For example, Mohammed now felt that, through the moderating experience, he

developed abilities and confidence to successfully design curriculum for and manage an online course or online training:

“Generally speaking, I learned a lot about moderation. Now I have the idea of how to put into practice some kind of training; I can now design a training session, a workshop online, I can design it. I know what are the necessary steps to do it; for example, how I can start and design a course, finding moderators, speakers, etc. all the ways to organize a workshop. That’s a skill added to the tools, to the technological knowledge or information. It’s the management. I learned how to manage online courses. I couldn’t do it before. Now I feel confident enough to do it, to do it successfully” (Mohammed Interview)

Additionally, Heather also acknowledged the development of her technology expertise through this hands-on-training and first-hand experience of moderating an online workshop.

“I would strongly recommend [this experience] to everybody, you know, joining in on the workshops and helping out as a moderator. It’s a very rewarding and learning experience [...] I think little by little you gain skills that you didn’t have before. I mean you go from never having done a blog to in sort of two years to being able to organize online sessions” (Heather Interview)

As I was talking to the moderators, I assumed that they would transfer what they learn in these workshops into their own teaching contexts or vice versa. To my surprise, both moderators indicated that they worked in limited technology environments.

Mohammed was teaching in a school where there was no access to a multimedia room or a computer lab where teachers and students could teach and learn with these web-based tools. Similarly, Heather was teaching in a school where access to even basic computer and web-based applications were forbidden. Therefore, interacting with Webheads gave them an opportunity to develop and to continuously update their technological knowledge and skills. As Mohammed puts it, “learning and sharing with Webheads, learning online, learning in online communities, that’s the only way that I can be active; in real life I can’t.” He indicated that he would welcome the opportunity to be able to transfer what he learned in all these workshops in his own teaching context. However, only through his interactions with Webheads, he was able to stay updated and refreshed in his skills with teaching with technology. These experiences seem to illuminate other functions of the Webheads community in members’ professional lives and identities. It shows that it is likely what a participant learns through this community does not immediately translate to his/her teaching context. However, their continuation in participating and contributing to the community’s activities perhaps displays an interest to the partaking in the development of the community’s collective practice, rather than their own individual practices. As in the case of these two moderators, the community might be a place not only to interact with and learn from others, but also to put into practice what they learn from the community in another activity of the community.

### **Other Aspects of BaW Culture**

**GMT (Greenwich Mean Time).** Throughout my participant observation in Baw2011, I noticed some other cultural products, practices, and perspectives in these workshops. First of all, the Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) was used as the designated

time denominator throughout the workshop, as it had been in 2007. As seen in Figure 4.16, taken from the front page of BaW2011 wiki, participants were provided with the time in GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) on the right-hand side of the front page. With this, they had a reference point on the central venue of the workshop to keep track of the workshop activities that were held synchronously (i.e. in real time).

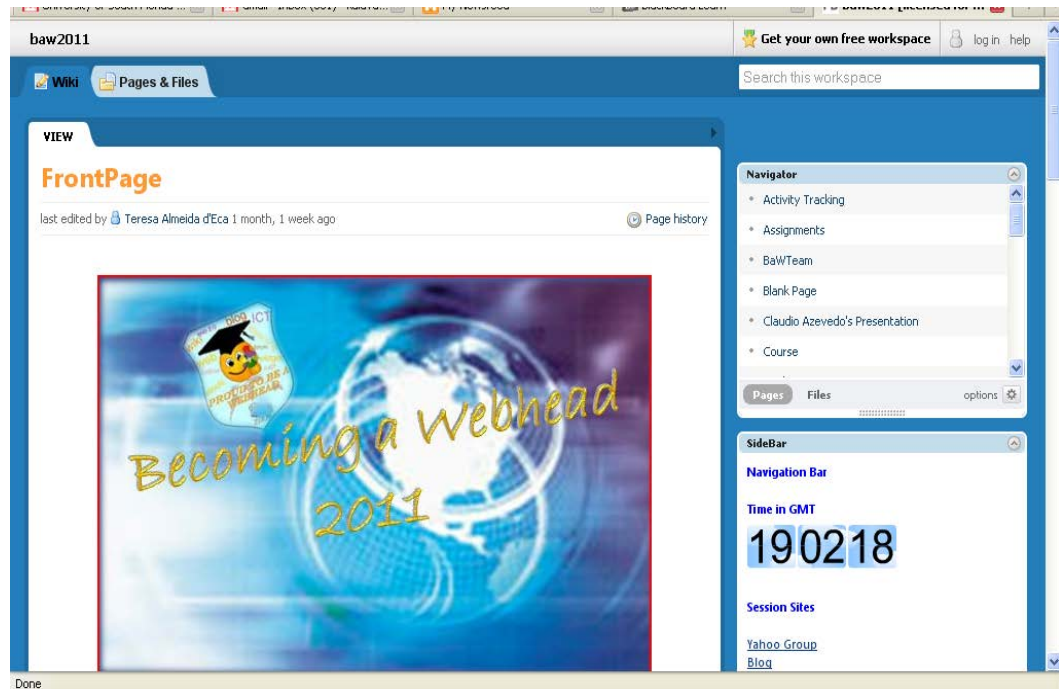


Figure 4.16. A screenshot of the front page of BaW2011 wiki

The use of GMT might be new to participants who had not interacted with other abroad before. This reminded me the 2007 workshop during which I became aware of which time zone Turkey was in according to GMT. Although I knew about the time zones and GMT, I think I did not check what time zone Turkey or any other country, was in, until I needed this information to interact with people around the world during BaW2007. To me, it became an important piece of information. This also reflects a Webhead practice at the same time. From the very first visit of the wiki, other BaW participants were also

introduced the common use of GMT as the designated time denominator for Webheads activities.

**The Webheads badge.** As also seen in the Figure 4.16, the badge that was previously created in BaW2008 by another webhead was used on this front page as a symbol for the workshop. On the badge (resized in Figure 4.17), there is a smiley face emoticon holding a bunch of flowers with different colors and with a graduation cap on the head; under it says “proud to be a Webhead”. On the background, there are information and communication technology (ICT) concepts such as wiki, blog, ICT, web 2.0, etc.



*Figure 4.17.* Resized image of the Webheads badge

I saw the same badge used before in previous workshop wikis as well, and it seemed to me that it had become a symbol for the workshops. One of the members whom I interviewed, Beren (a pseudonym), for example, also used the same badge in her own blog to identify herself as a Webhead to the visitors (Figure 4.18).



Figure 4.18. Front page of Beren’s blog. She uses the Webheads badge.

In my opinion, the graduation cap in the badge refers to the fact that participants will graduate as Webheads at the end of this workshop, although participants were not directly told about this at the beginning. In that sense, the badge also symbolizes a transition into a Webhead. On the main portal of Webheads ([webheads.info](http://webheads.info)), this badge is also freely available for Webheads to use in their blogs or wikis. Apparently, although this badge was previously created for a BaW workshop, it later became a badge for Webheads in general. While this badge seems to foster the idea that this workshop is a part of Webheads in Action, its use also bridges the new participants to the old-time participants.

**Participants as BaWers.** I observed that, although moderators or coordinators would address participants as ‘participants’ during the first week, there was a shift later on to the use of the word ‘BaWer’. This tells me that, at one point this workshop also creates its own community within the larger WiA community, and its participants call themselves ‘BaWers’. The use of this address form soon became common among

participants as well, in that participants would begin their emails with forms such as “Dear BaWers”. I also observed the continuation of this tendency in the emails sent to the BaW email list even after the workshop ends. As can be seen in Figure 4.19 below from a screenshot of the Graduation Party page (<http://baw2011participants.pbworks.com/w/page/36016084/GraduationParty>), I noticed that while most participants still addressed each other as “BaWers”, a couple participants greeted others with “Dear Webheads”.

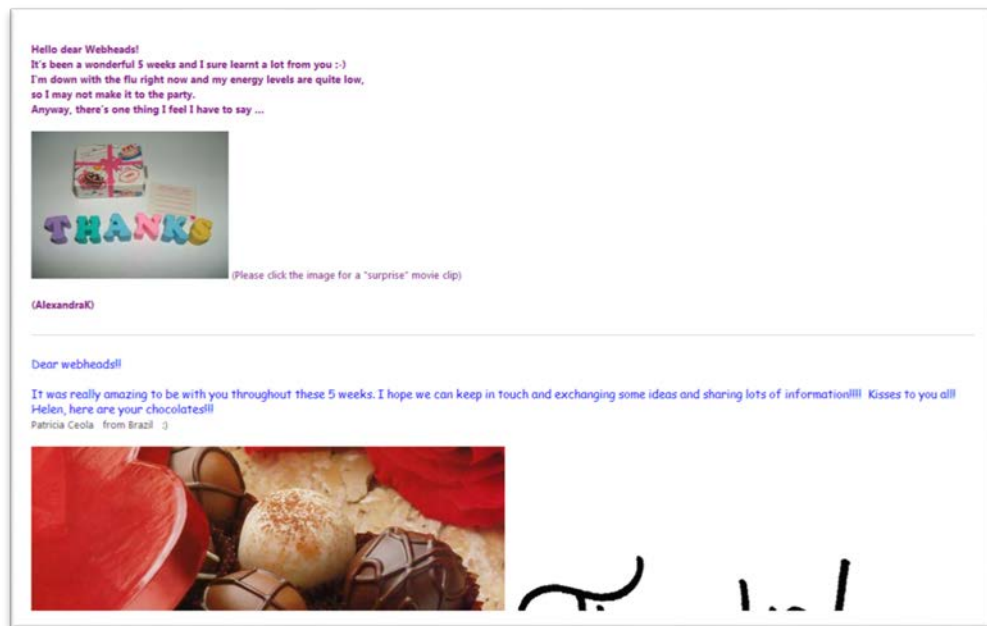


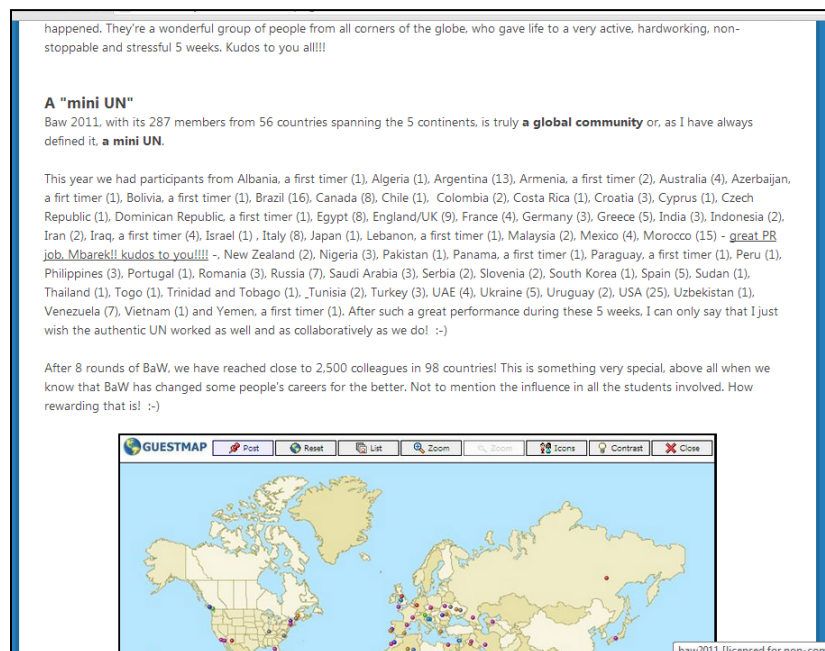
Figure 4.19. A screenshot of the BaW2011 graduation party page, illustrating participants’ addresses to each other as Webheads.

This example also seems to illustrate how this workshop serves as the orientation of the new members. New members attend the BaW workshops as a participant at the beginning; throughout the workshop, they gradually become BaWers, and thus a part of the community; and when they graduate as a Webhead and start interacting within the main evonline2002 email list, they are no longer BaWers, but Webheads. As a result, their identity in the field of technology integration in language teaching is successfully



transformed and completed. In line with CoP framework, this shift in their addresses and attributes to each other symbolizes their identity transformation, and thus their learning and movement towards becoming a full participant in the community and its practice.

**Connecting the local to the global.** During my participant observation in BaW2011, I noticed several incidences in which coordinators, moderators, and participants consistently brought up mentions or discussions of their geographical locations or local cultures. For example, Teresa, as one of the all-time coordinators of these workshops, told me that she keeps a record of all the countries represented in each workshop, and from time to time, I observed that she brought this cultural diversity to the attention of the participants. At the end of the first live session during the first week, for example, she wrote on the session page “The five continents were represented with over 30 participants!” (Fieldnotes, Jan. 12, 2011).



*Figure 4.20.* A screenshot from the BaW2011 graduation page illustrating Teresa’s view of the BaW workshop as a mini UN. She included this information on the Graduation page on BaW2011 wiki. She later went over it during the synchronous graduation party on Elluminate.

Also, at the end of the workshop, during the graduation party, she described the workshop as a “mini UN” referring to the United Nations (Figure 4.20). As can be seen, in this statement, she also included which specific countries were represented in BaW2011 with the number of participants from each country. According to her records, there were 287 participants from 56 countries in this workshop. I believe these reminders from the coordinator helps participants make connection of their localities within this global and intercultural community.

Additionally, because of the global nature of the workshop, a defining factor of the participants’ identities seemed to be their local cultures or countries. As such, I observed tendencies from participants to mention their locations even though it was not necessarily relevant or important. For example, one participant asked a question on one of the wiki pages, and signed his message with his name and an expressing stating as “Moroccan high-school teacher”. When I saw this message, I was not sure why it would be relevant to include this information in this message; however, this seemed to be not an uncommon practice. Also, in one of the live sessions that I attended, the presenter was introduced as “Rita from Rosario, Argentina”; in commenting on her live session on the blog, a moderator closed her message with “A warm hug from still wintry Romania”. Moreover, everybody seemed to sign off their email messages with information from their countries, such as “All the best from Croatia”, or sometimes with reference to local happenings in their places, such as “Warm greetings from the New Egypt” (referring to the Egyptian revolution happened during the workshop).

Overall, I observed that it was a common practice among people involved in these workshops to make frequent mentions of their locations. As a participant myself, this led me to remember participants as not specific individuals, but as specific individuals from specific countries. For example, even though there seems to be only one Amal (a pseudonym), I refer to her not as only “Amal,” but as “Amal from Egypt”. In the meantime, the frequent mentions of locations, I believe, also reinforced the idea that BaW2011 is a workshop that bridges all these countries and locations, and bring them all together in one space. Therefore, it serves a function of connecting the local to a global space.

**Hands-on practice and learning from others.** On the front page of the wiki, the workshop was defined as “a hands-on workshop on how to use web-based communication tools for language teaching and learning.” I had been familiar with this description from previous workshops as well. I noticed that not only the activities and tasks, but also the tools being used to carry out the workshop provided us, as participants, hands-on practice with these tools. For example, in my case, although I was familiar with online forums, I did not know any particular open-access forum services, nor did I try one. When we were asked to use the Proboards forum to reflect on the readings, this gave us an opportunity to try out this tool firsthand. This also applied to the wiki. It had been a while since I last used a wiki, so even though I was familiar with pbworks.com, through the tasks that we had to complete on the wiki (e.g. uploading my picture), I refreshed my wiki skills. This also helped me to further start a wiki project with my students around February 2011.

Additionally, another important aspect of this workshop was that whether or not they were active or visible to the community, participants learned from each other on an ongoing basis. In addition to the activities and interactions with others, such learning also happened in other ways such as reading others' posts and visiting the links they post. For example, throughout my participant observation in BaW2011, I learned new tools (e.g. Diigo, Twiducate, Symbaloo, Urban Dictionary, etc.) from others and developed ideas on how to use these tools just by reading their posts and visiting links. In one particular instance, during week 2, which was about blogs, wikis and social networks, I had missed the live session, but decided to watch it later, as other participants would also do. As I was reading the emails, I saw a lot of emails about a tool called Tweetdeck. I had not heard about this new tool, but just by reading the emails others posted, I became curious to explore it. I inscribed my observations and impressions of these emails in my fieldnotes.

“I am looking at and reading today's emails. A participant sent a tutorial for Tweetdeck in one of the emails. From these emails, it seems to be new to many people including the coordinators. I have not heard this tool before, either. [...] There are also out-of-the-syllabus activities taking place apparently. From these emails, I see that several members have chatted about Tweetdeck last night, and together they explored this tool. This was not included in the week 2 activities. Now many of the emails in today's digest are about Tweetdeck, and their experiences last night. I feel impatient to explore and learn what it is.”

(Fieldnotes, Jan. 28, 2011)

Later, that same day, I went ahead and ‘googled’ Tweetdeck. It is a tool that combines Twitter and Facebook accounts in one place, which makes it easier to check the updates and send a message to both accounts at the same time. If there is a specific hashtag (#) (it was also the first time I learned about the uses of hashtags during this workshop) that one wants to follow, Tweetdeck allows creating a separate column for this hashtag to receive and explore the tweets posted with this hashtag. For example, #elt brings you all the tweets that were tagged with this hashtag, and these tweets usually include resources on English language teaching (ELT). Therefore, on that day, while I was only reading the emails, I learned new tools, affordances of these new tools, and explored them myself aside from the community activities. Later on, after I had a chance to watch the week 2 live session, I noticed that the guest speaker introduced this tool in his presentation. I then realized some participants had gathered together on Twitter and explored the tool collaboratively. Others, like me, on the other hand, learned about the tool when they read these participants’ emails about it, even though they missed the live session. From this experience, and other similar experiences, I concluded that learning from others happens organically in this community in various ways. Even though a participant may not be very ‘active’ in the sense of being visible to others, by being behind the scenes, it is still possible that they will learn from others.

**Webheads spirit extended to others.** During my fieldwork, I consistently came across examples of Webheads’ core values with respect to sharing, helping, collaboratively learning, and exploring new technologies. One particular instance was especially eye-catching for me. On June 16, 2011, an Egyptian BaWer wrote to the BaW2011 Yahoo Group email list, long after BaW2011 ended:

“Dear all,

I hope you are very fine. I’m [Name], an Egyptian teacher. I teach secondary school students. As a result of what happened in Egypt recently, my students have decided to create a wiki inviting tourists to come back to Egypt. Every one of them has created a page in our wiki and wrote about a certain topic.

My students invite you to visit our wiki [wiki hyperlinked]. You can leave comments or ask questions. You can ask them to write articles about anything you would like to know more about it.

We need your students to participate in this wiki asking questions, leaving comments or giving opinions. We are waiting for your collaboration!”

Although for a while the email list was not very active, it became active with emails responding to this request. I visited the wiki ([www.azharstudents.wikispaces.com](http://www.azharstudents.wikispaces.com)) (Figure 4.21) as well, and I was impressed about the commitment and the enthusiasm of these students to help their country in those tough times through web-based technologies.

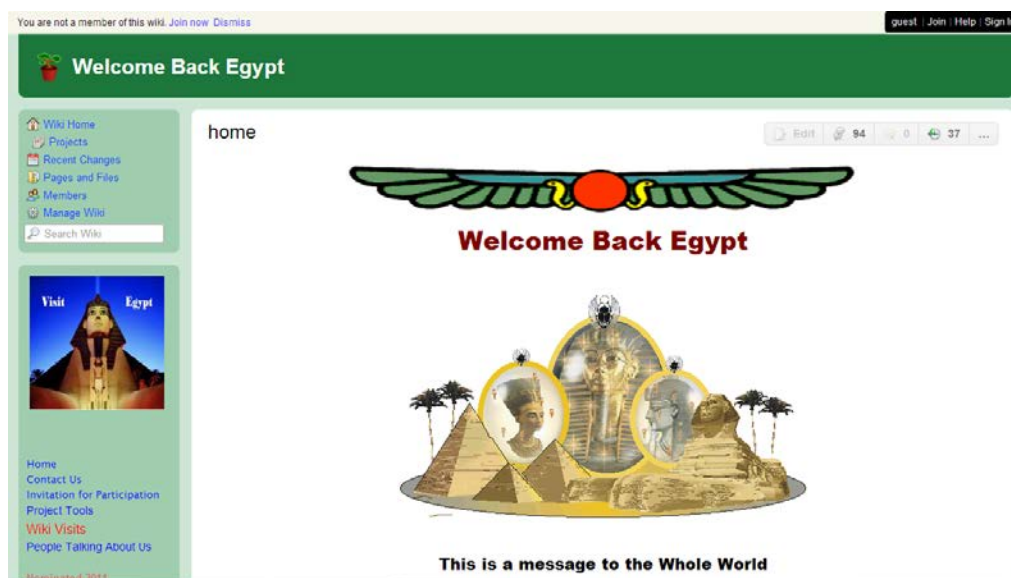


Figure 4.21. Welcome Back Egypt wiki front page. A wiki by an Egyptian BaWer and her students.

Students had created individual pages on various touristic sites in their country. After visiting this wiki, I inscribed my thoughts in my fieldnotes:

“[...] This looks like a very meaningful purpose given the fact that students’ motivation would be very high after the revolution in their country. The project seems to have goals to evolve into a global project, and is shared with others around the world. In that sense, I feel that in this project technology, global issues, and language learning are all integrated, and if it was not with the support of Webheads, which provides a global access for this Egyptian BaWer and her students, the global connection might not have achieved.[...]” (Fieldnotes, June 16, 2011)

A few months later, in another email to the BaW list, the Egyptian BaWer wrote again updating all of us with the news:

“Dear all,  
  
I hope you are doing well. I’m [Name], an EFL teacher. Do you remember the WIKI [wiki hyperlinked] that my students have designed to invite tourists to come back to Egypt?.. They have created essays, videos, glogs, PPT presentations, brochures, and a Facebook group.  
  
You have left a lot of comments to my students. These commentes helped them to keep up the good work .....and they **WON** the **SECOND PLACE** in Microsoft Partners in Learning Competition on the Republic level ... then the **FIRST PLACE** in Microsoft Partners in Learning MEA Forum (Category of Innovation in Challenging Circumstances) held in Jordan 7-9 Sept.,2011 .... They will compete in the Global Forum in Washington next month.... [...]

I want to thank you all for your support and help... I also want to send a BIG THANK YOU to our moderators for helping us to make a difference in our students' lives ... really you deserve a NOBEL PRIZE ... I can't stop my students now ... they try and explore new things and discover their potential ...

Thanks so much..!!!!!" (October 17, 2011)

As can be seen from this email, in about four months, the wiki and her students showed such success, and she attributed this to the success of BaW and the Webheads' support. In the meantime, this showed a powerful and timely example of how the webhead spirit transmits from long-term members (especially the coordinators and the moderators in these workshops) to the new members, and from the new members to their students. Webheads seemed to positively impact not only each other within their community but also others within their 'expanding circles' as I would call it.

All in all, BaW workshops seem to exhibit and transmit the culture and values of the Webheads community. At the same time, they have their own mini-culture that seems to have emerged over the years, as I tried to capture during my fieldwork and described here.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I have focused on the Becoming a Webhead (BaW) annual workshops. After describing the background, content and design of these workshops, I have discussed who is involved in the BaW team, and what these moderators' and coordinators' roles and responsibilities are. I have concluded this chapter with a discussion of the other aspects of BaW culture.



## CHAPTER 5

### WEBHEADS' PRACTICE: THE EVONLINE2002 YAHOO GROUP

After BaW2011 ended, I directed my attention more to the email exchanges within the larger WiA community through the evonline2002 Yahoo Group (YG) email list. I had subscribed to receive email digests, which compiled all the emails sent on a particular day, and sent it in one email. This way, instead of receiving all the emails separately, I would receive only one email from the group per day. At the same time, I archived all these digests sent during my fieldwork. According to my records, I received an email digest every single day during my fieldwork, which meant that at least one email was sent through the group every day. Although the other tools the community used to carry out activities had changed over the years, this YG seemed to stay unchanged as the primary space to communicate with each other.

Therefore, I considered emails in evonline2002 not just as archival data, but also I considered 'email interaction' to be one of the main activities of this community. I then wanted to know the function of this activity within the community, in what ways and for what purposes Webheads used the Evoonline2002 YG, and whether or not the other affordances of the YG were used (e.g. file uploading and sharing). Therefore, in this chapter, I continue describing Webheads' practice, with my findings of the particularities and functions of the evonline2002 YG within the larger community.

## The Evonline2002 Emails

On the YG home page, there was a paragraph description and brief historical information about the community (Figure 5.1).



Figure 5.1. The evonline2002 Webheads Yahoo Group home page

The description that was used for the community on this page was as follows:

“ This group began in 2002 as an event convened under the auspices of TESOL EVOnline (Electronic Village) but has carried on as a community of practice or a distributed learning network ever since. Participants meet informally throughout the year and regularly each Sunday afternoon GMT in Learning2gether discussions [hyperlinked] to help each other learn about forming and maintaining robust online communities through hands-on practice with synchronous and non-synchronous text and multimedia CMC (computer mediated communication) tools.”

This description seemed to acknowledge the fact that this community was once a group of individuals in the first workshop offered in 2002. Meanwhile, it also acknowledges that this YG might be a distributed learning network for others who are registered with

the YG but do not directly contribute to the practice of the community, and choose to remain on the periphery to the community. What caught my attention in this description was also the information that the participants meet regularly on Sundays in Learning2gether discussions. Learning2gether events, which I will discuss in the next sections, emerged as part of the community activities in September 2010. This shows that this description is occasionally updated to give more current information about the activities and spaces of the community. Moreover, what caught my attention is the fact that members are not referred to as Webheads, teachers, practitioners, or educators, but as ‘participants’. As I seem to have accustomed to seeing descriptions of Webheads as either one of these above, the use of ‘participants’ in the description on the longest-standing space of the community appeared to be inaccurately describing the characteristics of this community and its practice.

Although Yahoo Groups allow members to have various areas for sharing files, photos, links, polls, database, etc., this YG seemed to be used for email messages mostly. Therefore, I started with exploring the nature of emails before exploring the YG area. In my content analysis of these emails, I discovered that there were various forms of engagement in the email interaction about various topics. As I continued to read, I noticed that, while some emails were *community-oriented* (e.g. socializing) towards building and developing a sense of community and support among members, some were *practice-oriented* towards building and developing their collective and individual practice with respect to web-based technologies and their applications in language teaching and learning.

## **Community-oriented Engagement**

In my observations of the email interactions, I was quite surprised about the number of emails in which members engage in dialogue, interaction, discussions, etc. towards developing the communication and connection within their community. I define *community-oriented engagement* as engagement in discussions, practices, discourses, and interactions that are not necessarily oriented towards a specific technology and its application in language teaching, but oriented towards building and developing the sense of community among members through other ways. In that sense, although, especially in the case of an online community, what brings the community together is their interest or their practice, such community-oriented engagement seems to be crucial to sustaining this community for a long period of time on the Internet.

In my analysis of the emails, I came up with seven sub-categories for the community-oriented engagement displayed in the emails: 1) support, 2) collaboration on community events, artifacts, and projects, 3) enhancing professional development, 4) new member orientation, 5) socializing, 6) connecting the local to global, 7) fostering community discourse and identity.

**Support.** Providing support of any kind seems to be very important for Webheads. In my observations, the Evoonline2002 email list serves as the central place to request and coordinate support on various kinds of projects. For example, Webheads seem to feel confident in asking assistance from others in personal projects such as the one below:

“[...] I am currently doing some research into perceptions of ‘native’ and non-native’ English –speaking teachers. I would appreciate it if you could take a few moments to complete the appropriate survey below.” (Msg. 27446, Mar. 3, 2011)

This email, for example, received a lot of replies back from the members saying that they completed the survey, and wishing the member best of luck with the research. One of my interviewees, Beren, also asked for support from the community when she was doing her Master’s thesis on Webheads. While this generated many responses from Webheads expressing that they were willing to contribute, one Webhead’s email saying “Guys, let’s help [Beren] with her research!” (Msg. 28487, Oct. 13, 2011) also showed me that members coordinate to support each other in their individual projects.

The individual projects members ask for support from the community were not always related to research. One such support for example came for a member’s daughter’s school project, which was one of the most responded to emails during the first days of 2011.

“My dear friends,

Today and tomorrow are the last days to vote for my daughter’s school project.

Could you please vote in the link: [link is provided].

If they are in the first top 10, they’ll get 50,000 from Pepsi to buy new equipment.

Thanks a million and I wish you all a great 2011

(Name)” (Msg. 27133, Dec. 30, 2010)

With perhaps a lot of votes from Webheads, this member’s daughter’s school later won the Pepsi grant. What was interesting to me in this instance was also that this member did not feel intimidated to ask such a request from the community, and others did not even

express that this is not this email list is for, etc. In that sense, I felt that support requests for various kinds of educational projects that members could contribute to from a distance were usually welcomed by Webheads.

Support did not come only for projects, but I witnessed psychological support and camaraderie among members as well. This kind of support and sympathy happened especially during the two internationally sensational events: Egyptian Revolution and Japanese Earthquake. For example, during the protests and uprising in Egypt, webheads were in coordination to update each other about the safety of Egyptian webheads sending messages through the evonline2002 email list. As they knew that the internet services were cut during that time, for example, one member forwarded a message by an anarchist group (Anonymous) on specific ways to connect to the Internet for those members in Egypt. Once the president declared to step down on February 2011, Webheads celebrated this through messages addressed to Egyptian webheads such as “Congratulations on throwing the dictator out!” (Msg. 27406, Feb. 23, 2011), and “Congratulations to liberated Egypt and Egyptians! Wishing all success and prosperity to your country!” (Msg. 27349, Feb. 13, 2011). In addition, during the earthquake and tsunami in Japan in March 2011, I witnessed similar coordination and support. One Venezuelan webhead’s email illustrates this:

“Dear Webheads friends,

I’m at the Caracas airport ready to leave to Atlanta, then on Monday to TESOL in New Orleans, and I cannot breathe just watching the news on TV and the images of the earthquake and tsunami. There are many Webheads in Japan. I am worried about them. Can anybody make a list of their names and start checking if they are

OK or if they need to contact their families? How can we help? My heart and prayers are with them.” (Msg. 27487, Mar. 11, 2011)

This specific email illustrated how caring webheads were towards each other. This Venezuelan webhead heard the news when she was at an airport watching the news on TV. She immediately thought of the Japanese webheads, and the first thing that came to her mind right at the airport was to write to the group to express her emotional support and inquire about what kind of help she could offer. When I first read it, I was impressed by her conscientiousness, considering that she was writing from the airport. However, I was already becoming used to such emails among Webheads expressing psychological support and sympathy towards others in times of need.

**Collaboration on community events, artifacts, and projects.** Not surprisingly, Webheads were engaged in discussions and communications about community events, activities, artifacts and projects through the evonline2002 email list on an ongoing basis. For example, announcing, seeking participation, providing information, inquiring about, and confirming attendance of community events such as Learning2gether events, and the following year’s EVO sessions and BaW workshops appeared several times. Especially emails about the Learning2gether events, perhaps because they happened every week, were the most common ones. Every week, Vance sent an email announcing the upcoming week’s Learning2gether event, providing information about the presenter/speaker and the content of the session, as well as sharing the link to the meeting place and to the World Clock (for the participants to see their local time for the event that was scheduled in GMT). After the event, he would then send the link to the recording of the session through another email message via the evonline2002 list. In these emails, he would also

consistently encourage others to voluntarily contribute as a presenter or speaker in one of the Learning2gether events. In one of these emails, I also became familiar with these events for the first time. Therefore, announcing a community event through the evonline2002 email list seemed to be a common practice, as well as a way to make sure more webheads would be informed.

In addition to community events, webheads also engaged in dialogue through the evonline2002 email list to collaborate, coordinate, share information and brainstorm about community artifacts or projects during my fieldwork. For example, one webhead, Nancy, who was also one of my interviewees, announced in an email that the Webheads t-shirts were ready. She had previously promised to have them produced and create an online shop (Figure 5.2).



Figure 5.2. Webheads' t-shirts with Webheads logo on sale through cafepress.com



Afterwards, many webheads responded with messages commenting on the t-shirts, confirming their purchase of the t-shirt, appreciating Nancy's voluntary effort on this community artifact (e.g. "Bravo [Nancy] – brilliant initiative! (Msg. 27441, Feb. 27, 2011), "thanks for creating such a humane, friendly, Webhead project" (Msg. 27381, Feb. 21, 2011)), exchanging suggestions and ideas on how to advertise these t-shirts (e.g. "put on your t-shirt and join us at RSCON3" (Msg. 28036, Jul. 31, 2011), "be sure you bring your t-shirt to TESOL!" (Msg. 27390, Feb. 21, 2011) and how to use the money raised from these t-shirts (e.g. "I wonder if [webheads] would be interested in a dialogue for the purposes of agreement on a specific Webheads goal, to include some idea of budget for achievement?" (Msg. 27389, Feb. 21, 2011).

When I first read emails about these Webheads t-shirts, I found the idea as another step towards building a greater sense of community among the members. I wrote down the possible effects of creating such products for this community in my fieldnotes:

"[...] Although these products seem to make the community more commercialized, those who join the conversation/email exchanges seem to really like the idea, and it also shows that the community is trying to do other things to develop the team spirit, community spirit among its members in addition to professional academic efforts/projects/practices. It also builds a physical bond among all these virtually-known beings from all around the world. It makes the members and the community more visible to others and to the members themselves. They would more easily spot each other in physical circumstances as they attend conferences all around the world, and makes the bonds stronger, I believe." (Fieldnotes, Feb. 21, 2011)

In my opinion, these attempts also help build the roots of the community and make it long-standing. They also seem to show that members want this community to be long-standing, by developing a shared history with co-constructed cultural products.

While members were discussing these t-shirts, this discussion shifted towards the Webheads logo and its use, through which I and perhaps other newcomers within the community learned that the two Webheads logos were actually collaboratively created by three webheads and one's sister. In one email, Vance wrote us the 'story' behind it:

“[...] Once upon a time a long long time ago there begat Webheads, and a call was sent forth unto the far reaches of the cybersphere asking if any could provide a logo worthy of the endeavor. Many were provided but verily this community lacked a means of reaching firm decisions, and its leader claimed authority only akin to that granted a herder of cats. So the logo was mashed up into two very very solid contenders until, as there was no will within the community to choose one, in effect rejecting the other, the herder of cats hit upon a solution not quite as drastic as that of Solomon: use both of them ☺” (Msg. 27383, Feb. 21, 2011)

This story cleared for me and others the mystery of two Webheads logos (Figure 5.3) that had been used alternatively in various places of Webheads. Apparently, there was not a 'main' Webheads logo. This way, Webheads again showed a piece of their core values in my opinion, by accepting both contributions and not devaluing one over the other. Also, the community logo was collaboratively created, but at the same time it was collaboratively decided to keep both of them as the legitimate logos of the community. All in all, this illustrated the shared decision-making process in this community.



Figure 5.3. The two Webheads logos used alternatively

Also, I learned that one webhead’s sister was also involved in creating the logo on the right. This again fostered my interpretation that the Webheads spirit is extended to other people involved in each webhead’s lives.

Moreover, during my fieldwork, the evonline2002 email list was also used to engage in dialogue about other projects that meant to serve for the community. For example, one such project came from Nancy, who voluntarily created the Webheads & Friends blog for the TESOL Convention (Figure 5.4)

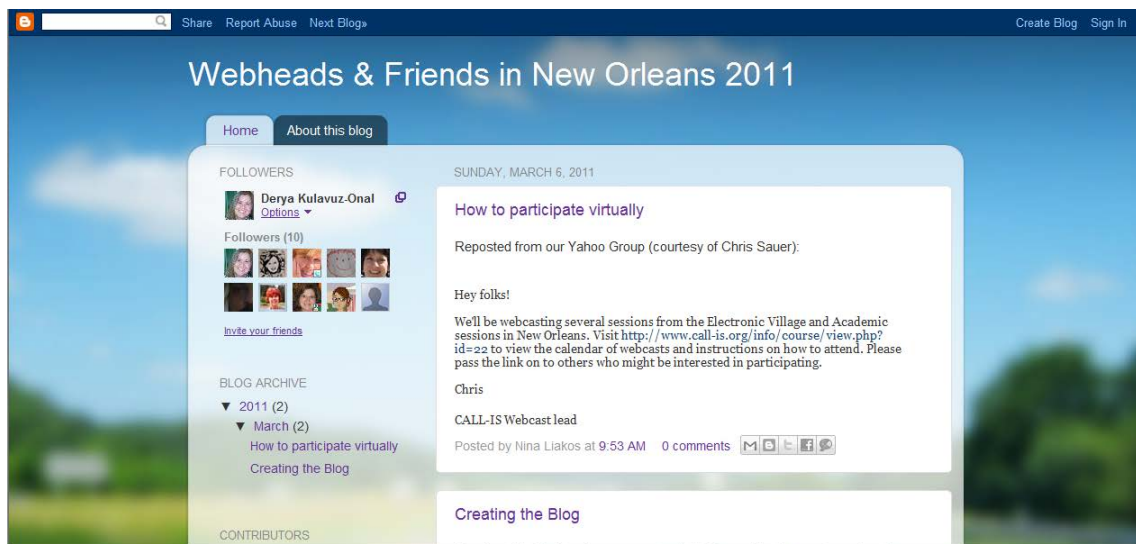


Figure 5.4. Webheads & Friends blog for TESOL 2011 Convention in New Orleans

She created this blog to update the community about the conference from the perspectives of those webheads who had a chance to attend TESOL 2011 Convention.

While she was creating this blog, Nancy consulted others for ideas on which blog service

to choose. Once she created the blog, she shared the link with others via the email list, and told everybody that they are welcome to subscribe to the blog to follow the updates. As time went by, Nancy shared updates and reminders about the blog via the email list. Once they were at the conference, she sent emails to remind us to visit the blog.

**Enhancing professional development.** Within the evonline2002 email list, Webheads also frequently shared announcements about other professional development events and resources for each other. For example, sharing announcements and information as well as coordination about the presentations in US-based TESOL and UK-based IATEFL (International Association of Teaching English as a Foreign Language) conferences were common. In addition, as a peripheral participant in the emails myself (who is reading and following the emails mostly, but distances herself from the conversations in order not to become too involved), I became familiar with new books, references related with technology and pedagogy. In one specific email for example, a member announced his newly-published book along with a summary (*Deconstructing Digital Natives: Young People, Technology, and the New Literacies* by Michael Thomas). In another email, a member asked for references from others in relation to elearning and teacher professional development for a presentation she was preparing for her class. Others sent replies with references, which I saved for future reference as well. In that sense, the email exchanges where members share general professional development resources such as these serve as archives for everybody. In the meantime, even those who are not directly contributing to the discussion can learn by ‘following’ the discussions in these emails.

**New member orientation.** From time to time, if a new member joined, s/he would write an email introducing herself/himself to the community. For example, Amal, one of my interviewees, who became involved with Webheads through BaW2011, wrote an email to the evonline2002 after she graduated as a Webhead, and introduced herself to others:

“Hello everybody,

This is [Amal] from egypt, I'm a new member in your group. I've just finished BaW course some days ago! I'm following all your messages and I attended your last session on Second Life ad trying to explore it more now! Is there a recording of the session available to listen to it again thoroughly?? Do you meet regularly online in other activities other than through this group? Thanks!” (Msg. 27397, Feb. 22, 2011)

Within two days, six other members replied back to Amal welcoming her to the group, and answering her questions. Through this interaction, I was able to observe that it was perhaps difficult to orient new members to this community and its practice only through one venue such as BaW workshops. Because the community is distributed in several places, new members are oriented towards the community and its practice in naturally emerging ways over multiple sites online. At the same time, for example, those who read responses to Amal's email was able to receive the hyperlink for the last session on Second Life and other SL resources that other members contributed. In addition, what I noticed in Amal's email was that the language she used also revealed her feelings about her being a new member. Although she had graduated as a Webhead from the BaW2011 workshop, she still seemed to be feeling 'outside' of the community as it was revealed by

her choice of phrases such as ‘your group’, ‘your messages’, and ‘your session’. One particular reply to her started with a greeting that included Amal as part of the community: “Welcome to our/your Webhead family!” (Msg. 27412, Feb. 24, 2011). In my opinion, such a reply not only was a warm welcome for the new member, but also oriented this new member to some cultural values of the community: Webheads is a family that does not belong to one particular group or person, and from the very beginning, all members are part of this family.

**Socializing.** As would also be expected from other groups or communities, Webheads engaged in socializing dialogues in these emails. One such engagement I considered under this category was the celebration of holidays. This immediately started with my fieldwork of course, since it was January 1<sup>st</sup>, and everybody was sending ‘Happy New Year’ messages. Even members whose names did not appear much in the emails or in other activities that I attended seemed to be eager to celebrate other Webheads’ new year. Participants also shared good wishes about other important days and holidays such as Muslim holiday Ramadan, and International Women’s Day.

Webheads also socialized in those emails in other ways. For example, one Brazilian webhead announced another Brazilian webhead’s newborn to the community:

“Dear friends,

Just to share with you my happiness. [Name]’s baby, Samuel, was born tonight and she is doing really well. [*Then she shares photos through a link.*]” (Msg.

27800, Jun. 16, 2011)

When I saw this message, I felt that this community went further away from just being a community for ‘exploring pedagogical uses of web-based technologies in language

teaching'; it was more than this. This email, and the replies with congratulations from other webheads around the world, some of whom called the newborn 'little webhead', showed us that this community evolved into a family over the years as evidenced by the fact that members comfortably shared updates from their personal lives. Moreover, these updates indeed mattered for the others; they were not left unanswered in the cybersphere just because they were not related with the actual practice of the community. What was also interesting was that one webhead created a *Wallwisher*, a web 2.0 tool that enables people to post notes on a wall online, so that others can post their good wishes for the newborn on this wall (Figure 5.5).

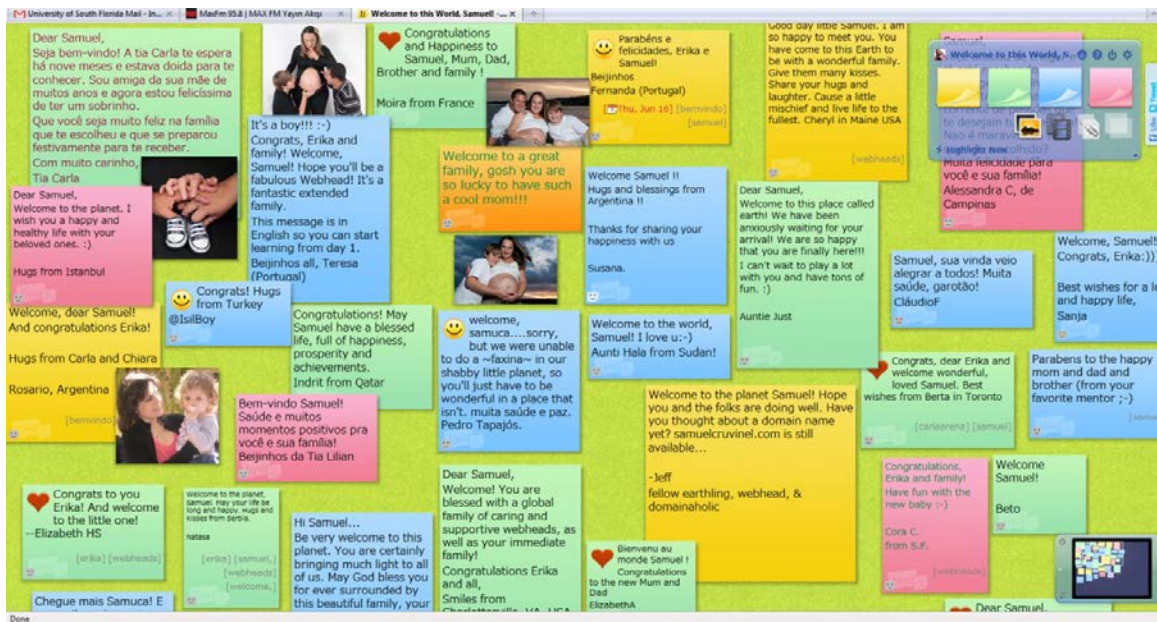


Figure 5.5. The wallwisher created by Webheads for one webhead's newborn baby.

This was a good example for me to see how the practice of this community facilitated the sense of community among the members, and how they also used these technologies to sustain their community. Moreover, as for myself, by visiting this link, and posting a note

on this wall, I not only contributed to the sense of community among Webheads, but also learned a new Web 2.0 tool and had a chance to practice it to see how it worked.

The evonline2002 email list also seemed to be a common place for those who wanted to arrange face-to-face meetings. One way to organize these face-to-face meetings are through the large conferences that many of them attend, such as TESOL and IATEFL. In those cases, one member creates a wiki and asks others who are attending to contribute to the wiki with information about their presentations, hotels, and their availabilities for a dinner out. Then, they share the link to this wiki via the email. Moreover, if a member is visiting a place, s/he would send an email to the community before his/her visit in order to arrange a face-to-face meeting with those living in the area. For example, another co-founder and a long-time webhead, Michael Coghlan, wrote to the group on June 15, 2011, to arrange a possible meet-up:

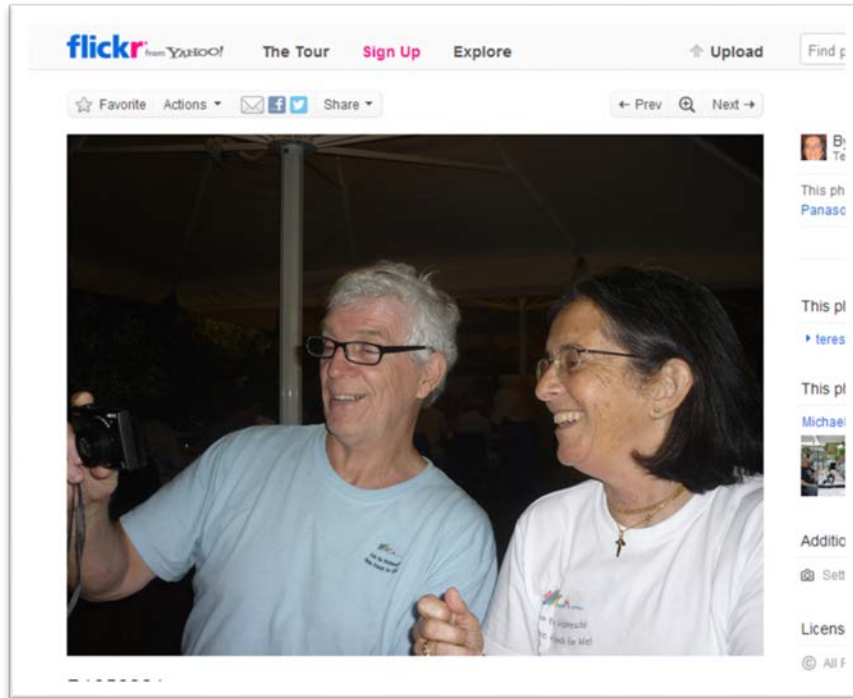
“Hi everyone,

Like Vance, I am also ‘hitting the road’ in the next few days. I leave on Saturday, and will be spending time in Singapore, Bangkok, and Jordan en route to the ED-MEDIA conference in Lisbon where I’ll also be spending some time with Teresa!

So if anyone is in any of those places in the next week (June 18<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>) it would be nice to meet up...” (Msg. 27794)

Once he was in Lisbon, Teresa reported to the group that he came safe and sound and that they were meeting for dinner. Other webheads replied with messages and waited for photos. Then, in another email, Teresa shared the link to the photos in her Flickr account. I visited the link and it was interesting to see both at dinner in Webheads t-shirts (Figure 5.6)

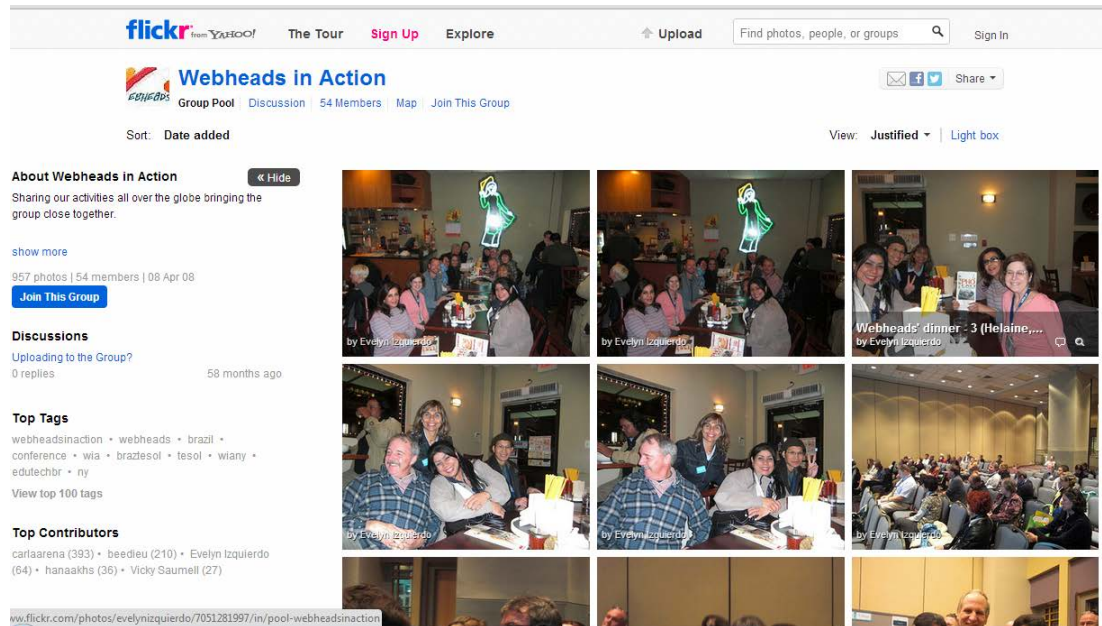




*Figure 5.6.* Teresa and Michael together in Lisbon, with their Webheads t-shirts on.

During Michael's time in Lisbon, another webhead who lives in the area also joined them. Lots of other webheads and I followed their time together in Lisbon through the email list and the photos shared. It felt almost all of us had a chance to meet with them face-to-face. Also, in this particular photo, I was personally impressed by the idea that these two webheads were eating dinner at an elegant restaurant with their simple white and light-blue Webheads t-shirts on. It appeared that they wanted to feel the Webheads spirit and share the spirit with all of us through the photos later on. I perceived this as another means of commitment to the community, its practice, and its artifacts.

Additionally, when other photos shared, I also discovered that Webheads in Action has a Flickr group to share community photos from such face-to-face meetings, and Webheads dinners at major conferences (Figure 5.7)



*Figure 5.7.* Webheads’ Flickr group for sharing photos from face-to-face meetings.

Although I did not attend a Webheads dinner during my fieldwork, I had attended one a year before, during TESOL 2010 in Boston. There were about 15 webheads, and it was interesting to meet some of them finally face-to-face. Although I did not feel directly a part of the group right away, because I had distanced myself from the community for a while, most of them seemed to know each other for a long time. They were friendly to each other, cheerfully talking, laughing, and taking photos all the time. At that point, I had understood that this was not their first time seeing each other face-to-face. Later I learned that, although this was true for some of them, for a few webheads that dinner was their first time meeting with others face-to-face.

**Connecting the local to the global.** I noticed that Webheads’ local cultures, languages, traditions, news, weather, etc. also become a topic or take place in the emails. Possibly, this is not surprising given the globally-distributed nature of this community. Meanwhile, I observed that it also helps members to develop their intercultural

awareness. For example, by following the emails, I learned a few expressions in other languages, such as ‘Ahlan wa sahan’ (meaning ‘welcome’ in Arabic), and ‘Beijos’ or ‘Um abraço’ (meaning ‘kisses’ and “a hug” in Portuguese, respectively), and a diminutive suffix *-inha* added to the names of people in Portuguese (such as *Teresinha*) would show affection to that person. I also realized that *Beijos* and *Um abraço* were probably ways of ending email messages in Portuguese.

In emails, another common practice that seemed to help connect their localities with the global community was ending email messages with information about their locations, such as ‘Best from Brazil’ and ‘Hugs from Argentina’. I had also noticed this practice in BaW emails, which supported my assumption that this would be a common cultural practice among Webheads. As participants, this not only helped us make frequent references to who lives in what part of the world, but also associate individual webheads with their locations. For example, I now feel that I can name several webheads with their locations by the help of these emails. Overall, it seems to me that geographical locations is one of the most salient markers of identity in this community.

Additionally, from time to time, webheads would ‘report’ from the places that they visited. For example, some time at the end of February 2011, Teresa went to Yakutsk, Siberia, for the first time. She then sent a message about her initial impressions about the place and the weather:

“Dear Webheads,

I flew to Moscow on Monday morning and to Yakutsk on Wednesday evening for an 8-day workshop starting in a few hours. Jet lag is playing its tricks! It’s 4:00

am local time and I'm wide awake after about 3.5 hours of sleep, and about another 3 hours during the afternoon.

It was a 'mild' -30C when I landed yesterday morning at 7:00 am. It felt cold, but not as cold as you'd imagine. It was bearable with a Portuguese winter coat, but I admit the fur coat I had waiting for me at the airport felt just great! As did my scarf over my mouth and nose!!!!!! Now I also have a great pair of reindeer boots. The city is covered in snow and just beautiful.

[...] Hugs all, Teresa (in a very warm and comfortable hotel room while outside it's -37C checked on the Internet, of course!!!)" (Msg. 27423, Feb. 24, 2011)

With this email, as other members of the community, we not only learned how cold and snowy it was and what people wore to bear the cold, but also were able to connect to a place that was unfamiliar to most of us, because there was only one webhead from Siberia that I came to know during my fieldwork.

**Fostering community discourse and identity.** I discovered that when writing emails, there are other common practices that Webheads choose to construct their emails with. In my opinion, these were the signs towards building as well as fostering a community discourse and attributing the community an identity. For example, a common phrase to end emails was "Hugs" and "Kisses". As I recognized the wide use of these endings, I also remembered that they were widely used in emails back in 2007, when I first met with Webheads. Not surprisingly, it was difficult to identify who started the use of these endings, or how they became a common use. However, in 2007, it was my first time learning that it was 'possible' to end an email with a hug or a kiss, after my engagement with Webheads. Meanwhile, the popularity of these endings also shows that,

even though most of these people have not yet met each other face-to-face, and they could not possibly know everybody registered in the evonline2002 YG, they were comfortable enough to send each other hugs and kisses. I thought that their online interactions, collaborations, and collective practice must have fostered such a bonding relationship. Also, I believe, as Webheads continue to end their emails with these expressions, they become an established part of the Webheads discourse.

Similarly, the ways they address each other in those emails also were interesting to me in the sense that they revealed how they saw each other. A common way was “Dear Webheads”, which shows that they attribute this identity to everybody registered in this YG regardless of the level of participation. Some also see this community not only as ‘friends’ but also as a ‘family’, as I understand it from their addresses as “Dear Webhead friends” and “Dear Webheads family”. These expressions show me that Webheads are strongly connected to each other beyond their practice.

As I continued to follow their emails, I also noticed there were other expressions in the discourse they themselves seemed to have developed. For example, when they wanted to say ‘fun’, they wrote it as ‘F.U.N’, which stood for “frivolous unanticipated nonsense.” It seemed that this was how they perceived fun, and it also kept appearing in BaW2011 emails. This again was evidence for me that they had ‘owned’ some words and expressions that becoming a member in this community also meant that you would start recognizing these words and expressions, and use them in your own interactions with others. This apparently was not something that I myself captured only. A member from Siberia, who joined Webheads through BaW2011 noticed it as well, and mentioned it in

an email where he wrote about graduating as a webhead. I wrote my impressions of his email in my fieldnotes:

“[...] writes about graduation. He read the graduation page on the BaW wiki and he is now commenting about it. He also realized that there exists what he calls a ‘Webheads Genre’. He must have seen those expressions in several emails, and on the wiki page as well. He says that he thinks expressions like ‘Kudos’, ‘Bejinhos’ are BaW2011 special jargons. Actually, these expressions are not new to me, but they were when I was first introduced to Webheads in BaW2001. I exactly felt the same way he did, but later on I realized that (after especially getting in touch with them through the main email list), these expressions are also widely used by most of the Webheads in general. So, they might be new to the newcomers in the BaW workshops but they are not new to others. It is I believe again a sign of discourse building within this community. He says that he found these words and expressions to be fun and he is actually keeping a list of them. He lists some of these expressions in his email too: F.U.N. (Frivolous Unanticipated Nonsense, be of a feather (I haven’t seen this one yet), kudos, lurking, Bejinhos. He admits that he has never come across these words and expressions before” (Fieldnotes, Feb. 27, 2011)

In my opinion, all these words and expressions that Webheads use among themselves showed a sign of development of co-constructed jargon or discourse among the community. I think the evonline2002 YG email list also gives them an opportunity to keep this jargon and discourse alive and spread it to the newcomers.

## Practice-oriented Engagement

In addition to community-oriented engagement, Webheads also displayed practice-oriented engagement in their emails. Since they describe themselves in multiple places as a community that explores pedagogical uses of web-based technologies in language teaching, I wondered how they mediated each other's technology learning and the development of technological pedagogical content knowledge –the constructs that seemed to be central to their practice. Therefore, I tracked their engagement in emails with respect to technology, pedagogy, content, and the intersections of these in the TPACK framework. Applying the codes that I derived from the TPACK framework and from my readings of the emails on about 550 emails (30% of the email data), I discovered that Webheads mediate each other's technology learning in multiple ways in these emails. As might be expected, as can be seen in Table 5.1 below, they engage in interactions about technologies more than the other areas in the framework such as pedagogy and content. This also yielded to my breaking down Technology into sub-codes to better understand what kinds of interactions they manifest in these emails with respect to technology.

Table 5.1  
Practice-oriented engagement as displayed in Webheads' emails

<i>Codes</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Technology (T)	338	76%
- T1. Seeking help with technology	14	3 %
- T2. Technical trouble-shooting & problem-solving	37	8 %
- T3. Sample technology use	69	15 %
- T4. Discussing affordances of technology(-ies)	33	7 %
- T5. Sharing technology resources	176	39 %
- T6. Technology updates	9	2 %
Pedagogy (P)	25	5 %

Table 5.1. (Continued)

Content (C)	7	2 %
Pedagogy & Content (PC)	20	4 %
Technology & Content (TC)	9	2 %
Technology & Pedagogy (TP)	28	6 %
Technology, Pedagogy, & Content (TPC)	17	3 %
<i>Total</i>	<i>444</i>	<i>100%</i>

As Table 5.1 shows, technology codes appeared in this data about 338 times (76%), with much higher frequency than PC, TC, TP, or TPC. In my opinion, one major reason to account for this would be the homogeneity of the community and their professional area. As these teachers are mainly English language teachers, content and pedagogy are among their shared knowledge area. Also, technology is the main focus of the community – the specific area that they want to develop their expertise on. Moreover, it is the area in which there is always new information because of the rapid changes. Perhaps because of these reasons, they share and interact more in terms of technology-specific issues. Although their discussions seem to focus mostly on technology-specific issues, the reference is made in terms of English language teaching. Therefore, I believe the seemingly isolated technology-learning interactions that happen in these emails would still directly serve for the development of TPACK of these teachers as they would all relate it to English language teaching.

In light of my readings and experiences as a participant observer in this community, in the following sections, I illustrate and discuss how this mediation with respect to technological knowledge, technological pedagogical knowledge, technological content knowledge, and finally technological pedagogical content knowledge potentially happens through the interactions and exchanges in these emails.



**Technological knowledge.** As this community provides a lot of support to each other in many ways, be it related with technology or other areas as I discussed earlier, it was no surprise to me to find out that they also seek help from and provide support to one another with respect to technology. While asking for help or trouble-shooting for each other's technology-related problems, they naturally discussed affordances of these technologies, and offered alternatives to each other. While doing that, they also mentioned the ways they use these technologies, which served as sample ways of using these technologies for personal or professional purposes. Therefore, it was possible to see multiple ways of mediating each other's technological knowledge such as the two email exchanges below.

“(Subject line: Help wanted re: (shared white boards) (on line meetings)

I'm deeply involved with some smart folks who want to meet on line, particularly with use of whiteboards (and a good text chat room). All suggestions welcome for tools which would add luster to conversations between not more than five persons – all of whom will be on phones.. so no worry about audio deliveries. [...]” (Msg. 27862, Jun. 30, 2011)

When I read this email, I understood that this member was *seeking help with technology* (T1) and was *specifically looking for a web-conferencing tool that would enable multiple whiteboards shared* (T4), which I was personally unaware of. Then, a reply from a member from Tajikistan came:

“I just found this <http://www.scribblar.com/> which might be very interested to you. Their demo <http://www.scribblar.com/demo> has everything you may need

including a good text chat room. Sign in as a guest to their demonstration to see if you like it.

Please let us know your experience using Scribblar.” (Msg. 27863, Jul. 1, 2011)

In this reply, the member helped with *solving a technology-related problem/issue* (T2) and *shared a technology resource* (T5) by mentioning Scribblar as a tool for these purposes and offering a link to it. Meanwhile, he *mentioned some of the affordances of this tool* (T4) in the sense that there can be multiple whiteboards shared and the tool allows a good text chat room. As a peripheral participant not directly involved in this discussion, but rather *following* it, I learned a new tool, updated my repertoire of other web-conferencing tools that I am using in my teaching, and I was informed, though briefly, about the fact that we could share multiple whiteboards with this tool. Although, I did not immediately click on the tool to explore it in more depth, I saved it for my records to explore it in the future.

In another email, a member initiated a discussion on video-conferencing and shared with the community what he pays attention to when conducting video-conferences with his students:

“Subject line: Your video conferencing studio

As I mentioned earlier, I don’t think the sound quality of video conferencing is very good. I’ve tried Skype and QQ, I hear Google is better but I don’t think it will be better by much. All of these things are going to get better and better in the future as connection speeds improve, microphones and cameras and the video conferencing technology improves. In short, video conferencing is the future.

I have seen some 'videocasts' made by some bloggers and magazine journalists. They seem to relish wearing the big headset with the attached microphone. I'm not sure why. When I'm doing video conferencing with my students, I think 'TV news'. Teaching online by video conferencing is a whole new game and there is a lot of problems with it and even some general resistance to it. People always think fles and blood face-to-face is better. I have to overcome that mindset. So this is something that I take as a direct challenge and focus on it and how to overcome it. How can I make the video conferencing experience as positive as possible? And so I have considered my video conferencing studio.

Pay attention to appearance. What is your student going to see? The whole 'work at home' SOHO idea embraces the idea of working in your pajamas but my students will not enjoy looking at me in my pajamas. I make a great effort at looking nice in a video conference that I do at a face-to-face lesson.

I don't want a big headset that makes me look like an airline pilot or NFL coach. I use earbuds and a clip on mic.

My window overlooks the garden which is full of mango trees. I turn the desk so that this scene is my background. It is very pleasant.

I look straight into the camera just as all professionals on TV do. They look straight into the camera and you don't feel they are looking at a machine. You feel they are looking at you. I want my student to feel that.

It is important to be more focused on what the student is seeing and experiencing than what we are seeing and experiencing.

Teaching by video conferencing is a whole new approach fraught with challenges. We have two choices, wait until the problems are solved and everyone is doing it or we can launch ourselves into it now and start working on these problems, solving them or minimizing them until the technology catches up.” (Msg. 27985, Jul. 25, 2011)

By following this email, as a participant, I witnessed another member’s use of video conferencing. As a teacher myself, who had previously conducted video conferences with her students, I had not thought about these slight, but important, considerations. In that sense, it made me aware of what to consider, and how to make them more effective so that my students had a better experience with video-conferencing instead of meeting face-to-face for our classes. Beforehand, I had not thought of having a nice background behind me while I am talking, or having earbuds instead of a headset so that I looked nicer to my students. Therefore, by reading this email, I was able to get insights into some strategies to consider in video-conferencing through the experiences of another webhead who *exemplified us his own use of video-conferencing* (T3).

Additionally, in some occasions, when a webhead shared an example of his/her use of a technology explicitly or implicitly, it would also possibly serve as a technology resource for some of us in other ways. For example, a webhead shared with us his presentation in the email below:

“I’ve uploaded the audio from my presentation at the ED-MEDIA conference 2 weeks ago to my Podomatic site at <http://michaelc.podomatic.com>. There’s also a link to the paper I wrote for the conference. I think it’s public via <http://tinyurl.com/6xcej6g> (if it isn’t, could someone please let me know?). The

presentation is a response to Nicholas Carr's book, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*.[...]” (Msg. 27914, Jul. 13, 2011)

In this email, perhaps this webhead's main purpose was simply to share his presentation with us. However, in my opinion, he further provided other technology-learning experiences for us implicitly. For example, although I myself was familiar with the podcasting tool Podomatic, it would possibly be new to another webhead who was not familiar with the tool and its affordances. Moreover, it gave us an idea of how else can this podcasting site (or another) be used: sharing an audio-recorded presentation.

Personally, it gave me an idea that, even though I cannot video record, or stream one of my presentations in the future, I could audio-record it and share it with others through a podcasting site, along with my slides. In addition to these, he also provides an example of the tool that shortens long URLs, Tinyurl.com, which makes it easy to copy and paste links correctly and fully in emails, such as this. Finally, by visiting his link, I could be forwarded to his podcasting site, explore his other posts, and save it as a technology resource for myself. In that sense, what he created for himself served not only as an example for me and for my repertoire of various uses of web-based technologies, but also as a technology resource that I could consult or follow in the future.

**Technological pedagogical knowledge.** In general, among the emails I coded, there were more references to technology and its relevance to pedagogy. This especially happened during the discussion of a current book at the time, *The Shallows* by Nicholas Carr, on which Michael presented and shared his presentation with the community via Podomatic. The topics the book raised yielded to discussions about pedagogical

implications behind new technologies and the Internet. At one part of the discussion, for example, Vance wrote the following ideas in one of his emails:

“[...] Young people might tend to be hitting at links in their recreational browsing, as we all do, but to leap from this to ‘they therefore never engage in deep vertical absorption of what they are browsing’ is in my view quite possibly false. [...] It could be that they have so much more data to scan that they, as we do, simply click on a lot more horizon before we latch on to the bits we feel we need to explore in greater depth. [...]

If you have some moments where you are tired from a long day, and you have no pressing deadlines, what do you choose to do? Do you play solitaire? Sit down in front of a TV? Pick up a good book? Check Facebook? If you tend toward the latter end of the scale you’re in good shape in my view. And when many of us were growing up we didn’t have the latter option, but now that we do, we learn a lot from Facebook, and that takes us into Twitter, email (I’m writing one now, aren’t I?), and interactions with my PLN [Personal/Professional Learning Network], which, when I decide it’s time to write and reflect, I switch off and get down to it. [...] We should be making ourselves and our kids aware of how to successfully leverage the affordances of the new technologies while avoiding the pitfalls, same as for TV, the telephone before that, books in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. [...] What we need is a comparative study of how much deep cognitive endeavor people did during the TV era vs. what they engage in now. I think that a lot of cognitive surplus was merging with recreational time. [...] This is actually a positively enlightening development, making possible, in my view, a renaissance

in thinking and sharing, along with a reversal of power directionality. [...]” (Msg. 27974, Jul. 23, 2011)

In this email, for example, while voicing his opinions, Vance further raises questions and considerations as to how new technologies change our learning styles and how we become more engaged in dynamic learning through the emergent social media technologies on the Internet. He also challenges ideas of those who think that people have become lazier and less cognitively engaged due to the invasive Internet technologies in our lives. As a peripheral participant in this discussion, by reading these emails, not only I became familiar with this book, but also it made me reflect on my own position on these issues and how these ideas and issues would inform my teaching practice, such as “what would be my position towards students who spend a lot of time on Facebook?”

There were also discussions, and emails geared towards more teaching and classroom-related implications of new technologies. For example, in one email below, a webhead offered his ideas on how to prevent cheating in online courses:

“Learning online is the future whether we like it or not. I have ‘flipped’ my classes and am using online extensively.

Recently I have been researching the subject of how to restrict online cheating. I have found that there are a few things that can be done but basically it is impossible. [...] What can be done?

- Have a pool of questions that your system will choose from. For example, 100 questions and your system will choose 10 of those at random. This way every student will get a different set of question.

- Have the questions appear in random order. Even if you are working with a limited set of questions, you can have those questions appear in different random orders so it is not possible to say the answer to #1 is B, etc.
- Put a time limit on how long the student is able to work on the quiz.

But none of these seem very effective.

My suggestion is to use the online quiz or test for training purposes only. It is sort of practice for the student to see if they have really got the subject. It could be required, that is, the student must do it and it could even have a score but it would only be a practice test and a practice score. Then follow it up with a paper and pen proctored quiz in the classroom.” (Msg. 28088, Aug. 8, 2011)

After reading this email, I reflected on my own online teaching practices and how I use quizzes in online classes. It made me feel ‘on the right track’ to see that some of the practices I follow and some of the beliefs I hold about this issue was already put in this email. Meanwhile, as I did not share the same view of online cheating can only be prevented with face-to-face testing in a classroom, it made me question these views and reflect on the issue in a bit more detail. Also, later a reply from a webhead from Canada came:

“Completely online is my own teaching environment. The way my university handles it is to have invigilated final exams. Within Canada, there are approved testing centres throughout the country. For other locations, students have to follow guidelines as to who can do this and where it can happen (colleges, universities, embassies, high schools, libraries), and we have the invigilator information and approve the situation. Students have to pass the final exam (even



though the weighting is often quite low) to pass the course. Students have to pay the cost for the invigilation. The system works – every once in a while we do find exam answers that are obviously very different from the caliber of work submitted for assignments sent as attachments ;-)" (Msg. 28122, Aug. 10, 2011)

This email also helped me learn another practice that is more specific to a 'completely online' environment, which made me think that she was possibly working at an online college or university. This context was thoroughly new to me, and I was informed how this issue was being handled in that context. In that sense, the discussion contributed to my technological pedagogical knowledge and how different contexts would require different strategies to tackle with the issue of cheating in online tests.

In my opinion, the other ways of engagement in these emails also contributed to our various levels of technological pedagogical knowledge. For example, when a member shared an announcement to a professional event, be it organized by the community or by others, s/he implicitly contributed to our knowledge base. For example, in an email announcing several concurrent talks over the internet, the description of one talk went as follows:

"[Presenter:] Cecilia Lemos – Alternative assessment and electronic portfolios:

sharing a successful experience and ideas

Description: We'll take a look at different types of alternative assessment we can use with students, the benefits and difficulties of them. I'll show the successful experience with electronic portfolios as sole assessment tool in my school and give ideas on how you can take the alternative route. [hyperlink to the session was provided]" (Msg. 28010, Jul. 28, 2011)

Although this message is an announcement to a synchronous session, and I would get more information on what this presenter would offer in terms of how to use electronic portfolios as alternative assessment by attending the session, this brief description in this email would still contribute to our technological pedagogical knowledge as participants, especially for those among us who had not previously thought of e-portfolios as alternative assessment tools. In this sense, because it might offer a different pedagogical perspective to us on how existing technologies can be repurposed for educational purposes, such information exchange in these emails mediate our technological pedagogical knowledge as members in this community.

**Technological content knowledge.** Similar to engagement in email interactions referencing various issues in relation to technology and pedagogy, such engagement happened in terms of technology and content as well. For example, in one email thread, some webheads were discussing their ideas and practices in reply to Hessa's request for ideas of a CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) textbook. While some offered references, some others opted for the use of multiple sources and not sticking to a book. A webhead from Brazil, for example, wrote the following in her reply:

“[...] The two courses for teachers I teach online in the language school I work for don't have books. One I had to prepare the group of teachers to teach online, the other is called Web Tools for Educators. We've decided not to have a book to be able to keep it always updated in the spirit of the topic. Couldn't you suggest a group of texts instead of a textbook? I always add texts, blog posts, podcasts, videos, etc. to make it engaging and up-to-date to really show teachers what the

trends in ed tech are. It also gives me the flexibility to change things accordingly.  
[...]" (Msg. 28085, Aug. 7, 2011)

This discussion was actually very interesting to me, as I was planning to teach a course like this in the future. In that sense, it gave me ideas on how to approach my content in such a course for pre-service teachers in a teacher education program. Apparently, many like-minded professionals were opting for 'keeping up-to-date with technology' by not sticking to one specific textbook, because of the rapid developments in technologies and their affordances. In line with new trends in learning and teaching with technologies, they were deriving their content for those classes on multiple online sources of information. Furthermore, when Hessa told others that she shared the same view, but her department chair 'suggested' her to select a coursebook, and she felt obliged to do so, Teresa offered a video to show to the chair on how learning is changing and it's not solely happening in books. Another webhead replied to Teresa's email by saying "I think it [the video] is a great help to all of us. It's perfect for my first ICT class on Digital Literacy. Thank you for sharing such a valuable source!" (Msg. 28121, Aug. 10, 2011). This reply also showed me that when a webhead shares a technology resource, others would also use it as content in their technology-related classes. In that sense, in email exchanges in this thread on whether or not to follow a CALL textbook and how to determine content in an ICT class for pre-service teachers, our technological content knowledge was enhanced.

Also, in another instance, where webheads were sharing ideas on a specific web-based tool called *Whitesmoke*, which serves as a grammar checker, there was again reference to technology and content, this time with respect to grammar in English language teaching.

“[...] While we have been using the grammar/writing checker in Word for many years, it has severe limitations, of course. While the teacher was not able to see the use of the software on the student’s draft, there were remarkable differences that the students said were due to the grammar checker. [...] there could of course be other reasons for the remarkable improvement. Even if this grammar checker were the cause of such dramatic improvements, that in itself would raise some questions of how to use it in teaching and learning English.” (Msg. 27871, Jul. 2, 2011)

Through this email and the others in the same thread about *Whitesmoke*, we not only learned about this technology and its affordances, but also were engaged in thinking over issues of grammar checker software in teaching or learning English. In that sense, as a participant, this discussion helped me reflect on how allowing a grammar checker to be used in my grammar class would change the content of a grammar class (e.g. perhaps basic grammar would be covered with such a program, and more advanced grammar could be the content of these classes). Therefore, personally, it contributed to my further understanding of how the use of specific technologies would affect what goes into our English classes in terms of content.

Finally, in a more implicit way, webheads emails mediated our knowledge bases of how technology and content would interact. For example, in one email, Vance shared with us a video by Shelly Terrell, whom I came to know virtually through her miscellaneous videos and webinars on technology and English language teaching freely available online. He wrote in his email that the video was on “Using Twitter in ESOL” (Mesg. 27972, Jul. 23, 2011). An interested member would definitely visit the link and

watch the video to gain more insights as to how to use Twitter in teaching English, and witness how others are integrating it in their classes. Additionally, in my opinion, the exchange of this information also allows others who only read the email to be informed that although Twitter is a general social media tool, there would be ways to leverage or repurpose it for English language teaching.

**Technological pedagogical content knowledge.** As I was participating in this community and its activities, be it following the emails or engaging in the BaW2011 workshop, I realized that as practicing English teachers, perhaps we already have built some pedagogical content knowledge in our training years, as well as through our teaching practices. What seemed to be necessary was to integrate the technology component to this database. Therefore, I tended to relate my technology-learning throughout my participation to English language teaching, or training English language teachers, in one way or another. Therefore, I developed an impression that even at times not made explicit in these emails, all kinds of technology-learning that happens through this community would eventually contribute to these English language teachers' technological pedagogical content knowledge, since they would be relating these new information to their own teaching practices 'behind the scenes'. However, there were also explicit and direct discussions that would contribute to the intersection of all these three knowledge bases. For example, the following email illustrates how this happens:

“[Subject line:] Your feedback sought: ESL-oriented video film review (Pirates of the Caribbean)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6wgacoTJ3E>

I made this clip after watching a video film review with my students and realizing that watching the trailer while listening to the reviewer is much more engaging to the student than just hearing or reading the review. I ‘ESL-ified’ the review by speaking slowly, using simple vocabulary, and glossing words and expressions both orally and using Youtube’s annotation feature (which can be turned on or off). Exercises, discussion questions could easily be added. The technique I used is as follows:

1. Go to <http://www.hd-trailers.net/> to download a trailer (I was unable to download this POC clip using the more common Youtube download methods – perhaps there was some kind of block on commercial movie trailers)
2. Convert the downloaded trailer to .avi (if it’s .flv or .mov, etc.). Use <http://www.pazeera-software.com/> tools or find your own free ‘something to .avi converter’ online.
3. Load the .avi file into Moviemaker version 2.6 (available at <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/en/details.aspx?FamilyID=d6ba5972-328e-4df7-8f9d-068fc0f80cfc> )
4. Click Tools/Narrate Timeline to add your spoken commentary on the voice track (over the video sound track). Prepare some notes so it flows better.
5. Click Tools/Audio Levels to make the movie soundtrack softer than your voice. This is key!
6. Save the movie as .avi (Save to my computer)
7. Upload to youtube (You’ll need a Youtube account – free)

8. In Youtube add annotations as desired (see Youtube help for how to do this.. it's not hard)
9. Get the link and post it on Facebook, Twitter, here, etc.” (Msg. 27682, May, 20, 2011)

In this email, this webhead is sharing a technique he has discovered and started using in his own teaching. In my opinion, it has tremendous information that contributes to others' technological pedagogical content knowledge in many, complex, and both implicit and explicit ways. For example, as a participant, far and foremost, I learned a new technique of repurposing a movie trailer – which obviously was not created for language teaching purposes, and a corresponding review of the same movie to be used as a listening/speaking material in my English language classes. Furthermore, through another webhead's experiences, I understood the fact that there are ways to redesign authentic materials that are available through multimedia technologies on the Internet in order to better serve the needs of our English language students. In addition, the email exemplified a language teacher's decision-making process to me, with the information on the reasons why this webhead decided to manipulate the material. Moreover, he specifically provided the steps for how to create these materials (Later, he presented his technique in a synchronous Learning2gether event for the community, which was archived at <http://tinyurl.com/5rubdwr>). Among these steps, I also learned new technology resources such as Pazeera software, and that Youtube had an annotation feature that I can use and monitor. Additionally, because I also teach to pre-service ESL teachers, I further think of ways of introducing this technique to my students, and having them create videos such as these for various levels of English language learners.

Therefore, even though I did not explicitly interact in this discussion, by only reading the email ‘behind the screen’ I believe it contributed to the development of my, as well as others’, technological pedagogical content knowledge.

### **Shared Spaces in the Evonline2002 Yahoo Group**

The evonline2002 Yahoo Group seemed to be used mostly for email exchanges. However, there were other places provided by the YG services for the members to upload and share documents. As I was exploring these areas, I noticed that most of them were not being actively used during my fieldwork. For example, the “Files” area included 17 folders, 13 word documents, six PDFs, and nine image files. Most of these folders were created back in 2002, 2003, and 2004. This gave me the impression that Webheads used this space as their central space for sharing files and photos before their activities and interactions were spread and expanded to multiple places. Also, currently they seemed to use wikis as central places for their activities, which also serve as an archiving space for these activities (such as the BaW workshop wikis). Some of the folders in this area named *Presentations*, *Articles*, *Photos*, *Chats*, etc. For example, in the *Presentations* folder, there was only one presentation uploaded by Vance that he had delivered in EgypTESOL 2002. The *Photos* folder was created on January 18, 2002. As I inscribed in my fieldnotes below, this gave me the impression that perhaps there was not a *Photos* area at the time in Yahoo Groups so that Webheads created a separate folder under *Files* to share each other’s photos.

“There is a Photos folder created on January 18, 2012 by Vance, and it seems like the oldest folder created in this group. It also functions as the first file/folder uploaded. The first photo that was uploaded to this folder was by Dafne and she



looks so young! All the photos in this folder were uploaded in 2002, except for one which was uploaded in 2003. Among those that were uploaded in 2002, there are other familiar names. That means they have been together with Webheads since 2002 then. There is another Photos area on the Group page but they seem to share community photos there. The Photos folder in the Files area, on the other hand, looks older and only individual photos were shared. Perhaps when the group was first created in 2002, Yahoo Groups did not have that area to share photos, and that's why they have created a folder like this? This again shows how they were ahead of technology and internet culture at those times. They seem to have already been aware of the affordances and non-affordances of technologies and thought that it will be important to put a face on a name and started sharing their photos to facilitate the sense of community among the group, or among the first time participants of the very first EVO session in 2002, which gave the Yahoo Group its name, evonline2002." (Fieldnotes, April 12, 2011)

Under *Files*, some folders had been named as 2002, 2003, and 2004, but there were no other folders for the next years. This, again, fostered my assumption that this Yahoo Group was a central place where this community was perhaps born, and it was also central to sharing. However, as they started to develop into a community of practice, where sub-communities were born and activities were spread over multiple venues on the Internet, the centrality of the Yahoo Group mainly remained for email communications.

Overall, I perceived the main function of Webheads' evonline2002 Yahoo Group as a space for email interactions. The email interaction in this community seemed to be a key factor to connect the community together on a daily basis, since there was at least

one email exchange everyday during my fieldwork. The central communications and the announcements and coordination for community events, artifacts, projects, and news from members' lives as well as face-to-face meeting organizations seemed to be held through email communication mostly. However, the email exchanges continued to contribute to the collective development of community's knowledge and practice not only for those who seemed to be actively involved in the email interactions (in the sense of posting regularly and frequently), but also for those who remained passive readers of the emails, like me.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I have focused my attention on the evonline2002 Yahoo Group. Since this space of the community seemed to be the longest-running space the community has maintained, and because of the high frequency of emails exchanged through this group, I considered the email interactions within this community as one of the main activities. Therefore, in this chapter, I provided my analysis of the engagement patterns in these emails, giving specific examples from the email data. I concluded this chapter by giving an overview of the other shared spaces in the Yahoo Group, which do not seem to be as frequently used as the email list provided with this Yahoo Group.

## CHAPTER 6

### WEBHEADS' PRACTICE: LEARNING2GETHER

*“...being human is a relational matter, generated in social living, historically, in social formations whose participants engage with each other as a condition and preconditions for their existence” (J. Lave, 1996)*

Another main activity that I participated in and observed was called the *Learning2gether events* (or sessions). In this chapter, I explain the background and characteristics of these events, as well as artifacts that are associated with these events, and the people involved.

#### **Learning2gether Events**

One day, as I was reading through the evonline2002 emails, I noticed an announcement by Vance about an upcoming *Learning2gether* live session. After I visited the link to the session, I came across with a new community event that had recently started that I was unfamiliar of. I inscribed that moment in my fieldnotes as follows:

“At this time, while looking over the email exchanges, I noticed something new, a new community activity and a product – its wiki. A wiki for this activity has been developed, <http://learning2gether.pbworks.com>. It’s called Learning2gether (meaning Learning Together, apparently.) On the wiki, there is a greeting: ‘Learning2gether – Welcome to a space where educators can learn together’. This was followed by a descriptions of what this wiki was about: ‘This space has been created as a portal where educators who gather here can teach each other and

leave archive recordings [here](#) [hyperlinked] and mp3 podcasts are starting to accumulate at <http://vance.stevens.podomatic.com>” (Fieldnotes, Feb. 27, 2011)

At a first glance, I was surprised to see that there was no reference to Webheads in these descriptions, and that made me wonder if this was a project conducted by Vance, but not a Webheads activity. Then, as I read, I saw another note on the wiki, which referred to WiA, giving brief information about it and the time and venue of these events (Figure 6.1). Part of the note said, “In the fall of 2010, we began holding these regularly scheduled online presentation events each Sunday at 1300 GMT, virtually in [Elluminate](#) [hyperlinked] or in Adobe Connect (but could be anywhere online).”

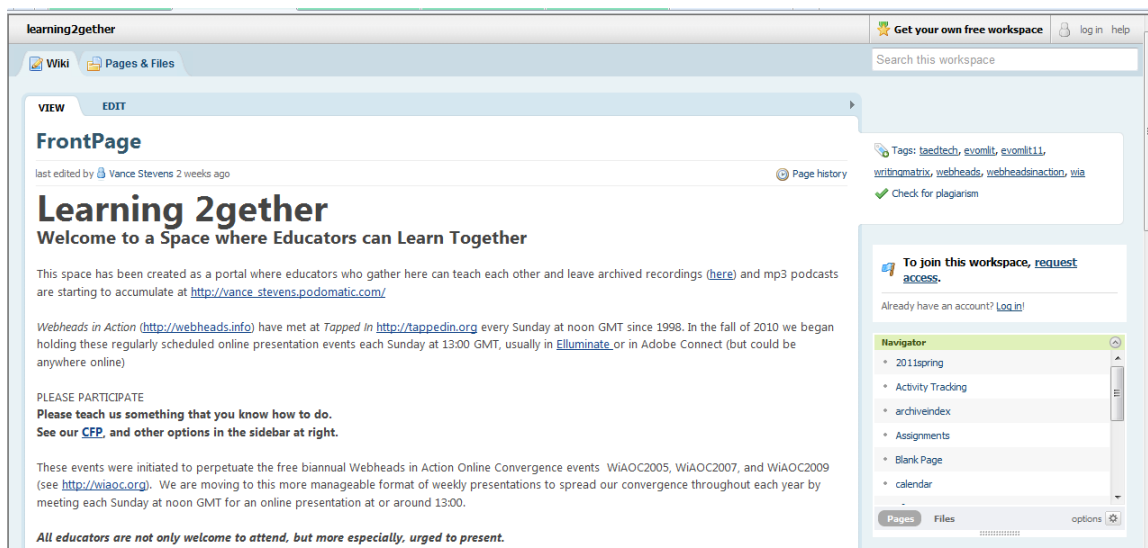


Figure 6.1. A screenshot of the Learning2gether wiki front page. (Note: I took this screenshot during my fieldwork. As Vance is constantly reorganizing this wiki, currently the front page looks a little different.)

Because I did not want to distract my attention from the emails on that day, I noted it down for myself to look into those events at a later time. During the following days, the same announcements followed, and I began to get an impression that this was a trending

new activity that Webheads were organizing, which seemed to be becoming a ‘main’ activity.

About a month later, on March 20, 2011, I visited the Learning2gether wiki to explore it in more detail. The wiki was coordinated by Vance. From my observations of the wiki, I realized that these events had come to replace the previous three-day biannual online conference that Webheads used to organize, *Webheads in Action Online Convergence (WiAOC)*. While this information satisfied my curiosity as to why there was not going to be WiAOC in 2011, I was now curious to know why Webheads stopped organizing these conferences and, instead, opted for these weekly synchronous meetings. Later, when I interviewed Vance, I learned the answer:

“[...] In 2005, we had this idea that we could just stage our own conference, without money, well just having people come together and the group was really strong and cohesive and it was kind of novelty back then. [...] It was really unique back then to get a lot of people together and just put on a conference, but that is what we did. In 2005 and 2007, we had a vetting system, we refereed it, we had people put in formal proposals, and we had a committee and the committee decided whether they should be there or not [...] In 2009 we got away with the vetting, it was too much pain. But we had no difference in quality, it was as superb. But I thought these 72 hours of marathon conferences have 72 slots. We didn’t really fill all of the 72 consecutive hours, you know there were times there were a few hour gaps and it’s coming out to about 52 presentations more or less, and if we do something weekly, it’s a lot less trouble and we get the same number of presentations and still everything is recorded.” (Vance Interview)

From what Vance told me here, I understood that WiAOC was a unique endeavor at the time, and it was offered free with voluntary efforts of Webheads. However, the work was hard and time-consuming, especially the behind-the-scenes. Therefore, if they were going to end up with the same amount of presentations, where learning continuously happened and spread over a year, it seemed to be less troublesome, and they wanted to initiate these events.

### **Learning2gether Wiki**

As I wandered around the Learning2gether wiki, I noticed that the design of the wiki was simple and self-explanatory, and it was very organized, just like the other wikis created by Webheads. As in the many other activities of Webheads, they again used Pbworks.com for the Learning2gether events, and I was already very familiar with the format of Pbworks wikis. On the front page, there was a phrase in capital letters: “PLEASE PARTICIPATE. Please teach us something that you know how to do. See our CFP (Call for Participation, which linked to another page that gave instructions on how to contribute.) This statement actually surprised me, since I would perceive Webheads as very knowledgeable and I would not consider myself able to ‘teach’ something new to them. However, this manifested an essential characteristic of the community: everybody is considered to have something to share. In that sense, the choice of words in this call as “please teach us something that you know” instead of “join us” or “present to us”, I thought, represented the values of Webheads well. Moreover, the word ‘something’ in this call also perpetuated the idea that these sessions are for learning together, and the content of what is learned is not as important as the learning itself. Therefore, this

activity, from the very moment, gave me the idea that it holds and passes Webheads values to others openly.

On the front page of the wiki, what followed was a group of services (LearningTimes.org, Tapped In) and associations that support these events by announcing them in their newsletters: APACALL (Asia-Pacific Association of Computer-Assisted Language Learning) and TESOL Arabia Ed-Tech SIG (TAEdTech SIG). This information seemed to support the idea that Webheads are spread over to other communities and networks as well, and their activities were intersecting with others. It also gave me the impression that, those who participate or present in these events may not necessarily be a Webhead since participation in these events did not seem to be limited to Webheads. On the other hand, at the bottom of the front page of the Learning2gether wiki, there was this note: “Learning2gether is an umbrella project of Webheads in Action <http://webheads.info> and a weekly extension of WiAOC <http://wiaoc.org>” (Fieldnotes, March 20, 2011), which followed by a Webheads logo. Therefore, the activity itself seemed to belong to Webheads, but the events were announced in multiple places, and open to anybody from any community.

On the Call for Participation page, procedures for contributors were provided. First they are asked to check the upcoming available dates and slots, and then contact Vance about their proposed presentation in order to gain access to the wiki and edit it. They are invited and encouraged to sign themselves up for an available slot. This illustrated again how Webheads collaboratively construct their activities, and how they appreciate the expertise of each other.

There was an index of sessions on the wiki. This section was constantly updated as the new sessions were planned. At the same time, for those sessions that were completed, there was a link to the session recording, screenshots and details of the session. The archives accumulated on a *Posterous* blog (<http://learning2gether.posterous.com>). There was one session almost each Sunday since September 5, 2010, and each session was archived under this index. The idea of archiving each activity seemed to have been an important characteristic of Webheads' activities, and Learning2gether events shared the same characteristic in that sense. This was not only for those who were not able to make the time and join those sessions synchronously, but could watch them asynchronously at a later time, but also for outsiders to the community. It seemed that there was a large collection of recordings that already started to accumulate in this space.

### **Characteristics of Learning2gether Events**

I decided to first gain a sense of the Learning2gether sessions by watching one of them asynchronously. As I limited myself to the activities that occurred during my fieldwork, I looked into 'Spring 2011' area in the index to select a recording to watch. Up to March 20, there had been 9 sessions completed in Spring 2011. The way the sessions were described was very casual, and it was difficult to put them under a category. For example, while one session was described as a "Discussion", a few others were labeled as "chat", "talk" or "online interview". Therefore, a glance through the previous sessions gave me the impression that these sessions ranged from formal presentations to informal chats, which seemed to be in line with the mission behind these sessions (i.e. "please teach us something you know how to do").



For my first ‘asynchronous participation’ in a Learning2gether session, I chose the first session held in Spring 2011. Even though I was not synchronously interacting with the participants because I was watching the session asynchronously, I would call it ‘asynchronous participation’ since I engaged in the learning process as another webhead would while watching these sessions. The session was an informal discussion, and it was entitled as “The Future of Learning in a Networked World”. There were a total of seven participants in the session, two as the main discussants/presenters and one as the session leader (Vance). The session was about an hour long. At the beginning of the session, Vance gave brief information about the Learning2gether events, the supporters (e.g. Learningtimes.org for the free Elluminate virtual room that they provide for these sessions), this particular session, and the presenters. As I was watching, although I felt unfamiliar and outsider to some of the content in this discussion, I found myself engaged in the discussion, by thinking and reflecting over the topics raised, as I inscribed in my fieldnotes below:

“[...] I learn in this session that gesture-based computing refers to the touch-based devices, and devices that are controlled by physical activities, such as wii. I have been familiar with such devices, though I have never played a wii game before for example, this term was new to me, and I learned it through this session. [...]

During the session, participants are talking about Netstick, something that you connect to your mobile provider to have access to Internet I guess. I haven’t used one myself, and I haven’t seen one myself. Apparently, especially those participants who have to travel a lot, are more familiar with them. They say that they are available for purchase in computer stores, convenient for travelling, and

you are just always connected. One says that dongle is another name for netstick. [...] Then the discussion moves towards the use of mobile devices in class. How much control should there be with the use of mobile devices in class, especially when students are usually expected to turn off their cell phones. How can cell phones be used for learning purposes and how can students be controlled on their use of mobile phones, should they be restricted, etc.? [...] They later discuss how in some countries social networking sites such as Facebook is blocked in school computers. At this point, Michael says – this is the kind of thing we are up against... This technology is everywhere but banned inside educational institutions. I kind of agree with Mike. I don't like to forbid something that is widely used around the world in schools; I rather support the idea of finding ways to integrate them into students' lives for educational purposes and introduce them as educational tools, so that students also see some educational value in these tools, especially the social networking sites, so that they don't just hang out with friends there. But I agree that it is hard, and this is an ambitious idea.”

(Fieldnotes, March 20, 2011)

From this experience, I understood that although the nature of participation changes when one asynchronously participate in these session, in a sense, asynchronous participation still felt as lively as the synchronous participation. Throughout the session, I continually reflected on the session content although I was not able to share these reflections with the other session participants. Moreover, such asynchronous participation would still lead to learning. For example, for that particular session, I was an outsider to the discussion, and at the beginning it was not easy to catch up with the conversation, which made me feel

like an outsider both to the session and to the community. As the discussion went on, I began learning new concepts and terms, and also realizing that these people were like-minded educators who also believed in the educational value of social media and new emergent technologies. Although I was invisible to them, because we shared the same viewpoints on the discussion topic, I felt like an insider to the discussion, and as if I was a synchronous participant. In that sense, I had the feeling that this activity also had a characteristic of inclusivity as I observed in other Webheads' activities; even though one was a first-time synchronous or asynchronous participant to the event, there was still sharing, learning, and a sense of community delivered by the Webheads implicitly or explicitly.

For my second experience of a Learning2gether event, I participated synchronously. However, when I visited the link for the event at 8 am US Eastern Time on April 17, 2011, Sunday, there was nobody there. That made me frustrated, and I double-checked the time to see if I missed the event, but there was no problem with the time.

“I wanted to join the Learning2gether event scheduled for today, but there seems to be no one there. In the email exchanges it says that it was going to be held on Saturday at some time that I can't be there. But on the wiki, it says today at 1300 GMT. Did I miss it already when I arranged myself to wake up so early on a Sunday morning and logged in before even having breakfast? I decide to wait in case somebody shows up. I'm wondering if I missed the time or something, because of the daylight saving time? Hmm, I'll wait a bit more to see if anybody will show up or check back again later.” (Fieldnotes, April 17, 2011)

Because I was still learning the culture of these sessions, I had not made it a habit to check the World Clock ([timeanddate.com](http://timeanddate.com)) before I arranged my time. Vance seemed to always put a link to the session time in World Clock to help us see what the time was in our locations at the time of the event. Remembering that, I visited World Clock and saw that the time in GMT was still 12.34 pm, and because of the daylight savings time, Tampa was -4 GMT instead of -5 GMT. Although this seemed to be a simple issue, it was an important learning experience for me in terms of how we arrange our time in an online world. Apparently, everybody else who later joined the session was aware of the rule, and nobody showed up early like me because of the time. That again made me feel like an outsider to the community, but I was glad that I learned one rule of synchronous participation in these events. For my subsequent sessions, I made it a habit to check the time through GMT and World Clock instead of my own clock at home. Thanks to Webheads and one of their activities, this experience enhanced my digital literacy as well as survival skills in the online digital world.

In each of my synchronous participation in these Learning2gether sessions, I experienced and learned something new. In my first participation, the session itself was about learning a new web-conferencing web tool: BigMarker ([www.bigmarker.com](http://www.bigmarker.com)) (Figure 6.2). The session was later archived and the detailed recordings, screenshots, announcements, and summary of the session was available at <http://learning2gether.posterous.com/59588468>.

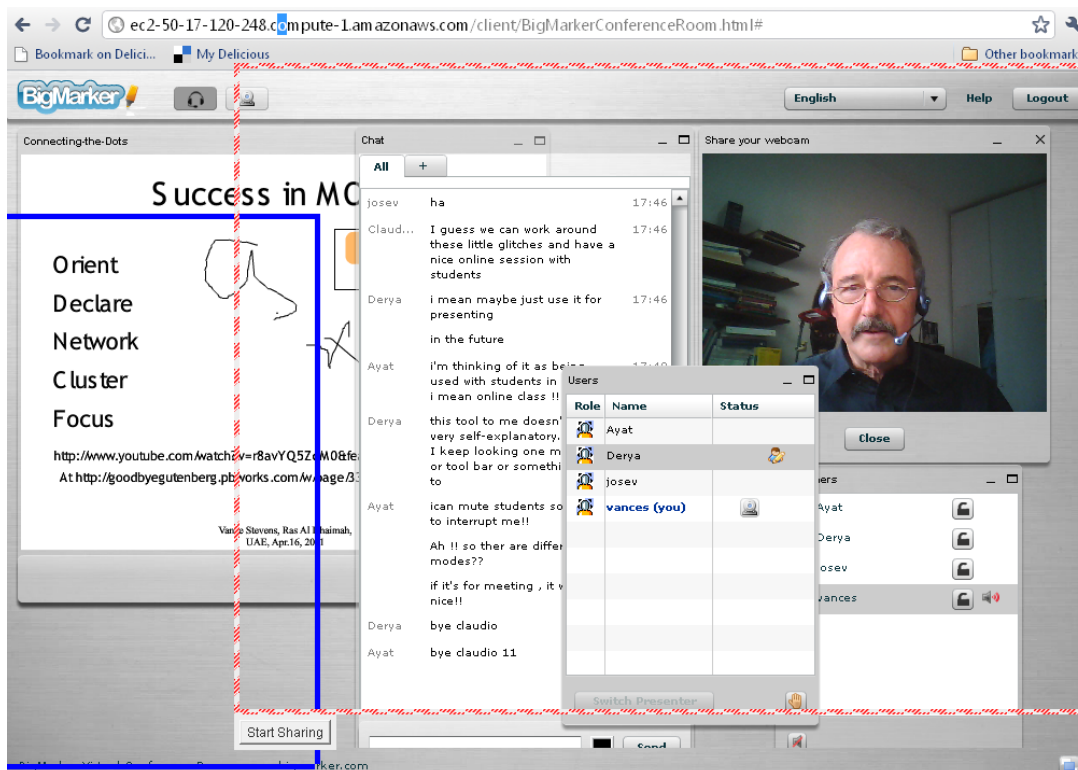


Figure 6.2. A screenshot from Learning2gether session on April 17, 2011.

In this session, there was again a few people synchronously participating. For all of us, BigMarker was new, and we explored it altogether. There was chaos as we were all chatting and giving our opinions about the affordances of this tool, but it was enjoyable and meaningful to learn it together. We all had previous experiences with web-conferencing tools so we knew what we were looking for. For example, we tried if we could activate multiple webcams together, or if we could share our desktops, or if this tool allowed overlapping talk. Together we found out the answers, and through hands-on practice, we were able to add one more item to our repertoire of web-based technology tools. Also, throughout the session, we made connections to teaching, and exchanged ideas as to how we could use this tool in our language classes. In other words, with the whole experience, we enhanced each other's technological pedagogical content

knowledge while exploring a web-based tool collaboratively in an interactive synchronous session. All in all, I felt that the session was reaching its aim: we were learning together.

The next week, Learning2gether session was going to be held in Second Life (SL). Eduration residents were going to give us a tour of Eduration on SL. I had heard of Eduration before. As far as I could remember, a few Webheads had been using Eduration since as early as 2006 or 2007. Currently Webheads has a space there as well, which is called Webheads Headquarters. Although I had an SL account, I was not a frequent user of SL. This, of course, was obvious when I had trouble finding out my way to the session on SL. As can be seen from the chat window on the screenshot below (Figure 6.3), I was frustrated that although I was able to hear the session, I was still not ‘there’ and I did not know how to go ‘there’.

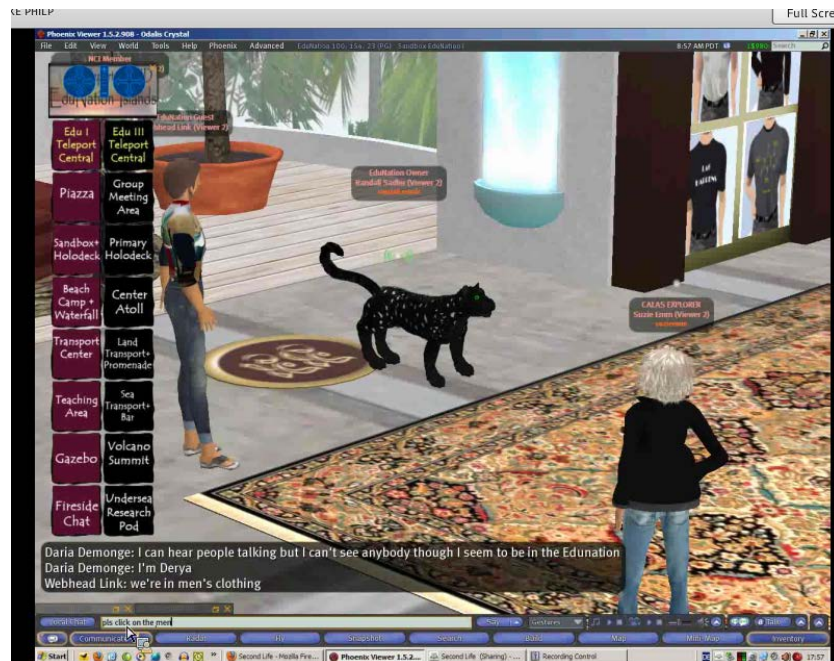


Figure 6.3. A screenshot from a Learning2gether session held on Second Life on April 24, 2011. Here Webheads gathered together in a room on Eduration and I was seeking for help through the chat window to be teleported to the room.

I wrote my problem on the chat window, hoping that somebody would see it, respond and help me out. The answer was “We’re in men’s clothing”, as if I would know what that meant. As seen on the screenshot above taken from the recording of the session, my chat appeared on their window and the session leader was trying to help me out. They later teleported me to the session, and I felt like I had been saved from being lost in cyberspace. With their help, there I appeared, with my purple shirt and skinny jeans –in the skinniest form that I had ever been in my life- safe and happy to join friends (Figure 6.4)



*Figure 6.4.* A screenshot of the Learning2gether session on SL with me finally teleported to the session.

Perhaps because of the new online environment in this session, it took me a long while to adapt myself to the session and understand what we were doing. I was so busy with trying to find out how to move my avatar, and how to ‘behave like others’ during the

session that I did not remember anything from the session. When I later had a look at the recording, I saw that this was apparent in the recording as well, since everybody was gathered around a fireplace facing each other as if they were talking as a group, but I was a little away from them, facing my back to the group. This made me feel a little embarrassed as if I was not following a cultural rule, and still behaving like an outsider to the community. Noticing my odd behavior in this meeting, one person wrote in the chat window: “Daria [referring to my SL name] looks like me when I first came to SL.. my twin sister.. smiles”. However, I did not notice this interaction during the session, since I was still lost. Reflecting on it later on, I was not sure whether s/he was referring to odd behaviors resulting in my isolation from the group during the meeting, or my clothes, which were the default clothes that are given to your avatar when you log into SL. As I was late, I did not have time to change my appearance. Moreover, because I was also taking fieldnotes at the same time, clearly I did not ‘fit in’ to this session. This experience taught me that, in a synchronous event, the expectation among Webheads was to participate, and make contributions to the discussion. However, my unfamiliarity with the communication means (SL in this case) –and the culture and norms of SL- left me out of the conversation and unable to participate. Only towards the end of the session, I began feeling more included, as I figured out how to move my avatar and how to chat with others so that I could at least turn my face towards them. In a nutshell, I had the impression that the space used to deliver the session affected the dynamics of the session for the participants. Therefore, acculturation and active participation in a Learning2gether event required participants to be technology-literate of the virtual meeting space and its affordances, conventions, and practices. Additionally, the default expectation seemed to



be contribution to the discussion. In other words, when attending a Learning2gether session synchronously, one should speak and interact. Otherwise, one's non-participation clearly stands out, as it did in my case.

On another session on May 1, 2011, we gathered together on BigMarker again to experience it one more time. This time, Vance moderated a discussion entitled "Connecting the Dots: Technology and the A-ha Moment" (Figure 6.5)

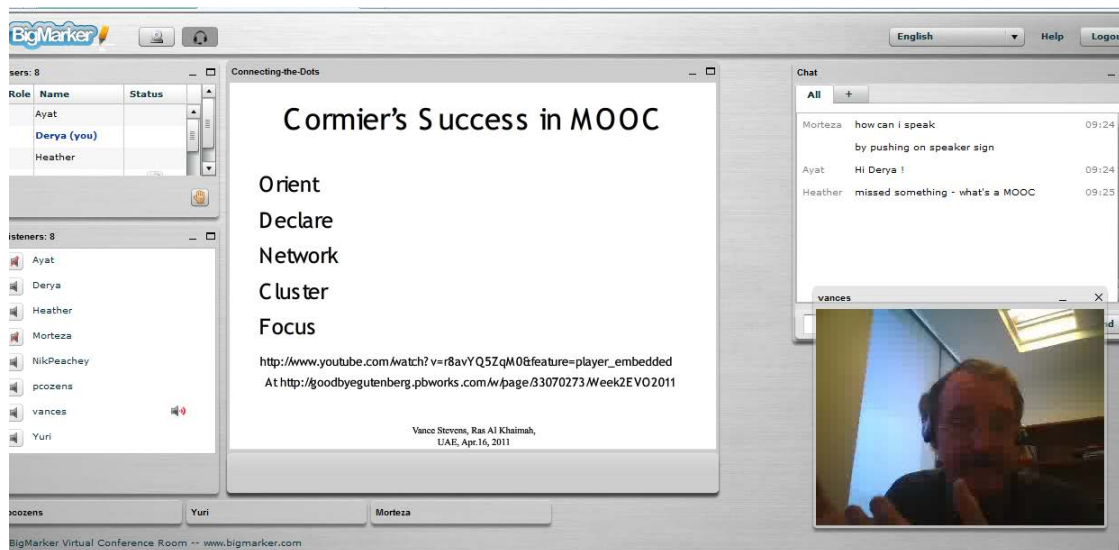


Figure 6.5. A screenshot from Learning2gether session on May 1, 2011.

In that session, my familiarity with the virtual conference room we met in BigMarker enabled me to display more of an active presence as opposed to the previous session on SL. However, because I was controlling my active participation in order not to take over the discussion so that I can balance my researcher role as well, I tended to use the chat window whenever I wanted to contribute to the discussion. However, when Vance asked me to share my opinions through the microphone, I did. Later on, for other participants as well, he asked them to take the microphone and share their opinions. By the end of the session, we all had spoken. That gave me the idea that this was an expectation in these

events: to actively contribute to the discussion by taking the mic and letting others hear your voice. In our interview later on, Vance confirmed my assumption: “One of my little secrets is to make sure that the people that are participating bring in their voice” (Vance Interview). I concluded that a hidden rule in Learning2gether sessions, most probably because they are synchronously held, is to actively contribute to the discussion and let your voice heard. When others see a participant’s name in the participants area on Elluminate for example, they do not pretend as if s/he is not there. They expect interaction as they assume that this is the reason why they gathered together synchronously on that particular day. Otherwise, those who would not contribute to the discussion can asynchronously participate and still learn together through others’ interactions.

Because he initiated this project and coordinated the wiki, Vance was the central person behind the Learning2gether events, which later grew with the efforts of other Webheads, as Vance points out:

“When you have an endeavor that everybody wants to happen, then you don’t have any enemies. Then this endeavor is quite likely to succeed. So Webheads kind of builds on that premise. [...] [Learning2gether] was set up based on the same model that I thought of in the EVO sessions, the original ones in EVO; that is my modeling of how the community forms. So my role in this is to basically set up a website. I just create a space for it, and then I announce it, and then I invite people to participate. [...] So basically you set up a space, and then you invite learners to come and share that space, and then learning takes place. So it’s kind of a formulaic thing. It’s a critical mass sort of thing as well. When you are going

to have a successful party, you got invite a few hundred people, you might have 25 or 30 to come, but it's going to be a great party. If you invite 25 or 30, you might have 10 to come, then it's not going to be such an interesting party. So you have to be very welcoming and you have to develop a critical mass, get enough people into the mix [...]" (Vance Interview)

As can be understood from Vance's words, he perceived himself as the person who initiated the idea of Learning2gether events as well as the Webheads community back in 2002, and who started or helped the network to get together. He had also been the person who consistently announced these events every week through evonline2002 email list and to his own personal learning network. I witnessed his attempts to solicit and encourage other people to present through these events several times. Also, he made use of other opportunities to turn a gathering into a Learning2gether event. For example, when I requested to interview him about the Learning2gether events, he asked us to turn it into a Learning2gether event and make it public so that other interested Webheads could join us. As can be seen from the screenshot below (Figure 6.6), we then announced it as a Learning2gether event and it was archived at Learning2gether wiki and blog. Although Vance was the central person behind these Learning2gether sessions, as he pointed out, the actual learning was happening thanks to the people, and their individual and unique experiences and expertise. As Vance summarized it below, Learning2gether was about the idea of 'learning together' rather than what was learned.

"What we are doing right now, just keeping a conversation going, week after week, we learn from one another in that way. And we have many ways of interacting with one another, and as long as we keep interacting, we keep our

network moving, we keep our network open. George Stevens said that the pipe is more important than the content; a really nice expression that I keep going back to. It's not so important what is in the pipe, the important thing is that you got the pipe working. If you got the pipe working, you can find the way to get the knowledge you need. So that is basically how it works. If I have done anything to help, I have just created some web spaces that help to facilitate some of that knowledge transfer. But the people in the network are the people who really make the network”.

After all, I felt that Vance’s descriptions could be attributed not only to the Learning2gether events, but also to Webheads in general.

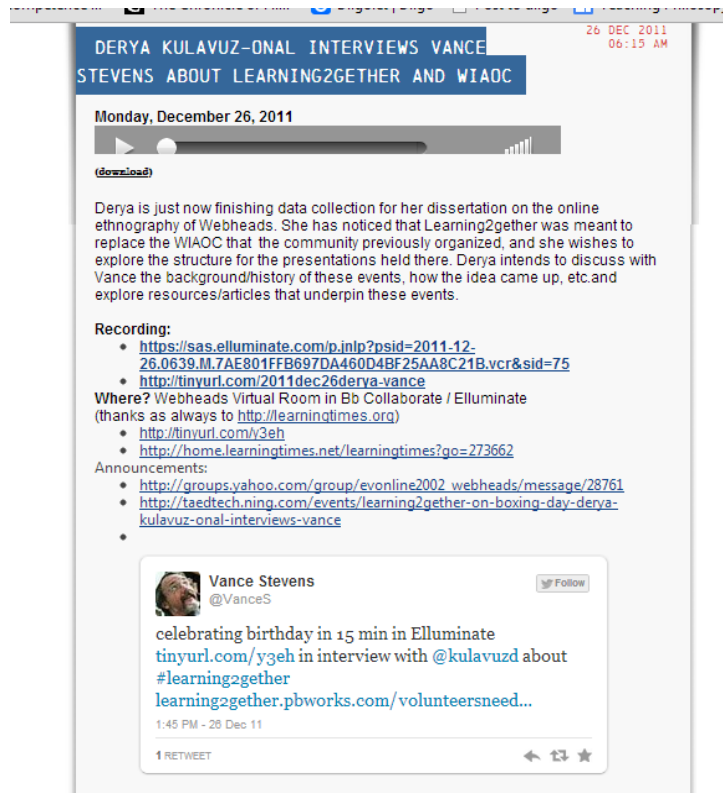


Figure 6.6. A screenshot of the Learning2gether session held on Dec, 26, 2011, as it was archived on Posterous blog. In this session, I interviewed Vance Stevens about the Learning2gether events, which was turned into a session where other participants were also present.

In sum, Learning2gether events constituted a large range of formats including discussions, presentations, chats, or talks. In order to qualify to present, participants were only asked to have a desire to share something that they know how to do, or initiate a discussion. For participants who are willing to join the session as a participant, rather than a presenter or a session leader, active contribution to the discussions seem to be an expectation. Meanwhile, Webheads do not seem to force any participant to bring in sophisticated ideas or make new members feel intimidated. Rather, the reason behind the expectation of active contribution seems to be that they want to interact with everybody participating; they want to be welcoming and inclusive towards everybody. Also, Learning2gether events seem to be directed towards a range of technology-expertise levels. A participant who is highly experienced in web-based technologies as well as a newcomer to the world of web-based technologies would equally have learning experiences through participating in these events either synchronously or asynchronously, although the nature of these experiences will likely be different. This eventually contributes Webheads' attempts to bring in new members and orient them towards their community and its practice. Through the personal learning networks of individual webheads, these sessions are open and free to anybody interested. In that sense, the sessions give way to new member involvement to Webheads in Action community of practice.

As for the mediation of TPACK, in the light of my experiences, a participant could learn and gain experience as to how to conduct effective synchronous sessions through participating and presenting at these events. Meanwhile, s/he could increase their

familiarity and/or improve skills with various web-based conferencing technologies. During a session, while a member is sharing, in a multimodal way, his/her own technology experiences or technology projects with students, this helps other participants to enhance their own repertoire of technology integration ideas.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I have focused my attention on the Learning2gether events: one of the main activities of the community, which I discovered during my fieldwork. I provided rich and thick descriptions of these events along with my observations, experiences, and my interview with Vance, who recently introduced these events. Also, I illustrated how TPACK is mediated in these activities through the lens of my own experiences participating in these events both synchronously and asynchronously.

## CHAPTER 7

### FROM THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER: THE WEBHEAD EXPERIENCE

*“Once a Webhead, forever a Webhead”* (A Webheads expression)

As I was engaged in fieldwork as a participant observer in this community, I gained new learning experiences, and new perspectives about this community. At the same time, I wondered how others perceived this community, what their learning journeys were. After all, as a researcher, I was an outsider to some extent, despite my involvement in their activities through my participant observation. Therefore, I needed to know others’ experiences, their learning journeys with Webheads, in order to gain insiders’ perspectives. What were Webheads’ experiences like within this community? Tracing others’ experiences was going to help me to be able to provide a more complete picture of the culture of this community.

In this chapter, I introduce five individual members and describe their learning journeys with Webheads: Amal, Nancy, Hessa, Beren, and Megan. Each webhead has a history and learning journey with Webheads that are unique in some ways and similar in others. I describe each member’s story separately with respect to how they joined Webheads, their contributions and collaborations in this community, and their technology use before and after Webheads. At the end of the chapter, I present a cross-case analysis of these webheads’ journeys focusing on similarities and differences, in order not only provide interpretations about the culture of this community on the basis of these journeys,

but also to illustrate how participation in this online community of practice mediates these members' becoming a full participant in technology integration practice and develops their TPACK.

### **Opening up Worlds: Amal's Journey**

*"I feel there are doors being opened and worlds being opened to me till the sky. I feel free, I feel the freedom, now. [Joining Webheads] has changed my life completely... They were like not a family, more than a family... They have taught me a great lesson, working within a community. This is the real success" (Amal)*

Amal (a pseudonym), who is from Giza (Egypt), first joined Webheads upon participating in BaW2011 in January 2011, and at the end of the workshop, towards the end of February 2011, she graduated as a Webhead and registered herself to the main Yahoo Group list of Webheads. At the time of the interview, she had been involved with Webheads for 8 months. In BaW2011, she emerged as one of the most visible and active participants, and she continued her active involvement with Webheads in Action after the workshop ended. She describes herself as a "newbie webhead." English is her second language, and she is a native-speaker of Arabic. She has a BA in English Language and Literature from Cairo University, and seeing that this did not qualify her to teach English, she obtained a high diploma in Applied Linguistics. In this program, they had courses in teaching methodology, testing and evaluation, second language acquisition, etc. She did not take any course specifically designed for integrating technology in English language teaching. Since then, she had taught nearly at all levels, and ages, in both public and private schools. At the time of the interview, she had been teaching EFL at a private language school to young learners that were 10-11 years old. She had been actively involved with Webheads since the beginning of the BaW 2011 workshop, but her



involvement and interaction with Webheads had only taken place through online means by the time of the interview; she had not met anybody face-to-face, or attended any face-to-face conference that Webheads appear (e.g. Annual TESOL Convention, IATEFL, etc.).

### **Joining Webheads**

Amal heard about the EVO sessions through a forwarded message from a listserv she was registered. After reviewing the content of the sessions, she decided to join BaW2011 as she thought it was the “mother course” of the other sessions, and she would be “putting [her] foot on the first steps of using technology”. Although she had always felt that there must be a lot to learn about using technology, she did not know where and how to. As soon as she joined, she realized that the workshop was very comprehensive and she “found the key which opened the door to a wonderful world”.

Then, about the third week of BaW2011, the revolution against the dictatorship in Egypt broke out. For a few days, there was no Internet connection where Amal was living. Once the Internet connection was back, she saw an overflow of support messages from other BaW participants:

“I disappeared about a week because we didn’t have Internet connection here in Egypt. [...] Once we had internet connection, I was surprised by the amount of messages sent to me by the group members asking ‘where have you been? How are you doing? We know things that are going in Egypt; we hope that you’re safe’. And there were some personal messages from the co-coordinator as well. I felt ‘oh wow!’ I haven’t had all this kind or all this flow of messages even from relatives and friends here, so how come I have them from those people who just

knew me for two weeks. So they were really really friendly and welcoming. They were like more than a family.” (Amal Interview)

Her own context, the conditions in her country at that time, and the emotional support that she received from this community through personalized messages helped her establish a stronger bond with others during the workshop, which in turn developed her sense of community towards WiA.

When participants graduated as a Webhead at the end of the workshop, Amal decided to continue and registered herself with the evonline2002 Yahoo Group. She had learned so much during the workshop that she wanted to keep going.

“I decided that I don’t want to end by the end of the course, I wanted to go on. It was optional to join Webheads Yahoo Group, but I decided to join since it will make me go on in this journey of learning” (Amal Interview)

As can be understood from Amal’s comments, she seemed to have developed an idea that it was important to be a part of a community when learning to teach with technology so that she could receive continuous support and feedback from other teachers alike. She felt that she should constantly be in touch with fellow teachers and educators “to share with them, to learn and to find guidance”. She seemed to accept the fact that technological advances happen rapidly and it is difficult to keep oneself updated with all the pedagogical uses and affordances of a particular technology without being connected with other teachers or educators.

“...technologies, they are something you don’t know anything about before you use it, so you need somebody to tell you that they have used it, they find that it is useful in what stage of a lesson and what are the issues with such a tool, and so

on. So you feel safe with a tool which somebody has used and share with you. So the community helps you and encourages you to use this tool ot to take care of some of the points that they have discovered not useful or blocking their way or flow in the class.”

In that sense, she also acknowledged the fact that what she learned in a short time after she joined the BaW workshop, happened mostly because she was connected and learning with others. She thought that she learned much more in a few months with others than when she tried on her own before.

### **Contributions and Collaborations**

Since Amal joined Webheads, because of her enthusiasm about developing herself with technology integration further, and continuing her “learning journey”, she kept in touch with several BaWers. One of them in particular, Matilda, who was also a first-time participant in a BaW workshop, became her friend, and their first collaboration with a Webhead happened together. After BaW2011, Amal and Matilda remained in touch through Yahoo Messenger, Skype and Facebook. Although their contact first started as a professional one (exchanging and sharing information about teaching, their classes and so on), it gradually gave way to personal exchanges, and ultimately developed into a close friendship. While Amal was covering a unit about rain forests in her English class, she asked students which countries were located in South America and what they knew about these countries. Then, she suggested interviewing a teacher from Argentina, a country that students were familiar with because of soccer, but not more than that. The idea was welcomed by the students, and Amal asked her students to prepare questions to ask to Matilda. In one class, she and her students went to the

computer lab, and connected to Matilda through Skype. One by one, students interviewed Matilda asking her questions about Argentinean culture, as well as personal questions such as her favorite food, etc. Later on, they organized a similar interview, this time between Amal and Matilda's students, who asked questions to Amal about Egypt. Students from both sides were very interested in this interaction and both teachers received positive reactions from the students. Because they viewed their achievement was possible because of Webheads, they put screenshots and pictures of their project on a *Photopeach* presentation, a web-based tool to create photo stories, and they shared it with their fellow webheads, who "left very encouraging comments [...] were very proud of us".

Their students' continued interest and Webheads community members' encouraging attitudes and motivated both teachers to continue their telecollaboration through other means. They created a Facebook group, ArgentEgypt, for their students to interact with each other through cross-cultural exchanges (Kulavuz-Onal & Vásquez, in press) In this project, Amal and Matilda acted as group moderators, by encouraging participation, contribution, and sharing from the group members (i.e. their students), just like the way they were treated in BaW2011. Although Amal and Matilda set English as the the medium of communication within this Facebook group, students of both sides, who were 10-12 years old at the time, were interested in the language and culture of the other group. For example, they learned that the word *potato* was pronounced the same in both Spanish and Arabic. They asked each other about their favorite food, music, singers, and movies, which led them know that their tastes were very similar to each other, and despite the cultural differences, they were very similar. Additionally, this project enabled

students to raise an awareness of the role of English in international communication.

Later on, Amal and Matilda's telecollaboration became popular within the Webheads community, and both teachers were invited to talk about their telecollaborative projects in one of the Learning2gether events on , which they viewed as a "reward" of their collaboration as Amal puts it.

"I felt like 'wow! I'm a star!' Being online, having my own presentation, I'm doing a webinar, one of the things that I'm used to attend, webinars, but have not presented one myself before. There were lots of great people who attended the webinar [Learning2gether session] and they had wonderful feedback. [...] it was very inspiring. In three months after joining Webheads community, I had my first webinar and people started knowing me, more people getting to know me. [...] I feel very proud of myself and I feel that oh wow, what would happen, if I hadn't joined this course."

For Amal, joining Webheads not only helped her change her teaching practice with technology, but also expanded her professional and personal network. Having a constant connection with the Webheads community, she established numerous professional connections, and made close friends from abroad. In addition, through her participation in Webheads' activities, she experienced an identity shift in terms of her perception about herself with respect to technology skills and integration. While in the past, she viewed herself as perhaps a passive recipient of technology-mediated presentations, now not only she but also others had started viewing her as an expert in delivering such presentations, which was made possible by her ongoing and shifting participation in this community.

Because their Learning2gether session was archived and recorded, Amal and Matilda contributed to the shared history and repertoire of Webheads' community resources. Through both these projects and their archived session, Amal also contributed to the practice of the community, which entails technology integration in language teaching and sharing this experience and related resources with the community.

Because of her active involvement in the BaW2011 workshop, and her continued involvement with the Webheads community through active contribution to the community's practice such as telecollaboration and synchronous presentations, Amal was invited to be a moderator during BaW2012. At the time of the interview, she was taking the moderator training provided by EVO coordinators' team. She considered this to be a major achievement for herself, and the training helped her not only to become more knowledgeable about how to moderate an online course or workshop but also to learn more about how to use various web-based tools in online moderation:

“...we were doing introductions through Nicky Hockney's articles 3-to-1, how to say three things about you, two places you like, and one reason to joining the EVO sessions. But actually it's not just saying them in a written format, no, Carla, has shared a movie with us that she made answering those questions, and how to introduce ourselves using Prezi, and other tools, many many tools to just introduce ourselves. Now you can make it very interesting and very engaging [...] You can see everything as engaging now [...] Everything can be done in a different, in a more interesting way [...] especially with technology, because technology can give you lots of options to use to make things more interesting and engaging.”

With this training, she was learning to be a mentor for the new participants in the same community where she was very recently a “newbie” herself, as she put it. From the invitation to the involvement in this training, she continued to receive support, encouragement, and mentoring from the others in this community, which further enhanced her skills as not only an online moderator, but also a language teacher experienced with teaching with technology. Her involvement in the community as a designated moderator, and thus a mentor, this time, was going to contribute to the practice of the community as well.

Although at the time of the interview, Amal had been with Webheads less than a year, she was able to make active contributions and to be involved in international collaborations in the Webheads community. Through her involvement, contributions, and collaborations, she was able to move from a peripheral participant in this community towards more of a full participant.

### **Technology Use Before and After Webheads**

Before participating in BaW2011 and being introduced to Webheads community and its practice, Amal’s technology use was limited to downloading worksheets or handouts from the Internet to use in her classes. Although she had heard and personally used some of the computer-mediated communication tools, such as Yahoo Messenger and Skype, she had not implemented them in her English classes for educational purposes.

“Using the technology [before webheads] was just using the internet to get some information, to do a kind of small research. And then I discovered downloading some worksheets, which was like a “wow!” for me some years ago. This was the

only thing that I used to do with technology. Just downloading some worksheets or maybe some activities from a website like the British Council.”

Amal also indicated that her repertoire of technology resources was very limited before she joined Webheads, and she did not have self-confidence in experimenting with web-based tools.

“I used to think the easiest way, because I was poor, I didn’t have resources, I didn’t know a lot about all these web tools. So I would just use the easiest one and the simplest one I had. I wouldn’t exert that much effort, because I didn’t have self-confidence”

Her teaching with technology and technology integration practice changed soon after she joined BaW2011. During the workshop, as soon as she started learning new tools and their applications in language teaching, Amal tried to integrate them in her teaching in various ways. She first created a class blog and used it as a learning management system in a way to connect with students, upload homework assignments, etc. This project received positive reaction and feedback from both her students and their parents, “They felt like this is support like the teacher being with them any time at home, they just opened the blog and they find the material.” This was her first step to discovering pedagogical uses of web-based communication tools and repurposing available technologies for educational aims.

Amal also expressed that soon after joining the community, she had begun developing a rich repertoire of technology resources, and that, day by day, her self-confidence in using these tools and resources in her classes continued to increase. In addition, through her interactions with the community members, she also learned how to



be selective when integrating technology, how to approach each teaching topic and which tool to select to best support the content. She attributed her self-confidence mostly to the community's support:

“With Webheads, you feel like you always have support, you will always have somebody to help you whenever you get lost, whenever you fell you're lost, you will find help. Whenever you feel you are not sure about something, you will find somebody to tell you about it. It's like you are all the time protected. [ ... ] So you're now more brave to take the decision to use something.[...] I will never fall behind, I'll never fail, they give me security and support”

Although previously Amal's technology use was limited to personal use of websites for ideas and handouts to be used in her classes, at the time of the interview, she indicated that she now decides about her content, language objectives, and the technology tool that can best support what she wants to teach in complex ways.

“I try to search technology first, for any topic that I would like to teach or to talk about with my students. If I found something suitable, then I start examining it, thinking if I used it, how would be my students feedback and so on. I think very well about it before using it. And if I feel that it's going to really achieve some of my aims, or it's going to really work with my students, then I decide to use it. But not all the time, because I don't like to impose technology just in any lesson and that's it. No. whenever possible and whenever it will make a difference, or it will really help. And now I feel that lately I've used technology or these kinds of movie segments I've told you about in grammar [referring to a website with a collection of actual movie segments to teach grammar, which was introduced in a

BaW2011 live session]. That actually worked perfect. It made great change in my students and int heir understanding of how grammar is actually in our language all the time, and that it's something real, it's not just rules and some exercises, or activities to do in a book. No they are real life situations, they are in a movie we watch; they are in the same situation we live in our life. [...] So I try to pick what can really work and examine it, or think how would be their feedback or how would they react to it, and if I feel that it will work, I try. And if it didn't work then I learn here that this was not the right one to use in that context.”

As is seen from her reflections above, Amal first decides on the content and the language objectives in that content; these perhaps already comes with her syllabus or textbook she needs to follow. With the content in her mind, she explores technologies available and critically examines their affordances according to her content. At the same time, she considers her students and their needs, and tries to foresee their reaction to this technology. At the same time, she is aware that using technology just for the sake of technology does not bring educational outcomes and she does not like “to impose technology just in any lesson”. As she explores the technology, she keeps her content and her objectives in mind, and then decides to use it or not. In this process, it is important for her to discuss it with others and learn about other webheads' experiences with the same technology. She is “sure that they will answer me, and they will give me help whenever I need”.

Through Webheads community and being involved in BaW workshops both as a participant and as a prospective moderator, Amal indicated that her digital literacy skills had also developed. She now was more selective in following online discussions within

the Webheads community or other communities, which she considered to be an important skill that she did not have before:

“I started to be more selective, and now I can, whatever the number of posts I have, or people or sources being shared, I can be now selective, I can decide what to read, and what to just skip, and which link to open, which link that I can use, which I like a lot. In the beginning, I felt like I have to go through everything and everything, but after some time, gaining a bit of experiences, I can be more selective, I can decide what to go through quickly and what to scan and what to read in details. This is a really important experience for me.”

As can be understood from her words, as her online interactions and online presence increased through her involvement with this online community, she not only is now rich in resources, but also feels more ‘educated’ and literate in the digital world. This coincides with her developing understanding of not imposing technology to her students all the time, just for the sake of technology. If she did not have this network of people that she interacted with continuously, and collaborated in many ways, it would perhaps take more time for her to improve her digital literacy skills. Additionally, this long-lasting efforts would have eventually discouraged her to integrate technology in various ways.

Finally, her involvement with Webheads also encouraged Amal to take more initiatives with respect to technology integration in her own teaching context, which she considered a limited technology environment. After she finished the BaW2011 workshop, she began carrying her laptop to her class, and using video-based resources on the internet in teaching grammar. Additionally, her attempts and determination to integrate

technology into her classes despite the limited technology resources in her teaching context, helped her convince her school principal to buy a projector for institutional use. At the time of the interview, Amal had been the only teacher in her school to use the projector in classes. At the same time, in the near future, she was preparing to serve as a voluntary moderator during Library 2.0 conference, a world-wide, annual, free virtual conference. As a future goal, after she finished moderating the BaW2012 workshop, and getting more experience in online moderation, she was considering to implement something similar with respect to teaching online or through blended ways in her own teaching context.

For Amal, a Webhead is first and foremost a source of support and encouragement.

“A webhead is other than being an expert in using technology in teaching. A webhead gives more than takes, shares for the benefit of others, gives a hand no matter how far she is. A webhead never underestimates any newbies or inexperienced participants. A webhead makes a change in others’ life.”

While she thinks that what defines a Webhead is their expertise in teaching with technology, Amal feels that Webheads do not keep this expertise to themselves, and they are open to share it with whoever wants to take it. As Webheads made a difference in her life, and she made difference in her students’ lives, she was now ready to make difference in other ‘newbies’ lives in BaW2012.

### **From Cassette Decks to Web 2.0: Nancy’s Journey**

*“I’ve been teaching with technology since 2006 [after she joined the Webheads community], I mean technology, you know, when I started teaching, technology was a cassette recorder, and in fact, in my first teaching job, the technology was a cassette recorder that had no reverse.*

*So, in order to play anything twice, I had to tape back [...] But using Web 2.0 tools, that started with Webheads.” (Nancy)*

Nancy (a pseudonym), who is from Maryland (United States), has been a Webhead since January 2006, when she attended BaW2006 workshop for the first time. At the time of the interview, she had been actively involved with Webheads for nearly 6 years; therefore, I consider her a long-term member. She is a native speaker of English, and she teaches ESL at the English Institute, Intensive English Program at a northeastern university in the United States. She had been teaching for about 40 years, 30 years of which was spent at this institute. At the time of the interview, she was teaching a Listening and Speaking class, as well as a Pronunciation class to international teaching assistants.

### **Joining Webheads**

Nancy heard about the EVO sessions from her colleagues in 2005. Because she had not been involved in professional development activities for a while, she decided to join these online sessions. When she read the description of the BaW workshop, she thought that this would be the most appropriate for her since she “did not know anything about anything” with respect to technology.

During the first weeks of BaW2006, she created a blog, her first blog and the first example of her self-created online presence. She was having a problem with uploading a picture in her blog, and as she wrote about this problem to the BaW2006 email list, she soon received a Skype call from a webhead in Sweden. Although Nancy was new to Skype as well, she was able to interact with her and they figured out the problem together synchronously. Because this was a unique experience for her at the time, in terms of getting technology help online synchronously from a person physically far away from

her, Nancy thought “wow these people are friendly and helpful!” This was her first experience and exposure to the Webheads’ continuous willingness to help others.

During BaW2006, she felt that she was learning a lot, but because her semester started, she was not able to continue her active participation during the last weeks. However, in 2007, because of her active involvement and her willingness to help others during the first weeks of BaW2006, she was invited to co-moderate a week in BaW2007. She soon realized that moderating in an online workshop was time-consuming as she needed to interact with the participants all the time. Moreover, she needed extra technology skills and support as she was learning to use HTML codes, which was necessary when editing a wiki at the time. At the same time, though she sharpened her technology skills while moderating, she realized that she did not have the time to do the readings or the activities that she had when she was a participant. Therefore, although she was present in all the consequent BaW workshops after that year, in some of them, she purposefully chose to be a participant but not a moderator in order to be able to keep up with the readings and the activities to renew and update herself with the new technologies.

### **Contributions and Collaborations**

Since BaW2007, Nancy has made many contributions to the Webheads community. After BaW2007, she joined other Webheads to attend the TESOL Convention in Seattle, which was her first time to attend an international conference in a different city. At the same time, she thought that it would be a good idea to connect with those in the Webheads community who were unable to attend the conference. With this goal in mind, she created a blog to share her impressions, reflections, and pictures from

the conference. Other TESOL-attending Webheads also joined her in this blog, and it soon became a collaborative blog. Since then, Nancy has become ‘the TESOL blogger’ of the community as she continues this practice every year for TESOL conventions. As she also describes it to the new members of the community, these blogs are “a place webheads at TESOL can post their impressions and photos for each other and for those who are unable to make the trip to the convention” (Nancy’s email to the community, January 16, 2011, Sunday). In 2011, during my observations of the community, she again volunteered to create a blog, and consulted the community with respect to which blog service to choose from:

“Hello all,

Who is planning to attend the TESOL Convention in New Orleans, March 17-19?

[...] I will create a “Webheads and Friends” blog as I have before. But I am wondering if a Posterous blog would be more convenient than a Blogger blog, at least for those with smart phones. Would there be any advantage to a Posterous blog over Blogger? Please weigh in. Thanks!

I have [also] created a wiki to match roommates, organize a webheads dinner, and list webheads presentations and contact info. [...]

<http://wianeworleans2011.pbworks.com>” (Nancy’s email to evoonline2002 email list on January 16, 2011, Sunday)

As can be seen from her email, she had assumed a self-initiated role in the community (without the pressure of any other member) as an organizer and a connecting person among the conference attendees and between the attendees and non-attendees. Moreover, she used the tools that she learned through this community for the service of the

community in return. Although she had done this blog for her own purposes for the first time, because she now feels that it has become a part of the community's practice, she asks others for their input in these blogs as well. This exemplifies how a self-initiated endeavor gradually becomes an artifact of the community with the others' involvement and willingness to collaborate.

In addition to emerging as the designated person for the 'Webheads and Friends at TESOL' blog, since 2007, Nancy had attended every TESOL Convention spending most of her time in the CALL-IS sponsored Electronic Village (EV), a specially designed large room with state-of-the-art technology and computers, where many Webheads attend either as a presenter, listener, organizer, or volunteer. Although in 2007, in her first time, Nancy only "hung out" there, since 2008 she had volunteered, presented, and spent most of her time offering help in the EV during the TESOL conventions. This gave her opportunities to meet other Webheads face-to-face and develop her personal relationships with them further. Some of them even visited her at her home, and she established long-lasting friendships with some others, with whom she also interacts outside the community.

Her contributions to the community's practice also continued with the biannual Webheads in Action Online Convergence (WiAOC) that Webheads organized in 2005, 2007, and 2009, which was later turned into Learning2gether events. Nancy volunteered to work as a moderator during WiAOC 2007. She also not only volunteered but also presented in WiAOC 2009, which she described as her "first ever online presentation". During WiAOC 2009, she was also introduced to Second Life and attended several synchronous sessions delivered in SL for the first time.



Moreover, after BaW2006, she actively participated Tapped In chats every Sunday for two years, which seemed to be a more common practice among Webheads in the past. This perhaps strengthen the ties with her fellow webheads. As synchronous technologies were not easily held every time, Tapped In enabled Webheads to interact through synchronous chat, in a chat room provided by this educational platform.

Nancy's active contribution and participation was not limited to only one EVO session (i.e. BaW workshops). In 2009, she also joined the moderation team for another EVO session, *Multiliteracies for Social Networking and Collaborative Learning Environments*, which was also organized by a few Webheads including Vance. This enabled her to work with the other community members to expand the learning network and the community's mission to others, as well as gain experience in designing another online workshop. Interestingly, in 2011, she joined another EVO workshop, *Podcasting for the ESL/EFL Classroom*, this time only as a participant, despite having moderated and mentored others through BaW and other EVO sessions in the past several years. She explained that she missed being a participant and learning by completing the assignments. In that sense, Nancy's journey within the community illustrates how expert/learner roles are fluid in the Webheads community; it is not uncommon for a long-term Webhead to gain new experiences and learn new technology skills by becoming a learner again in another sub-community.

Nancy was also the webhead behind the Webheads t-shirt initiative. As shown in Figure 7.1, there are t-shirts, and other goods, from mugs to bags, and from bottles to dog t-shirts, and they are on sale through a free online shop, [cafepress.com](http://cafepress.com). During my observations, Nancy announced the online shop to the community through an email, and

told them that the t-shirts were now ready for sale. Immediately a few members ordered their t-shirts from the website. Nancy also wore her t-shirt during TESOL 2011 convention as was apparent in her pictures on the convention blog that she created.

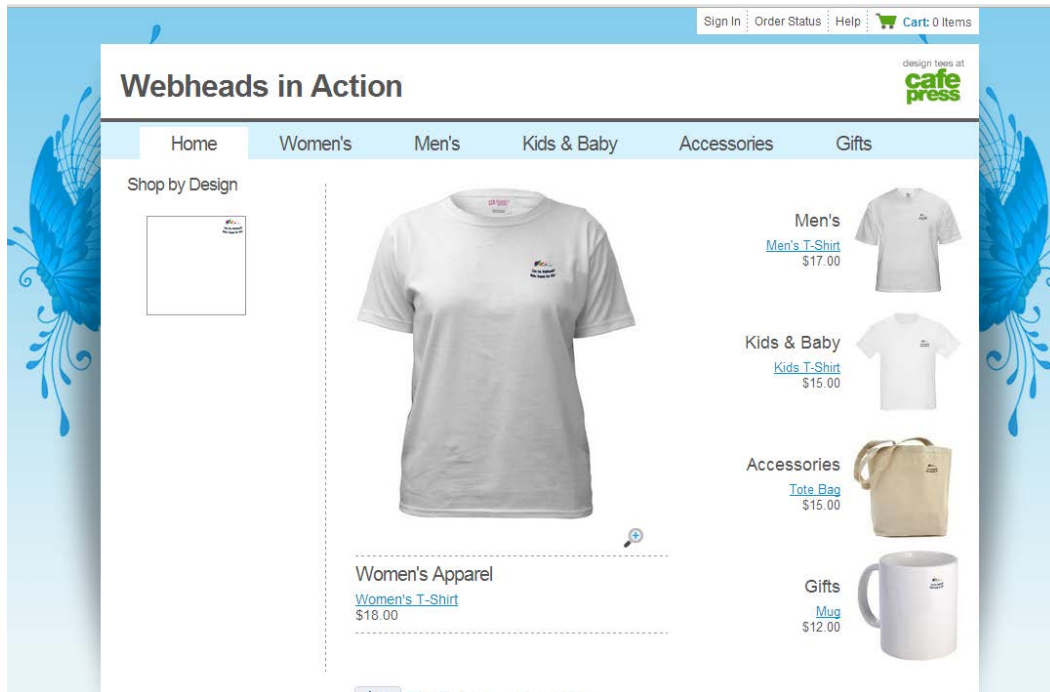


Figure 7.1. A screenshot from *Webheads in Action* online shop at [cafe press.com](http://cafe press.com).

Her initiation of this endeavor helped the community to build another tie among members, this time with a physical artifact. It was a step towards spreading the Webheads as an offline identity in addition to an online one.

### **Technology Use Before and After Webheads**

Before joining Webheads through BaW206 workshop, Nancy's use of computer-based technologies was limited to Microsoft applications such as preparing tests or quizzes for her classes, or personal use of Internet, such as emails. As she put it, she was "very Web 1.0", meaning that she used to use the Internet as resource only; she was aware of neither any Web 2.0 technologies nor the possible ways of applying these

technologies in language teaching. At that time, she did not have any online presence either.

“I remember this thing called email in the 80s, and I thought ‘why would I have an email account? It would just give me more junk mail’. And I was, you know, I had a computer, and I started making the tests on a computer. I used email and I used like a reflector [overhead projector] for my class. I had a computer and internet access. I was very Web 1.0. ..I didn’t interact and I was very cautious and nervous about establishing any kind of presence online.” (Nancy)

In that sense, Nancy was not using Internet or web-based technologies to interact with others. She only used them as a consumer, benefiting from what content other people created online. Moreover, when she attended at the TESOL Convention in Baltimore in 2003, she did not even visit Electronic Village because she felt “intimidated by technology” at the time.

As soon as she signed up for the BaW2006 workshop, she suddenly found herself “creating all these accounts everywhere”. She suddenly had a growing online presence.

“I’m putting my picture on the web, and oh my God, I would never have done that but I guess the difference was that before that session I didn’t trust I didn’t know any particular sites that I should trust or not, so I mistrusted all of them. And then what happened is that they said ‘go to blogger and create a blog’ and I thought blogger must be okay. And then they said ‘there is other thing and do this thing’, and I thought that must be okay. They kind of were leading me and before I knew it, now when I Google myself, wow, I’m all over the place! [...] I started using technology a lot and that was all from having taken BaW. I didn’t know what a

blog was before that. I didn't know what a wiki was, I didn't know what anything was!"

As can be seen from her words above, she acknowledged that belonging to a community like Webheads gave her confidence and trust in establishing online presence and start using Web 2.0 tools in her personal and professional life.

After the BaW2006 workshop, Nancy started using blogs with her students. In 2006, she coordinated a two-week program with some students from a university in Japan. When those students came to the US, they went on daily field trips, and their writing assignment was to read Nancy's blog about the significance of the trip and the place, and then write their own blog entries about their feelings and experiences about these places as well as comment on each others' blog entries. When these students went back to Japan, Nancy kept in touch with them through Tapped In, which she became familiar with through the Webheads community. This intense blogging experience helped Nancy to build connections and relationships with some of those students, one of whom became her "Japanese daughter." In that sense, during her learning journey with Webheads, she always transferred the skills and knowledge she gained to her own teaching practice, which in turn helped her build long-lasting offline and online relationships.

Nancy's interactions with Webheads and her participation in Webheads' activities enabled her to promote the community's values and practices in her own teaching context at the same time. As she built a repertoire of activities and ideas to integrate web-based technologies in various ways, she started sharing these with her colleagues, and helped other teachers with their technology-related problems. For example, on the day after our

interview, she was going to hold a professional development workshop at her home institution about using TED Talks (<http://www.ted.com/>) in language classes. Although she sometimes tends to think “Oh my god, everybody knows about TED,” then her Webhead-ness come into way saying “but what if they don’t? or maybe they haven’t seen all the different ways you could use them.” In that sense, to her colleagues in her school, she demonstrates an example of sharing and valuing everybody’s expertise and ideas, a value that can also be attributed to Webheads’ culture.

Her involvement with Webheads and their practice also informs Nancy’s technology-related decision-making. When making technology integration decisions for her own teaching, the nature and the content of the classes that Nancy is teaching at that time plays an important role. When she taught reading writing classes, she made technology choices that were most suitable for reading and writing instruction, such as blogs and wikis. At the time of our interview, she was teaching listening and speaking classes for the first time after a long break, which enabled her to experiment integrating several Web 2.0 tools related with podcasting and voice-recording, such as Voxopop and Audacity. Additionally, she was repurposing available technologies for her own classes. For example, although her institution was a registered user of Blackboard, which was freely available to students and the teachers, Nancy thought it was not serving for her purposes, and she preferred to use a wiki as her class website. Also, when deciding on which web-based technology to use, she took into account students’ familiarity with the tool or whether or not the tool would be user-friendly for her students. She purposefully did not want to overwhelm students with a lot of technology, just for the sake of technology:

“I have students create a professional words list. They have to do 100 words in a semester, words in their field, because I have students, they are TAs in Physics and Biophysics, and Engineering, Computer Science, Communications, and Educational Counseling. So they keep these words in a google doc which they share with me. And in my other class, my students listen to a TED Talk, 6 TED talks a week and they have to log them into a Google Spreadsheet.”

As can be understood from her words, she prefers more common tools for her students to use or submit their assignments, which, in turn, would not make the technology tool the aim of the learning experience, but an aid to their language learning processes.

In her attempts to integrate technology, she admitted that she had already built a repertoire of Web 2.0 tools and possible ideas to integrate them in language classes by the help of her participation in Webheads’ activities and her interactions with other webheads. When she wants to integrate technology, she then picks the most suitable technology tool from this repertoire for the content. When making those decisions, she consults Webheads, her primary support community when it comes to technology integration. Webheads plays a role of a community as a source of advice and recommendations in her own technology integration practice.

According to Nancy, the first rule of being a Webhead is to “be registered with the evoonline2002 email list” as she sees it as “the glue that holds us together”. However, she also perceives it as “a state of mind; I think you are a webhead if you think you are and if you say you are.” She believes that the most important Webhead value is “always helping people that ask for your help,” and she acknowledges that this is one

characteristic that makes her a Webhead, and that she exhibits in her job and local institution as well as in the Webheads community.

### **“If only the whole world was a Webhead”: Hessa’s Journey**

*“...when you just think about this community, you find like you wish if the whole world was a Webhead. I’m very grateful to Webheads, I’m very proud, as I always say, I’m a proud Sudanese Webhead, which gives me the opportunity always to learn without having certificates, to build knowledge together, to learn from them, to learn with them [...] This sense of belonging, the feeling of being part of this family, the unique sharing spirit and it’s a team. It’s magic!”(Hessa Interview)*

Hessa, “a proud Sudanese Webhead” as she puts it, seems to be the only Webhead from Sudan. She met with the Webheads community for the first time when she attended BaW2005. Since then, she has continued to contribute to the community and its practice, as well as to interact with the other Webheads in various ways. When she joined Webheads, she was an EFL teacher in Sudan at the college level. In the following years, inspired by Webheads, she pursued her doctoral studies in a program on computer-assisted language learning and teaching. At the time of the interview, she was an assistant professor of Applied Linguistics at a university in Saudi Arabia, as well as a “CALL Specialist” at this institution. Along with other Applied Linguistics courses, she was teaching an Educational Technology course in teaching and learning English as a foreign language, which she had designed herself, and it was the first of its kind in her program. Her first language is Arabic, and English is one of her foreign languages.

### **Joining Webheads**

In 2004, Hessa used to visit a website called study.com on a daily basis, to download worksheets and other materials for her students. There she also found a chance to interact with other English language teachers and students. In 2005, on one of the

webpages on this website, she came across with an announcement, or an advertisement, about Writing for Webheads, which was the student-teacher community that was initially formed by Vance and would later lead to the formation of Webheads in Action. She decided to join, thinking that she would explore it for her students and see if it would be something of interest for her students. This was the start of the extensive email flow in her online life; “It was a crazy community! They didn’t stop sending emails. Imagine using this with a dial-up connection. So it took me about 3 hours to finish reading all these emails in a day.” Through this Writing for Webheads community, Hessa met Vance Stevens and learned about the BaW workshops, and this was how she decided to attend BaW2005.

When she first joined, Hessa was the first participant from Africa. She was again amazed by the flow of emails in the BaW workshop and the relationship between Teresa and the participants, which gave her an impression of how connected this community was: “For each and every participant introduction, they told us stories, they told us about their memories, especially Teresa. She has like her own fingerprints on each and every single introduction”. Her words illustrate how it was interesting for Hessa to see that participants in an online community have built such relationships that one would see in face-to-face relationships. Perhaps, she first expected that they will only learn about web-based technologies and their applications in language teaching. However, she soon realized that this workshop was more than learning to teach with technology. It was a true community with bonding relationships among participants.

Not having much experience or knowledge with technology, and describing herself as a “consumer of the Internet” only, Hessa immediately found herself learning



extensively. As she recalled, the very first thing she learned how to do was how to take screenshots on a computer. This moment stayed with her for years. She further used screenshots in her classes when she needed to design tutorials in order to teach various technology tools to her students. During BaW2005, she also appreciated the way the novice technology users in this workshop, the first-time participants, were treated: “The thing which just glued me to this was their patience. You don’t feel that you are learning something; they just make you feel like you are part of them, and this [being novice] is very normal, without even saying it”. As she explains it, Hessa felt a sense of belonging in this community from the first day she joined them.

Like Amal and Nancy, once the BaW2005 ended, Hessa graduated as a Webhead and registered herself with the evonline2002 mailing list, starting to interact with the larger Webheads community. However, it took her about a month to “have the courage” to introduce herself to the community because she was “amazed by the knowledge of these people about technology and how the action goes there.” Therefore, in a sense, she took her time to ‘observe’ the email interactions in this community and to make sense of their culture before she introduced herself. After she wrote her post, her fruitful learning journey began:

“Then I started learning on a daily basis; learning from the posts, learning from the hyperlinks, learning from the interaction, the collaboration, learning from so many things about the use of technology in English language teaching and for my own professional development.”

As Hessa puts it in this interview excerpt, for her, learning was everywhere in the activities and interactions of this community. Even though she did not directly interact

with others on some days, she indicated that she was still learning from others' posts and interactions.

### **Contributions and Collaborations**

Since BaW2005, throughout her journey with Webheads, Hessa has made many contributions to the practice of this community, and collaborated with other webheads in various ways. After her active involvement in BaW2005 and afterwards, she was invited to be a co-moderator for a week in all four BaW workshops between 2006 and 2009. At the time of the interview, she had already accepted to moderate a week in BaW2012 as well. In that sense, she seemed to be the most frequently appearing moderator in BaW workshops. As she puts it, this is a way for her to give back to the community:

“I cannot not accept the invitation. [...] I'm just giving back very tiny of what these people gave me. I think this is the feeling in all of us. This is what I learned from them; you should give back what you have learned.”

In addition to actively being involved as a moderator in BaW workshops, Hessa also collaborated with other webheads in other online workshops and presentations. In 2005, she was a co-moderator of a workshop that Vance was coordinating online outside the Webheads community in coordination with British Council in Doha, Qatar, titled *Blogging in an online community of practice: The impact on teacher professional development*. With this experience, she contributed to the expansion of the community's practice to other online communities and platforms. In 2006, she collaborated on a proposal with three other webheads to jointly present at the TESOL2006 Convention, in which she had to present online because she could not get a visa to come to the US. This was one of her first experiences in combining her academic endeavors with her beloved

community. Her circumstances in her country, while restricting her from physical presence, nevertheless allowed her to gain another experience in online presentations that were somewhat unique at the time. Additionally, in 2007, she also worked on a presentation collaboratively with a Nigerian webhead, with whom she only had online correspondence until they met at the airport and then presented together at the E-learning Network of Nigeria conference. This was a unique experience in the sense that how these two webheads were ahead of their time in their respective “developing” countries. They were able to illustrate an example of online collaboration to their colleagues in African countries. Moreover, in 2008, Hessa received a full scholarship to present at WorldCALL, a global conference on computer-assisted language learning that is only organized every five years; she was one of the 13 world-wide scholarship recipients from WorldCALL in that year, eight of whom were webheads, including herself. This was a rewarding experience for her, and she attributed her success to Webheads, as she thought that, during that time, she would otherwise not have such strong connections for support and resources in her physical environment. Finally, in 2010, the year she received her PhD, she also published a chapter in a book titled *CALL in Limited Technology Contexts* (Egbert, 2010) together with other webheads. This was another example of how she merged her academic endeavors with her learning journey with Webheads, and how these endeavors eventually contributed to the practice of the community, as she continued to collaborate with other webheads.

Likewise, Hessa made attempts to consult other webheads’ expertise and sought their contributions and collaborations in her own projects with her students. For example, in an educational technology course that she was teaching at the time of the interview,

she invited two other webheads to synchronously present at different times about topics related their specific expertise, such as virtual classrooms. Also, she would willingly share her students' technology-infused projects with webheads, and ask them to post comments on her students' projects. She would also reciprocate: whenever other webheads shared students' projects, she would visit these projects and post comments. These practices gave way to cross-cultural discussions among Webheads and their students. Particularly for her students, these intercultural projects helped open windows to them as Hessa explained:

“My students created something called why Sudan is considered a unique country, and it was great. So the teachers asked my students, my students responded about Sudan. They were very happy that they have reflected the culture and what they thought very important to be known about their country [...] Working with Webheads did not just only opened windows for me, or develop me professionally. It opened windows for my students in a country where it was very difficult for them to be connected with others outside because of the infrastructure or because they did not know how to do that.[...] It changed something in them for the better. They think that they can have their voice heard; they can reflect the positive parts of their culture to the whole world.”

As can be understood from her observations, her involvement with Webheads made a difference not only in Hessa's personal and professional life, but also in her students' lives. Webheads played a role of a bridge to connect these students to other parts of the world.

Overall, Hessa's journey with Webheads was full of various contributions and collaborations within the community, which, at the same time, nurtured her own teaching practice, and the ways she contributed to her students' education.

### **Technology Use Before and After Webheads**

Hessa's technology use was also very limited before she joined Webheads. She described herself as a consumer of the Internet before she joined Webheads. She used to have what she calls "secretarial skills or techniques like using word documents, MS Office in general, surfing the net for downloading materials for my students." During the first year that she joined Webheads, she did not start teaching with technology, but rather used this time for her own professional development with technology, by actively participating in the community's activities such as Tapped In chats on Sundays, interacting through the emails and attending the conferences, seminars, and webinars. One such online presentation that she carried out was also in 2006, when she presented a teacher professional development workshop for the British Council. As she recalls, this was the "first webcasted presentation in Sudan". With this experience, she was a pioneer in terms of technology use not only in her own location, but also in her home country.

Once she started feeling more comfortable with technology use herself, she started a pilot project on blended learning at a technology- and science-based university in Sudan, where she was teaching in 2007. When she requested to have access to the computer lab regularly, not only the other faculty but also the students were surprised because this was going to be the first time an English teacher at the university would take her English language students to the computer lab to have English language classes. With those students, and considering the available web-based technologies her university had

access at the time, her blended learning project with her students constituted an integration of blogging and Yahoo Groups as a way to turn her course into a blended course, and it was a unique attempt in Sudan at the time. As she recalls, her students “had never heard the word blog before; they had never heard about Yahoo Groups before. It was the first project in Sudan [to use technology] to teach English language.” In the same course, as a final project, students created digital videos on effects of harmful products or habits such as bleaching creams and smoking. Once students created those videos, they uploaded them to their blogs. Then, Hessa shared this project with Webheads and invited them to visit her students’ blogs and comment on them. As Hessa recalls, one student became involved in a long-lasting interaction with a webhead, which encouraged him (the student) to continue blogging since then. In this overall experience, her fellow webheads served as a built-in audience for Hessa’s students, which enriched her technology integration practice, and provided students meaningful learning experiences with technology. As Hessa put it, this pilot blended learning project was the first time that she ‘integrated’ technology in her class, and it was also the basis for her PhD proposal on blended learning that was approved in December 2007. She completed her PhD three and a half years after that date.

With her blended learning project, Hessa soon became popular at her institution, and then her principals started asking about her certification. Because the way she learned about integrating technologies in language teaching was through a voluntary-based community, Webheads, she did not have any certificates, nor did she think of having one to prove her skills. This clearly demonstrated for her how Webheads were marginal in their educational practices and values. On the other hand, these practices and values did

not seem to be recognized by every place in the world, at the time. Her certification perhaps was all her contributions to the community and its practice, but this was not yet recognized in formal institutions at the time. In any case, in order to obtain a certificate, she participated in the online teaching certificate course offered by TESOL, where several webheads also taught as coordinators, and she further explored teaching reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar online. Then her involvement with Webheads and this certificate course also brought her another full scholarship with a training course for online teachers, a scholarship that was given to those from developing countries only.

An additional success in Hessa's technology integration career came when she became an assistant professor and a CALL specialist outside of her home country, Sudan. As she indicated, the reason for her to be hired in this position was her technology expertise that she developed over the years with her involvement with Webheads activities.

Her involvement with the Webheads community, and what she learned with them affected Hessa and her technology integration in her classes in various ways. Looking back, the first time she used technology with students, as she recalled, was a time when she was teaching an ESP class, English in Medicine, to a group of 100 students, which she described as a course "which does not have any relevance to computers and blended learning." Although she did not integrate any technology in her teaching at the time, she directed students to some websites, and Yahoo Groups, and talked about the internet. One day, students requested her to teach them how to open a group on Yahoo Groups, and other affordances of Yahoo Groups. One day out of the class time, Hessa gathered students together in the computer lab, and demonstrated them how to open a group and

how to use Yahoo Groups, through the tutorial that she created with screenshots that she learned how to do in BaW2005 for the first time. She later learned that those students used that Yahoo group as their official platform to keep each other updated, share announcements, upload files to share, etc. until they graduated. In this overall experience, Webheads' support in helping Hessa to gain experience in these tools empowered her teaching practice, and made a difference in her students' lives.

At the time of the interview, Hessa was teaching undergraduate courses in an EFL teacher education program at a university in Saudi Arabia. Apart from educational psychology and applied linguistics courses, she was also teaching an educational technology course for senior students. As she indicated, she designed the course on a wiki, instead of university-wide Moodle available for instructors. She admits that she was inspired by Webheads, and she took BaW workshops as her model. This exemplified how practices of the Webheads community became a model for the classroom communities that individual webhead teachers develop for their own students.

In that course, as can be seen in Figure 7.2, she had weekly topics that range from constructivism vs. connectivism, to CALL, mobile learning, and microblogging. Throughout the course, Hessa and her students used the wiki as a learning management system to upload and share course materials, student-created projects, relevant web-based technologies and multimedia, etc. A significant part of the course was also dedicated to exploring various web-based technologies and their applications in language teaching. Among these tools were Google applications, blogs, wikis, Twitter, WIZIQ, Proprofs, Voicethread, online offices, Yahoo Gorups, etc.



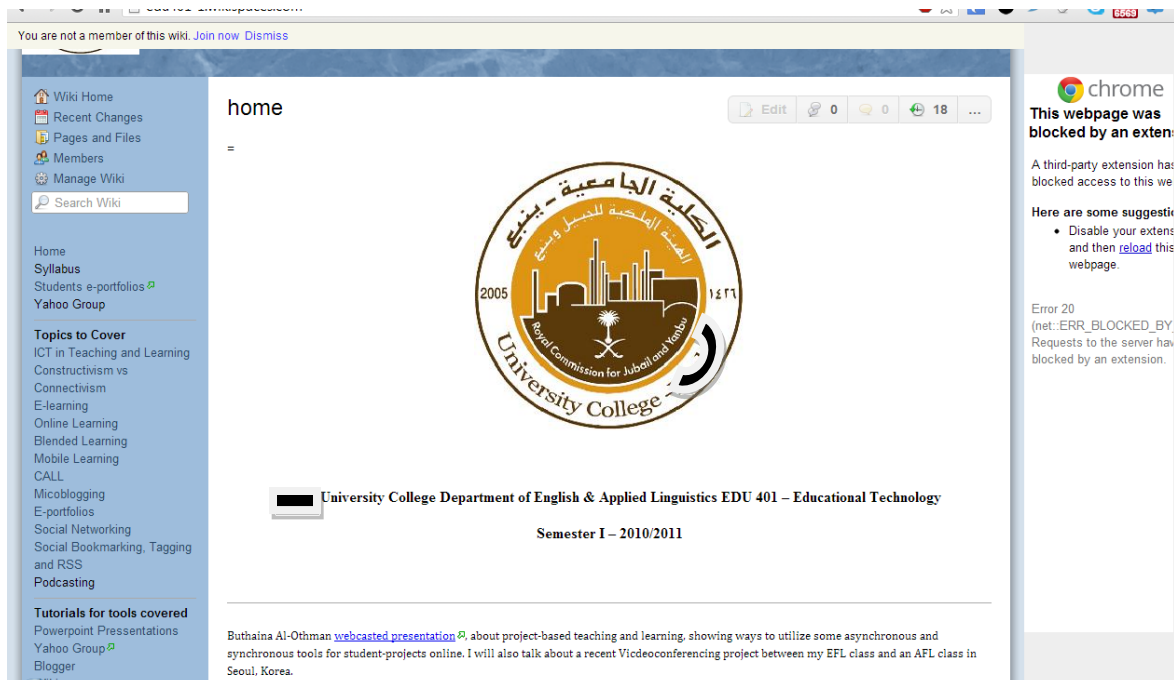


Figure 7.2. A screenshot from the front page of Hessa's Educational Technology class wiki

Hessa's students were EFL pre-service teachers, and throughout the course, each student had an e-portfolio on Wikispaces, to which they had added their projects and explorations with each tool. Also, Hessa provided them opportunities for hands-on practice with these tools by making the tools a part of the course management. For example, students had to use Google docs as a forum to discuss their ideas about the final project. These hands-on practices, just like the BaW workshops, enabled students to develop their repertoire of ideas on how to use these tools for educational purposes for their future classes.

Moreover, it also gave students confidence in exploring additional tools themselves. For example, one student was very interested in Twitter, but because Hessa did not use Twitter much, and was not knowledgeable enough about its applications, this student took responsibility of presenting it to the class, and then to the other faculty in their department.

“[some projects] I didn’t ask students to do them. They just started themselves. For example, Twitter. One student, she loves Twitter. So I told her, I’m not going to present about Twitter. Why don’t you do that by yourself to the class. So she created the video PowerPoint presentation. She presented this to class. It was amazing. I asked her to present it to the teachers at the Applied Linguistics department as well, and last Wednesday she did that.”

As can be seen from Hessa’s anecdote above, her students, who are also pre-service teachers, also develop expertise through what Hessa learned with Webheads. As would be in the BaW workshop model, where actively-contributing first-time participants could become moderators in the following years, Hessa’s students also rapidly become experts in technology use for not only their classmates but also the faculty in that institution.

In her current decision-making processes, Hessa also demonstrates knowledge of pedagogically-sound technology integration. For example, when integrating technology, Hessa indicated that she first considers her students’ needs, skills, and familiarity with various technology tools, since she thinks that “it would be a waste of time otherwise,” and it would not be aligned with the course goals and objectives. She also considers the course goals and objectives when choosing which technology to use or to integrate. For example, in other applied linguistics courses she taught at that time, she chose to use the university-wide Moodle as the course management system, because she only needed to upload readings, videos, syllabus, etc. for students to retrieve them asynchronously. However, in her educational technology course, she chose to use a wiki as her course management tool, because the main goals of the course were that students were going to create content on the web, and gain hands-on experience with these tools. Moreover,

Hessa is aware of the contextual factors and how they affect technology integration choices. This is why her technology integration in Sudan was limited in scope, while in Saudi Arabia, because students even personally owned latest technology devices, Hessa feels more flexible and rich with the technology tools to integrate in her classes.

Finally, according to Hessa, a Webhead has various characteristics that go beyond the specific affiliation with the email list and the community's activities, and interestingly, she expressed that it is Webheads' characteristics beyond their expertise with technology that make them unique.

“[A Webhead] is first definitely an educator. Not necessarily a teacher; maybe he is just a journalist and an educator. Also, intellectual, he loves challenges, inspiring in everything he does. Sharing, he knows that sharing is caring. A fantastic scholar, extraordinary educator, and an amazing human being. It's not all about technology with Webheads; it's about being a human being; it's about making the world better, and he doesn't wait or think to extend a helping hand. He is a participator; he is engaged in all activities, or most of them; he loves technology, and he integrates technology. He also knows the meaning of participation in a community of practice. [...] When they [webheads] need help, they just don't hesitate. I feel that to ask for help is not easy. So a Webhead could be a lurker all the time, but when he needs help, he just jumps into the community and ask for help, believing that help will be extended and found 24/7. [...] And Webheads always reflect on their own practices.”

As Hessa's descriptions explain, for her, being an expert in teaching with technology is probably a limiting description for Webheads. For her, they are humanistic, intellectual,

extraordinary educators that are dedicated to make difference in other people's lives. On the other hand, in line with Webheads' perspectives and values, she does not exclude lurkers from the community. She believes that those who lurk for a while would eventually join the interaction at times if they are a true Webhead.

### **Glued with Interactivity: Beren's Journey**

*“What I was looking for was interactivity, because I, from the examples I saw, examples from the other communities, before 2007, there was lack of feedback and people came across some problems because of this lack of feedback and mechanical exchanges of information just question and answer. But in this workshop [BaW and Blogging for Beginners 2007], because they included a lot of web 2.0 tools in the training experience, I think the learning process became more interactive.”*

Beren (pseudonym), is a Webhead from Turkey, who is also an EFL instructor at the college level at a private university in Istanbul. At the time of the interview, she had been teaching EFL for seven years, and she was a graduate student at the same time, writing her MA thesis on the Webheads community and online professional development. She had been involved with the Webheads community and their activities for four years. In addition to teaching EFL, she was involved with a private institution to provide online technology training services and courses for English language teachers for the past year prior to the interview.

### **Joining Webheads**

As opposed to the other webheads' journeys in this study, it can be said that Beren's Webheads journey did not solely start with a BaW workshop. In 2007, she heard about the EVO sessions through an email list and registered herself with BaW and Blogging for Beginners (B4B), another EVO workshop designed by Webheads. Although she wanted to participate in both of them actively because she was “hungry for

workshops”, she soon realized that it was difficult to keep up with both workshops because of the intensive work and interaction involved in both. As she was interested in blogging more at that time, she ended up participating more actively in B4B, but still ‘lurking’ in BaW. Therefore, her first introduction to the community was mainly through B4B, although she still graduated as a Webhead and registered herself with the evonline2002 at the end of BaW2007.

Before these two workshops started in 2007, Beren did not have many expectations about them. She did not anticipate such connection and interactivity in these workshops.

“First, I thought it would be a very mechanical exchange, exchanging information through emails. I didn’t expect such a vibrant group of people, and I didn’t know that I would get some kind of constructive feedback. So it was helpful for me to understand my pace and my progress. [...] I really liked the activities and I found the social community, social support there, so I decided to continue. But at first my expectations were different; I thought the workshops would finish and I would go.”

As can be understood from her words, at the beginning of this experience, Beren only anticipated mechanical email exchanges and interactions among participants, and did not anticipate any hands-on practice during these workshops. Similarly, she thought that the workshops would end, and everybody would go their separate ways; she did not think that these workshops would be a part of a larger community, and that she would become a part of this community and continue learning and interacting with these people after these workshops. To her surprise, the workshops exceeded her expectations with their

nature and design, and by the helpfulness of the coordinators, moderators, and other participants. She thought that she found strong support within the community that she did not want to lose. Then, she joined Webheads.

### **Contributions and Collaborations**

Throughout her four years of involvement with Webheads at the time of the interview, Beren was able to make various contributions to the practice of the Webheads community, and she collaborated with other webheads at different times in different ways.

Not being able to keep up with both workshops in 2007, Beren participated more actively in BaW2008, but at the same time she was invited to co-moderate a week in another workshop, *Advanced Tips and Tricks for Successful Online Teaching*. Gaining experience with technology and online moderation more, she decided to design a workshop herself in collaboration with another webhead in Turkey, *Digital Storytelling in ELT Classrooms*, as part of EVO 2009 workshops. In that sense, her contributions, in the forms of offering other workshops, helped the community's expanded network and practice grow.

In addition to offering and moderating workshops, Beren believes that she contributed to the community by contributing to the "Webheads literature" in other ways. For example, for her MA thesis, she explored the effects of being a part of an online community of practice, the Webheads community, on EFL teachers' professional development. She sought webheads' participation through the email list during my fieldwork, and she received 80 respondents to participate in her detailed, open-ended survey, more than the number that she originally expected. Moreover, together with

Vance Stevens, they had submitted an article about Webheads and multiliteracies, which was confirmed for publication eight months after our interview (Yilmaz & Stevens, 2012). In that sense, her contribution to the Webheads literature helped the community to expand to academia as a site for research.

A small but effective, collaboration with another webhead that Beren integrated in her class especially stayed with her. Sometime around 2007-2008 academic year, when she was teaching with wikis, and designing problem-solution tasks for her students to solve and respond to, by giving advice and using modals in English language, she thought of asking for help from Webheads. One webhead from Brazil, who actually had a real problem at that time, agreed to collaborate. He wrote about his problem and consulted Beren's students for advice.

“After realizing that it was just me and some students interacting while others remained silent, I asked a Webhead, [his name], to help create a task in which he could interact with the students. He agreed and in subsequent interaction, both the length and the number of the responses of my students increased, and their feedback on this activity in our real time class became quite positive.” (Beren's reflection on this collaboration, from her article with Vance (Yilmaz & Stevens, 2012))

As a result of this activity, students became more involved because interacting with a real person from another part of the world, whose native language was different from students' native language and who had real problem at the time, gave students a real-life meaningful purpose of using English. This affected students' participation in the task, and

empowered Beren as a professional who was meaningfully integrating technologies in her teaching practice.

Finally, like other webheads above, from time to time, Beren also shared with the Webheads community the projects she did with her students, where she integrated technology in pedagogically-sound ways, which always resulted in some webheads visiting these projects and making comments for Beren and for her students. This way, not only did her projects receive positive reactions from her students and her students became more involved, but also other webheads who visited her wikis and blogs further developed their understandings and repertoire of applications of these technologies into their own language teaching practices. Through sharing and exchanging of such practices, the benefit was mutual: she became a more empowered teacher in her own institution due to her developing expertise in technology integration through her engagement in Webheads' activities, while other webheads learned from her as she shared her ways of applying these technologies in English language classes

### **Technology Use Before and After Webheads**

Before she joined Webheads, Beren was not a complete outsider to Web 2.0 technologies. However, although she had heard about these tools such as wikis and blogs, she had not integrated any of them in her teaching, or experienced them for personal use. Therefore, when she joined her first BaW and B4B workshop, she already had a goal in mind: "I was very willing to integrate these Web 2.0 tools and activities with them, but I needed some examples, some hands-on tasks." Thanks to the design of these workshops, "as they involve participants a lot in the process", Beren's goals were met. "[In those workshops] I tried them, and saw the problems, and came up with solutions for how to



overcome those problems. Then I felt comfortable in using them.” With this opportunity, she started building her repertoire of ideas to apply web-based technologies into language teaching through witnessing other webheads’ uses of web-based technologies, and the hands-on experience of several of these tools while participating in these workshops.

With what she learned in these workshops, and through trial and error in different contexts, Beren not only developed her repertoire but also gained a better understanding of how contextual factors affected her choices and ways of applying various Web 2.0 tools into her teaching. For example, after the workshops, the first technology integration project happened when she tried to integrate blogging into her teaching. However, soon after she started this project, she realized that perhaps for her own context, it was better to use wikis, instead of blogs.

“After trying blogs with my students, I decided that wiki would be better for my context, because our students changed in every eight weeks, and they did not keep a learning portfolio, and they were making a lot of mistakes. So, I decided that wikis would be the best idea. After that, I realized that students’ motivation increased [...] it kept the classroom connected; it made them more active in the learning process.”

Moreover, in that institution she used wikis as a course management system (CMS) because the university did not have one. However, after she started teaching in another institution, where there was a university-wide CMS provided, she decided that she no longer needed to use wikis as a CMS, and she changed the ways she integrated them. Because the institution changed, and her students’ needs were also different now, she chose the web tools such as Wordle, and she linked them to the CMS that they used

university-wide. For example, because her current classes were mostly ESL writing classes, she was integrating tools that would help students' writing. This shows her understanding of how course goals, students needs and contextual factors affect her technology choices. However, if she did not have this repertoire of technology resources and ways of applying them, thanks to her interactions with Webheads and her increased technology skills as a result of these interactions, she might have been more limited in terms of technology.

Currently when deciding on what technology to choose and integrate in her teaching, Beren first considers her students, their needs and the objectives of the course. At the same time, she considers students' technology skills, their familiarity with the tool, and the possible problems that students may come across with that particular tool and be prepared to offer solutions to her students. Then, she considers her context in terms of available technologies and resources. In all these decision-making processes, her previous experiences with various technologies also play a role in terms of "what worked and what didn't work." At times, she also consults Webheads for ideas when integrating technology. However, she does not use the email list for consultation all the time, as she is also connected with several webheads through Twitter.

"I discovered the importance of Twitter. The first thing I do is asking the question to my PLN [professional learning network] and then asking my webhead friends [in the email list], because it's quicker if I use a hashtag, much more quicker. The response time is quite quick and easy."

This also illustrates that her digital literacy skills had also developed with her interactions with Webheads. In addition, it exemplifies how Webheads are connected to each other

and nurture each other's practice in various ways as they interact through multiple online platforms.

In all her technology integration activities, Beren perceived Webheads as a support behind the scenes. Although because of her graduate studies she had to 'lurk' a lot and her participation in the community activities decreased, she felt that she was still learning, and she was determined to become more involved in the community's activities, such as presenting at a Learning2gether event, once she submits her MA thesis.

For Beren, a Webhead is "an educator of the 21<sup>st</sup> century who is willing to use web 2.0 tools, and to share and cooperate with other like-minded people, and is open for continuous learning, and willing to be a reflective educator in the 21<sup>st</sup> century." As can be understood from her description, she puts emphasis on the 21<sup>st</sup> century technology skills for someone to consider herself/himself as a Webhead. In addition, this person is an educator and reflects his/her own practice. On the other hand, when it comes to considering herself as a Webhead, she implies the importance of active participation: "I feel guilty now that I cannot participate actively, and I'm not blogging for two years. I really feel guilty about that." From this description, it is understood that a Webhead should also be active in her own practice. Also, for her, active participation entails significant commitment to the community's activities and interactions such as "reading and responding to messages on the Yahoo Group and during their Tapped In chats on Sundays [...] answering questions of the newcomers, welcoming newcomers, taking an active part in EVO workshops, and other activities organized by Webheads."

### **Webheads within Webheads: Megan's journey**

*"I don't really participate much in the emails, in the Webheads email, like the general Webheads email. I don't participate much in it because I feel like that group is too big [...] I prefer to have a small group, and I have that group [of Webheads]. There's about 15 or 20 of us. We've worked together on a variety of projects we have. And we have our own mailing list with each other"* (Megan Interview)

Megan (a pseudonym) is an American webhead currently residing in Japan. She became a Webhead after she attended BaW2005, her first BaW workshop. Since then, she had contributed to the practice of the community, and collaborated with several webheads through a sub-group of webheads that they created. At the time of our interview, she had been teaching English for about 10 years, and since 2006 she had been working as an Associate Professor of TEFL at a university in Japan, where she was also a writing supervisor. She holds an MA in Teaching English as a Second Language from a university in US. Once she graduated from her MA, she came to Japan to teach English in 2003. During the 2005-2006 academic year, she went back to the US for one year and taught English Composition at a community college. During this time, she met Webheads.

#### **Joining Webheads**

While Megan was working at a community college in the US during the academic year of 2005-2006, she was working part time teaching English composition classes. During that time, she received training in her institution as to how to teach online English composition classes. However, she felt that she did not have any resources for professional development at the time, and she was very eager to find some. Although the training she received made her become interested in online teaching, she did not have

resources or support for conferences or taking some classes to further improve herself in that area. Then she came across with the EVO sessions announcement and she wanted to try the Becoming a Webhead workshop, by which she was impressed:

“It was really interesting. I was really interested. I remember I was reading everything and I was so, I was so impressed. There were so many interesting things people were doing or ideas that they had. It was really interesting.”

With this level of interest and enthusiasm, Megan “did about everything” during the workshop. She was very involved in it and tried to follow the syllabus and activities closely. What stayed with her as one of the first learning experiences in this workshop was when they learned about wikis.

“I really liked wikis. At that time I really didn’t know about that at all. I remember we had some project to make a wiki page. I thought that was really interesting because I didn’t know anything about that.”

Also, during BaW2006, one day she “just happened to chat with [a webhead] on Yahoo Messenger” though she couldn’t remember why or what they talked about. This experience, talking to someone abroad personally, made her realize that she “can meet teachers from other countries and share experiences”, which in turn “changed my impression even of that whole workshop experience.” She felt that this was “something more than just making wiki pages.” With one small experience, she was able to get into one of the essential qualities of Webheads: interculturality.

### **Contributions and Collaborations**

Since graduating as a Webhead in BaW2006, Megan had never moderated in a BaW workshop. Rather, in 2007, she was enrolled as a participant in BaW2007 again,

which (being a participant more than once) is not uncommon for BaW workshops. In 2008, she was invited to be a moderator for another EVO session that was organized by a small group of Webheads: *Blogging for Educators* (B4Ed). This seemed to have been a tradition for her, as she continued in her moderation experiences with other EVO sessions: *Images for Education* (2009 & 2010 and *Digital Tools with Purpose in the Classroom* (2012). Megan's involvement with Webheads activities in that sense mostly happened through the sub-communities of Webheads. Together with a small group of webheads that she interacted with mostly, every year they seemed to offer a new workshop that they brought together and she was one of the moderators. She became involved with this group of webheads through her first BaW workshop, and then through another sub-community Webheads created: *Learning with Computers*. Since 2006, she continued interacting with them, which resulted in collaborations towards a new EVO session almost every year.

As she was explaining, I was curious to know more about how her connection with this smaller group evolved.

“We found ourselves sharing ideas or talking about things or stuff like that. So just we kept communicating after our sessions. We found we have some other interest, other areas that we wanna do some projects on. [...] It started very naturally. [Name] had an idea ‘let’s start an online book club. Let’s read the same book, let’s blog or make some different artifacts about the books and what we think about them. And we’ll have each person choose a book sent or written by somebody in the country we live in. And then we’ll kind of travel around the world, and we’ll learn each other’s countries.”

As Megan explains, she naturally found herself interacting within a smaller group of Webheads within the larger community because she seemed to be able to build a stronger connection with this group, and this was perhaps what she needed in an online community. She also stated that she does not interact much through the evonline2002 email list, which was something I noticed during my fieldwork as well. I hardly saw a message from her during my fieldwork, except for the message she sent after the earthquake in Japan. Although I knew Megan from earlier workshops, and her active involvement in EVO in general, it was interesting not to see her interacting through the main email list. She said that she felt “embarrassed” to say something “in that group” because there are a lot of people that she does not know. Although she seemed to accept a general Webheads community or an identity, it appeared to me that every activity Webheads organized created a “group” in itself, as she named the evonline2002 email list as a “group.”

Megan’s Webhead experience was different in that sense. Since 2007, she contributed to the community’s practice by more closely interacting and collaborating with her own group of webheads. The initial online book club that they created led to other projects that integrate technology in teaching and learning literature. They then presented their work in several venues such as TESOL and WiAOC through online or face-to-face presentations.

Her contribution to the community also seems to be evolving with her interactions evolving within her group of webheads. Currently, with an Argentine webhead from this group, they are exploring the ways technologies can be integrated in teaching literature. In their own contexts, they try different things to this end, and they share their

experiences with each other through online means. They developed this project into workshops and presentations, and at the time of the interview they were also working on an article on this topic. Their interaction and collaboration, in that sense, provides another example of how the larger Webheads community fosters close relationships between individual webheads, which in turn evolve into long-term, sustained, collaboration in various ways.

For Megan, contribution to the community seemed to take a different form, in essence. As she explained her contributions to the community, it seemed that ‘interacting’ and ‘mentoring’ was central characteristics that defined her contributions according to her:

“What is a contribution? I don’t know, I think mentoring some people. After the Blogging workshop that we did, I worked with some of the participants on their blogs and kind of participated in their class blogs or making comments on their blogs or personal blogs. And keeping interacting, I guess that may be what I think my contribution was, is. I kept interacting with those participants through different online spaces. Then, we continue to help each other or leaning something from each other from doing that. I tried to integrate some of my friends to this community or to the stuff that I was learning.”

In that sense, her contribution to the community and its practice was ‘staying connected with others’ through multiple platforms and ‘being willing to share her expertise’ through online means. This does not necessarily have to lead to collaboration or creation of community artifacts, but because connectivity and interactivity seems to be important in the Webheads community and in an online community in general, her contribution in



“keeping the pipe work” (as Vance put it in our interview) was complementary in community’s practice. Her overall contributions with offering and moderating various EVO sessions along with facilitating interactions and integrating others to the community and/or its practice, helped the community to expand through other networks and groups.

### **Technology Use Before and After Webheads**

Megan does not remember a time that she taught without any technology present. Though this might be attributed to her teaching in a technologically-advanced country, her perception was different. She explained that “Japan has a reputation of being high technology but all the students use mobile phones and stuff like that. They don’t necessarily use computers so much.” Therefore, even though the contextual factors already necessitated integration of technology in her location, this did not happen necessarily for educational purposes. Her comment revealed an insight into the fact that an advanced technology environment would not necessarily mean meaningfully-integrated technology in education. In that sense, she displayed an awareness of the key role of pedagogically-sound technology integration in education.

After she met with Webheads in 2006, she returned to Japan to continue to teach at the university level, this time with more technology skills and resources with respect to pedagogically-sound technology integration. As soon as she learned about blogs in BaW2006, she started her own blog to reflect on her professional development adventures, which also enabled her to experiment affordances of blogs and blogging. After she found it worth trying with her students, she made a class blog, which first functioned like a discussion board on a course management system, and then turned into an intercultural platform:

“I would usually write the posts and ask students to write something in the comments. And then a couple of times we had some interaction with a guest. We studied about weddings, for example, my friend is a wedding cake designer, and she was on Food Network. So I asked her to write something on the blog and then interact with the students. And then we did movie reviews with [an Argentine webhead]. She had a class of level two and the students wrote some movie reviews; they recommended movies to each other. We’ve done a lot of things that I wanted to try. [Students reactions] actually were positive, really positive. They told me that they hadn’t had a lot of chances to talk with people from other countries, so it was really interesting for them that there was a space where they could talk to some people they didn’t know and use English to communicate about their ideas.”

As can be seen, Megan’s Webheads connections helped her to expand students’ blogging experience interculturally, which gave students opportunities to interact with people they do not know, using English to communicate. This enabled students to experience a meaningful integration of technology catered for English language learning purposes.

With her experiences in the BaW workshops, Megan became familiar with web tools, which was important for her in the sense that “when you have an idea of all the variety of web tools, then when you have a lesson or class, then you can pick a tool that suits what you’re doing.” She thought that her experiences in that workshop changed “how I look at it”, her perspectives and decision-making when integrating technology. Moreover, similar to the experiences of other webheads, participating in Webheads’ activities and keeping interaction with them, Megan was able to develop her repertoire of

technology resources, which in turn better enabled her to choose the most suitable tool for her content. As she explained, “Instead of thinking ‘how can I make this [the content] work with the tool that I’m going to use’, I think ‘Oh, I have all these tools, so I can choose one that’s gonna work better or best’”, she felt more equipped with knowledge and tools that she needs in order to integrate technology in pedagogically-sound ways, and work it for her own content, goals, and students’ needs.

Like others, Megan considers many factors before integrating technology in her classes.

“First I want to think about what’s gonna work, our computer lab is pretty slow and old. And actually YouTube doesn’t even work at our school. It’s kind of like a firewall or something, you can’t even get to the videos. So some things are immediately just out of the question. We can’t do Skype, and YouTube. [...] The I want to see if it’s gonna be easy to use and I want it to be appropriate and seem worthwhile to the students.”

As she explained, her decision-making involved consideration of contextual factors and student needs before she jumped into using any technology because she wanted to use it. She also seemed to believe that there should be a meaningful purpose behind the technology integration as she does not “want to use technology just because”; rather, she wants to use technology when she feels that “it can do something that other things can’t.” In that sense she is aware of the fact that when technology is integrated, it brings another dimension to the instruction. If other non-technology tools will do the same thing, then maybe there is no meaning to use technology.

“For example, I did a lot of projects with *Dvolver* [a custom movie-making website, [www.dvolver.com](http://www.dvolver.com)], we did digital stories with Dvolver, and I think that has some advantages. The students can make a digital story and they can have it online, they can look at it, and watch it again and again. Whereas if they acted [the story] out, it’s only one story on a piece of paper, then they throw it away.”

This example of her use of digital storytelling in her classes explains how she considers the affordances of this web-based tool, and how it would change the activity she plans for her students for the better while still accomplishing the goal of using English for communicative purposes.

The Webheads community meant for Megan, first of all, “colleagues all over the world that I can talk with, that we can learn from each other, and we can collaborate on some things, and we can be friends.” She gave value to building friendships in the online communities that she belonged to, and Webheads met her needs in that sense. Belonging to the Webheads community, and her learning experiences with the community also “gave me a lot of confidence; it’s confidence to try other things, like to write articles, or to be more active professionally.” In addition, the community means more than a professional connection for her.

“What a group of people, you know? It means a lot to me now, just to know so many people and be friends with them. Even if we don’t talk about teaching, just it’s amazing to just know somebody to see what life is like in different countries, or what’s their experience with teaching”

From her words, I understand that the intercultural and global nature of the community also led her to experience her profession differently, by learning about the teaching

experiences of others in other countries. However, it also seems that the culture of friendly contact in this community helps to develop these intercultural friendships and relationships. In addition, in her own technology integration practice, the Webheads community is a source for ideas for Megan.

“If I ask somebody for some recommendation or idea, then they would send me some link for examples so that I could see examples how other people use that and then that would give me ideas for how I can use that.”

With the community acting as a source, Megan is able to develop her repertoire of technology integration ideas specifically catered for English language teaching.

Megan believes that “A Webhead has a certain personality.” A Webhead is “open, and wants to share things, willing to listen to other people’s ideas.” Among Webheads, “even beginners have a voice and a place and other people don’t say ‘you’re new’ or ‘you don’t know what you’re talking about’”. In that sense, she believes that a Webhead is “friendly, supportive, open-minded.” In addition, she thinks that a Webhead has innovative ideas; “if you’re a Webhead, then you’re willing to try new things.” From her descriptions, she feels that she is a Webhead.

### **Cross-case Analysis**

After I talked to each of these webheads, I understood that, in some ways, every webhead has their own individual experience. However, it was interesting to also see that, at different times, through different interactions, these individual still went through very similar experiences in this online community of practice. Their learning journeys crossed in some important ways.

### **Centrality of BaW Workshops**

Although these webheads went in their own unique ways in their learning journey within this community, BaW workshops seemed to play a central role in their orientation to the community, its values, and its practice. Except Beren, they all indicated that they were introduced to the Webheads community through a BaW workshop conducted as part of EVO sessions. As they learned basics of technology integration in language teaching in these workshops, they gained confidence to try new tools, or integrate same tools in different ways, and to excel in their technology integration practice.

### **From Technology Consumers to Technology Leaders**

Before their learning journey with Webheads began, these webheads were more passive users of web-based technologies and Internet. As Hessa put it, they were “consumers.” Once they started their journey with Webheads, they became “producers” of the web-based technologies as they started experimenting with them and creating content on the Internet through Web 2.0 technologies. This production later involved their students; once they produced content themselves, it was time to spread the word to their students and colleagues. This made them further excel in their technology integration practice as they started sharing their expertise with others, be it online, or offline in their own institutions, or in their own locations. Even though they were recently “technology consumers”, through their involvement in this community, they soon became “technology leaders” in both their online and offline networks. As technology leaders, they were not afraid of implementing new ideas in technology integration, nor were they unwilling to share their repertoire of technology resources with others, just like a Webhead would do.

## **Interaction Leads to Contribution**

These webheads contributed to the practice of the community by collaborating on projects and community artifacts, sharing, helping others, expanding the network to other colleagues and community, and transmitting their expertise to others including their students. In that sense, contributions seem to all began with continued interactions with others in the community.

Also, contributions to the community are complementary, which enables the community to develop a collective practice more effectively since each individual brings their own expertise and voice into the community. For example, Amal was engaged in an intercultural collaboration with another webhead, who together brought two culturally and geographically distant countries and elementary school English language students together. Their effort received encouragement and attention within the community, and was recorded in the community's shared history, which further enriched others' repertoire technology integration ideas. Nancy has played a role of a convention blogger, and recently initiated the production of Webheads' t-shirts; her attempts strengthened the ties among members. Hessa has been the most frequently appearing BaW moderator, who is always ready to give a hand to the success of these workshops, which are central to the orientation of new members to this community and its practice. Beren contributed to the Webheads' literature by doing her MA thesis on the online professional development experiences of the community members, which strengthened the ties of the community to the broader academic research. Finally, Megan had been one of those webheads who, consciously or unconsciously, contributed to the expansion of the community to other

communities and groups of people, by being one of the most frequent EVO session organizers and moderators.

Each of their contributions seemed to emerge organically as they continued to interact with other webheads. In that sense, what seemed to constitute the essence of contribution in their experiences was the fact that they all continued interacting with other webheads. They either developed a close friendship with one of them, or created their own small group within the larger community, or continued to interact any webhead as the opportunity revealed itself. Therefore, sustained interaction appears to be the key to contribute to the community, which in turn, also helps each member to excel in their own technology integration practice.

### **Learning while Lurking**

In the light of these webheads' experiences, their TPACK seems to be mediated in various ways: through collaborating with others, learning together, contributing to the community's practice, and applying what they learn into their own teaching practices. However, their experiences also involve some 'lurking' at some point throughout their journeys with webheads. This usually entails hiding behind the scenes, and not interacting. While lurking, they do not contribute to the practice of the community, since they are not interacting and thus remain invisible to others. However, lurking still mediates their learning, as they read posts of others, visit links others have sent, read emails from the email list, or, as I did, watch recordings of synchronous events asynchronously. Lurking in this sense, is not equal to not-learning, but rather to not-interacting. Lurking also appears to be a form of legitimate peripheral participation, as learning from the community continues. However, the first step to moving towards a full



participant role seems to begin with interacting with and becoming visible to others in the community. A lurker may still be considered as a participant, but active participation necessitates more than lurking and starts with interacting.

### **The Appeal of Interculturality**

While interactivity seemed to be central to their fruitful learning journeys with Webheads, what seemed to nurture this interactivity was the intercultural nature of the community. Each of these webheads has had some degree of intercultural collaboration through their journeys. Because they themselves are language educators, they seemed to be interested in languages and cultures. Therefore, the diverse representation of world cultures and the fact that cultures represented a relevant topic often fascinated these educators and motivated them to continue their interactions. This interculturality also provided opportunities for them to help their students see the meaningful use of English for communicative purposes in order to communicate with real people from around the world. The community members often served as built-in global, intercultural audience for their students. Through Webheads, students also have others around the world, who support them in their projects and English learning, and are interested in their work. This also empowers these Webheads in their local teaching contexts as they are able to provide opportunities for meaningful use of English and web-based technologies as students interact with Webheads around the world. This way, students are better able to see the meaning and power of learning English and using web-based communication technologies.

## **Meaning of Membership**

Interestingly, the identity of a Webhead entailed both similar and different definitions for each of these webheads. While some emphasized the fact that they are educators, some said they are colleagues or friends. As a default characteristic, on the other hand, they seem to agree that a Webhead has expertise in technology integration and tries integrating emergent technologies in their teaching practice in innovative ways. However, they all point to the fact that a Webhead, or being a member in this community goes beyond the level of expertise in technology integration. In essence, they define a Webhead by referring to the values of the Webhead culture that seems to have been reproduced over the years, such as willingness to share, friendliness to newcomers, and hospitality towards all levels of expertise. Therefore, a Webhead who is not willing to share their expertise, is not a Webhead no matter how expert s/he is in technology integration.

## **Constructing a Global Experience from the Eye of a Local**

What seemed to be a common characteristic of these webheads' learning journeys in this community was the fact that all of these participants experienced it from the perspective of their own contexts. In that sense, as Freeman and Johnson (1998) observed, these teachers' sociocultural environment and context played a role in how they view this experience and how their learning was shaped. Also, the strength of this experience seemed to differ for each as they are in different parts of the world, having different realities. This was especially the case in Amal's and Hessa's experiences, for example, since they seemed to be from more 'closed' cultures or societies. This struck me most as they both described their experiences and their students' experiences in exactly

the same way, - i.e. as a 'window opening to world,' - even though during my fieldwork I was sure that the two had not yet met. While their learning journeys helped them all develop professionally in their technology integration practice and broaden their international networks, the fact that it 'opened up windows to the world' for these two webheads seemed to be as equally important.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I have described five webheads' learning journeys with the Webheads community: Amal, Nancy, Hessa, Beren, and Megan. First, I have provided descriptions of each journey with respect to their joining the Webheads, their contributions and collaboration in the community, and their technology use before and after Webheads. After these journeys, I have provided a cross-case analysis, summarizing the similarities and differences among these learning journeys with reference to the Webheads community's culture and practice.

## CHAPTER 8

### THE WEBHEAD WAY

*“[...] Webheads in Action is a school for everybody. [...] Webheads are leaders wherever they are. [...] We see ourselves as a team, not as competitors. Being a Webhead is magic! [...]”*(Msg. 28523, Oct. 17, 2011)

Before I began my fieldwork, I thought to myself “I already seemed to know a lot about Webheads, what else would I learn from this experience?” Before beginning my fieldwork, I was not really sure. I did not know what else I was going to discover about this community. I was sure to trace my own journey as well as others, but I was an outsider, though I thought I knew a lot. As soon as I began my fieldwork, I found myself as if I was swimming in a cyber ocean, discovering and learning something new every time I was engaged with the community. In the previous chapters, I gave a richer and thicker description of the community’s main activities, and selected members’ experiences since they joined the community. In this chapter, I summarize these discoveries, with respect to the culture in this community and its practice, organizing them according to my research questions.

#### **Revisiting My Research Questions**

When I began my study, the following research questions guided my inquiry about the characteristics of culture of Webheads and their practice:

1. What are the main activities (and artifacts and resources related to these activities) carried out by Webheads that help develop their shared practice?

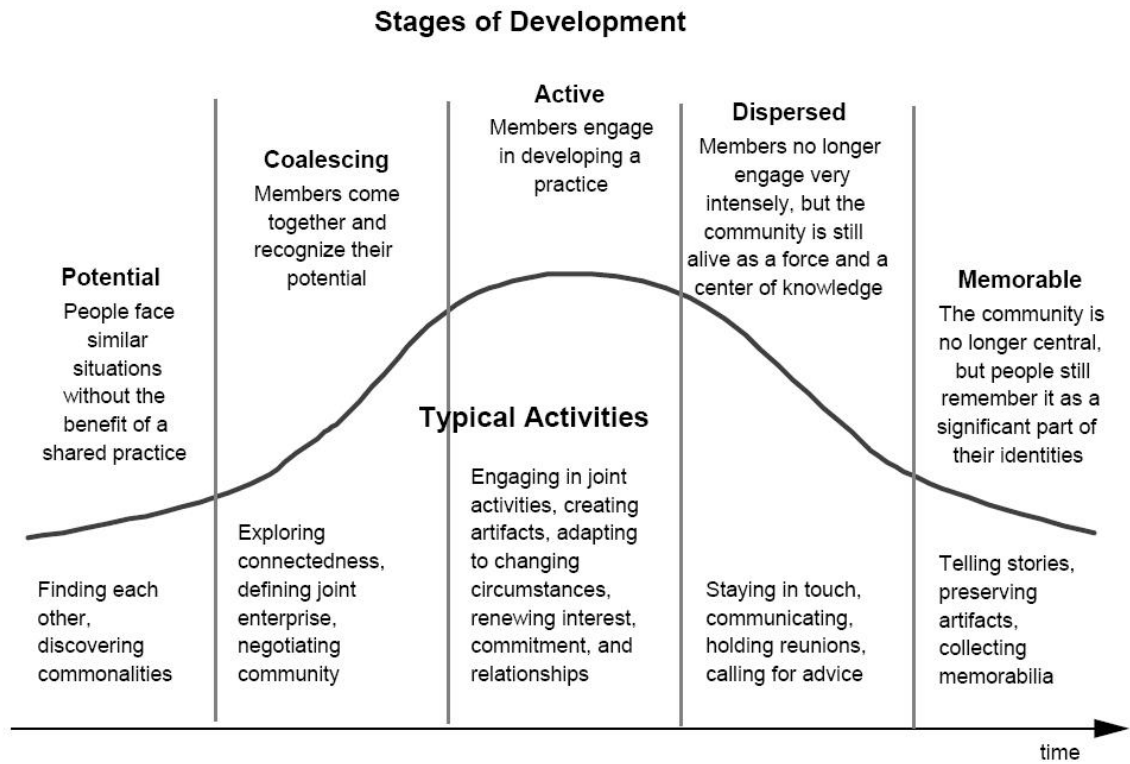
How are these activities organized? What are the characteristics of these artifacts, activities, and resources?

2. Through what forms of engagement do members of WiA develop their shared practice? In what ways does their membership status (newcomer vs. long-term member) play a role in the ways they engage in the community and its shared practice?
3. How are new members introduced to WiA and its practice? How do they become a part of this online community of practice? How do they move from legitimate peripheral participation to full participation?
4. How participation in WiA helps members develop in their understanding of pedagogically-sound integration of technology into language teaching as perceived by five selected members? What do their learning journeys within this community consist of?

In the next sections, I answer these questions and provide my interpretations of the broader culture, in the light of my findings, and descriptions throughout chapters 4-7.

### **Characteristics of Webheads' Activities**

Acknowledging the fact that all communities (like all human beings) are born, develop, and eventually die, Wenger (1998a) identified five different stages of development in the life of a community of practice (Figure 8.1).



*Figure 8.1.* Stages of development in a community of practice.

According to him, a group of people shows potential to become a community of practice when they see common interests among each other. As they come together in shared spaces try to stay connected, they coalesce into a community. In their most active stage, they engage in developing their practice, by creating and participating in joint activities, evolving and adapting to changing circumstances, and renewing their interests according to these circumstances. As they start disbanding, they still stay in touch, but they no longer engage in joint ventures to develop their collective practice. They see the community as a source of support mostly. In the final stage, the community remains in the memory of its members, and the community becomes a significant part of the members' identities.

According to these stages, it was surprising to see that Webheads in Action, in its 10<sup>th</sup> year, was still in its 'active' stage, as members are still engaged in developing their

collective and individual practices. Although not all members' engagement with the community is the same (e.g. some members would be no longer contributing, and thus only remember the community as a memorable experience in the past), the community is still vibrant, expanding, and growing.

Throughout this study, I discovered that there are certain principles, premises, and values that Webheads base their activities on, which contributes their ongoing active stage of development. These principles and characteristics probably seem to have evolved and emerged as 'the community's characteristics' over time, as others joined, and adopted each other's ideas and practices explicitly or implicitly.

### **Webheads and Open Access Movement**

Webheads believe that knowledge should be freely accessible. Consequently, they organize activities using open source technologies, and in return, they offer their activities and archives freely online. As such, both participation in their activities and access to the materials and resources created by the community are open to free and equal access by anybody with an internet connection. With this, as Lave and Wenger (1991) argue, potential participants are already given access to the materials, resources, and the activities of the community –which is an essential condition for participants to move towards full participation. Also, as they interact with the community and participate in the activities, participants have an opportunity to build on their own repertoire of freely available web-based resources and how they can be implemented in their own teaching contexts with their own students. In that sense, the way the community operates also models examples to participants to learn various ways of utilizing these technologies for their own professional development and online presence as well. This principle,

eventually, contributes to social justice around the world, as those globally-distributed participants use these freely available technologies, as opposed to their expensive versions, in their technology-limited contexts.

### **Webheads and Volunteerism**

Webheads develop their practice on the premise of volunteerism. They never pay anybody for their work, nor do they themselves get paid for the work they do for others. Volunteerism boosts sharing and volunteerism among the community, and seems to be one of the main reasons for the sustainment of the community. They may or may not do any voluntary work in their offline lives, but being involved in Webheads activities and taking active roles in these activities, they accomplish such voluntary work in their online lives. The fact that new participants go through a rich learning experience through the voluntary efforts of others seems to be an important factor on their stay with the community after the BaW workshops for example. They then seek out opportunities to give back to the community voluntarily. This enables the cycle to go on, and the community is sustained by the help of all contributing members. If the activities were not offered free and voluntarily, the leaders and the mentors of the community would not rotate, and the community would live shorter, or remain as a unidimensional, or a small group, in which the leaders/mentors would teach ‘participants.’ Then, participants would not call themselves a Webhead.

In that sense, although it has been previously claimed that an online community of practice is difficult to emerge naturally, so it needs to go through careful design (Lai, et al., 2006), in Webheads’ case, this seems to have been possible. Over the years, they have



gradually grown into a community of practice, for which the idea of volunteerism seems to play an important role.

### **Webheads and Social Learning**

Webheads construct their practice by celebrating the idea that learning is a social activity (Engeström, 1999; J. Lave & Wenger, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978; Wenger, 1998a, 2000). They prefer to learn together as opposed to learning individually. This seems to be the reason why they ask others to ‘teach something to other webheads.’ Additionally, their activities are based on this philosophy as well. They co-construct their activities in collaboration, and these collaborations are extended to other online or offline communities.

Additionally, when they archive their activities, and connect these archives to other events (for example all these main activities are linked from the main webheads.info platform), this contributes to the community’s shared history. In that sense, what they create once, helps newcomers to visit these archives and learn from them. In that sense, while the culture and practice of Webheads pass from ‘generation to generation,’ they still ‘learn together’ and from each other, though at different times in the history of the community.

### **Webheads and Expertise**

Another characteristic of Webheads’ practice is based on the premise that they value each other’s experience equally and they believe that every member has something to share. Wenger et al. (2002) and Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) also perceived this as a necessary principle to sustain a community of practice. A variety of expertise levels results in a variety of participation patterns and levels, which in turn contributes to the

diverse nature of the community. It is for this reason that it is difficult to locate a single “community leader” in Webheads in Action. This naturally influences the membership roles in this community; as opposed to what has been offered by Glazer et al. (2005), membership roles are loosely defined in this community. A webhead could be a novice or a peripheral participant in one activity, but a mentor or a full participant in another one. It is also possible that a recently new member could fast be a full participant as s/he continues to interact and share his/her own expertise. Also, all members take initiative for carrying out at least some of the group’s activities. For example, BaW activities rotate moderators, and even though there is a new member, this member’s enthusiasm and contribution to the group activities is acknowledged by assigning them new roles and identities (as in the case of Amal for example). Moreover, as Lave and Wenger (1991) put it, no matter how much of a full participant they are, existing members or long-term members in a community are still peripheral to the community’s future. This claim is substantiated in the Webheads community: as their domain (i.e. web-based technologies) are continually changing and evolving, members find new learning experiences each time. This is the reason, for example, that they participate again in the following years’ BaW workshops, or other EVO sessions as participants in order to continue to learn from their peers, or that they are open to the idea that everybody has something to share, and everybody has something to learn from the others.

### **Webheads and (Tele)Collaboration**

Collaboration and interaction is a necessary characteristic among members of online learning communities or communities of practice (Hiltz, 1998). Because Webheads are located in various parts of the world, such collaboration naturally turns

into telecollaboration; in fact, the majority of collaboration among themselves occurs at a distance. In addition, telecollaboration in this community takes a variety of forms, and it is for this reason that the all-encompassing definition for this would be ‘collaborating from a distance.’ In that sense, the first examples of telecollaboration would be the activities they organize such as BaW workshops, and Learning2gether events. Moreover, they telecollaborate on presentations to present at online or face-to-face, and national or international conferences on English language teaching. They telecollaborate to organize other online activities such as conferences and EVO sessions. Their telecollaborative efforts are also extended to their students. They conduct projects where their students could interact with each other further crossing national borders, and opening up new windows for them to the global world. They also telecollaborate in developing each others’ own teaching practices in their own contexts; they join each others’ classes as virtually as a guest speaker, or they act like an international audience for students’ technology-infused work.

### **Webheads, Interculturality, and Diversity**

As webheads telecollaborate among each other, intercultural exchanges occur naturally and frequently in their interactions with each other, or among their students. The global diversity within the community helps promote this characteristic of the community, and it has become a valued principle among members to celebrate this diversity by always making connections between their localities to their global community. When they talk about another webhead, they always mention where s/he is located in the world. By giving information about the countries they are located, such as when signing off their emails, they bring their local identities into the global arena of this

community. Through these interactions, their geographical location becomes a salient marker of their identities within this community. This perpetuates their view on friendship and friendliness; even if they would be from countries that are politically or religiously apart, for example, telecollaborating to develop their practice through participation in this community, they understand that they do not have to be from the same countries to share certain educational values and become friends. The global diversity among each other helps them go beyond these borders, and become global intercultural citizens. They think of their 'webhead friends' when they hear breaking news in a particular country.

As they develop their interculturality, this eventually is extended to their students, especially when they collaborate on projects that their students can interact with other webheads or other webheads' students. Through the spirit of Webheads, they develop their own interculturality, become more aware of their own cultural and linguistic resources, and feel empowered as they realize their multilingual resources both as users of English rather than learners of English, and as experts of their native language and culture, as others become interested in learning phrases in their language and practices in their cultures.

Interculturality, overall, and intercultural practices such as above help members develop closer connections to one another, regardless of where they are located in the world. Even though some of them have not been outside their countries, their connections and interactions within this community are likely to contribute to their intercultural communicative competence (Byram, Nichols, & Stevens, 2001).

## **Engagement in Practice**

Webheads engage in the community's practice in multiple ways and at multiple levels, as the community welcomes any form of engagement, as long as members interact and are connected.

### **Participation vs. Interaction vs. Contribution**

In Webheads community, participation takes many different forms, as the community members welcome different levels of participation (Wenger, et al., 2002). A member may be a participant in this community, but for various reasons might choose to lurk for a while. In addition, because they are spread over multiple platforms, a member may be an active participant in one activity, but lurk in another, such as the emails. Also, they may be participating in events, but not interacting. For example, they may participate in a synchronous event, but choose to stay silent. Moreover, a participant may be contributing to the practice by taking active roles in the community's events, interacting, presenting, organizing and helping out with various community activities.

In that sense, 'active participation' in this community refers to contribution to the community and/or its practice. As such, contribution starts with interaction with others through the community's spaces and activities. Although interaction is a form of contribution to the community and its practice, it also gives way to larger contribution to the community and its practice in the form of collaborations among webheads. As members start learning about each other, their expertise, teaching experiences, and contexts, while interacting with each other, they begin exploring collaboration possibilities with each other. As they collaborate and share the results of these collaborations with the community –which eventually is archived in one of the spaces of

the community, - members contribute to development of the shared repertoire and shared history of the community.

Therefore, although participation in the community and its practice starts as early as one registers himself/herself to one of the spaces of the community, if they do not interact, they do not contribute to the development of the community and its practice. 'Participation only' helps those members learn from others for their own teaching practice. In that sense, they are mostly lurking and are mostly invisible to others. It is because of this reason that the key to being or feeling like a Webhead begins with a willingness to share. A Webhead shares, interacts, and contributes, but they do not isolate or withdraw any lurkers; they know that lurking is a participation too, and that it results in learning, though it does not result in 'learning together.

### **The Role of Membership Status**

Membership, in general, seems to be loosely defined in this community. A newcomer and a long-term webhead are primarily different in terms of the length of their engagement with this community. On the other hand, a member would be a newcomer but much more actively interacting in one activity than many other long-term members. Because newcomers' expertise and contribution is always encouraged and acknowledged, they are given equal opportunities to engage in the practice. Although they are a newcomer, they can easily move to an 'active member' status because of their continuous contribution, and interaction. Being new is not stigmatized in this community.

Also, members continuously shift roles. For example, Glazer and Hannafin's (2006) collaborative apprenticeship model explains a newcomer's gradual increase in involvement in the activities, sharing, and technology-integration practice. A new

member is introduced to the community and its practice, is scaffolded through interactions with others, and as s/he learns and shares s/he takes initiatives in collaborative projects that contributes to the development of the community's practice, and, at the same time, she begins coaching others. However, this is not always a hierarchical process in the Webheads community; although the 'experts' (such as Vance and Teresa) seem to coordinate the main activities, others' contribution and help is also appreciated as they invite moderators, and presenters to the main activities they coordinate. They seem to be voluntarily doing this to create a rhythm for the community by maintaining these regular activities (Wenger, et al., 2002).

Also, as members say that there is always something to learn from and something to share with others. Therefore, a new webhead assumes all these roles in linear or non-linear ways. In addition, 'coaching others' in the collaborative apprenticeship model takes place within the community, while in the Webheads community, it is extended to others including their students and fellow teachers in other online and offline communities that they belong to.

### **New Member Orientation**

New members join to the Webheads community in various ways; some get to know a webhead at a face-to-face conference and then join, some come across with the evonline2002 Yahoo Group or learn about it in other ways and join, some graduate as a Webhead at the end of the BaW workshop, and some are introduced to the community through other EVO sessions. Also, through Webheads' involvement in other online or offline communities, new members may also join other ways. However the first contact happens, it seems that especially BaW workshops plays a central role, in the sense of

orienting a person who is novice both in the community and in technology-integration practice. A new member in that sense would mean a new member to the community who is not necessarily a novice in technology-integration practice, or technology application in language teaching. However, those who are new to the community and novice in technology-integration practice engage in more learning.

### **Hands-on Practice**

One important characteristic of the ways new members are introduced into the practice of this community is through hands-on practice. The communication tools and spaces the community uses are also some of the basic web-based technologies that they explore and use in this community. In order to communicate and interact with others in the community, members need to know how to use these technologies. In that sense, what they call ‘hand-on practice’ provides members authentic learning experiences in this situated context as they try to navigate through the regular practices within this community (Brown, et al., 1989). As they begin to learn how to use these technologies (such as wikis, Yahoo Groups, Skype, etc.), other members act as a source of support when they need help. Once they actively interact and effectively use these technologies in these interactions with others, then their first introduction to the practice of the community occurs. Through the year-round activities that create a rhythm for the community (Wenger, et al., 2002), the community continue presenting opportunities for hands-on practice, and thus authentic learning experiences, to the members

### **Becoming a Webhead**

Social learning theories view learning as “identity-making life projects of participants in communities of practice” (J. Lave, 1996, p. 157). Thus, learning changes



our identities. As such, in the Webheads community, after new participants join BaW workshops, they gradually move from a BaWer to a Webhead, as they continue to interact and contribute to the practice of the community. New members feel that they become a part of this community, or that they are a Webhead, when they interact and share, when they implement what they learn in their own practice (often in collaboration with other webheads), and when their efforts are recognized and they are given a chance to give back to the community through mentor roles in the main activities.

### **From a Legitimate Peripheral to a Full Participant**

As members move from ‘participant only’ to a ‘multiple contributor’ and thus an ‘active Webhead,’ they become a full participant in this community. However, because roles are loosely defined, and one can be active in one activity while remain as a ‘participant only’ in another one, there is a continuous mobility between a legitimate peripheral role and a full participant role.

A member who at some point becomes a full participant (i.e. an actively contributing member) seems to usually begin as a peripheral participant in a BaW workshop. In other words, the beginning of the cycle happens with the BaW workshop. In order to move in this continuum, they interact, share, learn, and then share what they learn in other ways. Then, they practice what they learn in their own contexts or in collaboration with their fellow webheads. Then they come back again and share their practice, which contributes to others’ practice and thus to the community’s collective practice. In all these efforts, they strengthen the connections within the community, and build new ones, sometimes. They also put additional efforts that hold the community together, such as organically initiating a t-shirt, or designing a logo, or joining the cheer

for a fellow webhead's (or his/her students') success. In the final step of the continuum, they seem to initiate new activities for the community and others outside the community in collaboration with their fellow members. This eventually brings new members to the community. Therefore, it seems that once they do one of these at least once, they remain somewhere in the continuum towards the 'full participant' end, as long as they continue to interact and not lurk for so long. In short, interaction and contribution is the key to becoming a full participant.

### **The Mediation of TPACK**

As was mentioned throughout Chapters 4-7, members' technological pedagogical content knowledge is mediated and developed through multiple ways while they are participating, interacting, and contributing to the community and its practice.

Even in a 'participant only' role or when they are a legitimate peripheral participant, and during their first phases as a newcomer in the community, members observe others, read posts, follow discussions that occur while others interacting. They also visit links others share, and archive any technology resources they find interesting or useful. At the same time, they asynchronously watch recordings from community's archives.

In a more 'active contributor role' while their TPACK is continuously mediated through these, it is also mediated and developed when they put what they learn into practice, share the results with others, and receive feedback. When this happens, they also have a chance to reflect on their own practice, while opening it to the discussion within the community. Once they receive positive feedback and encouragement, they continue to strive in their technology integration practice.

## **The Power of Sharing Sample Technology Use**

Whatever role individual members have, what seems to mediate their TPACK continuously is the exchanges of various technology integration ideas that each member implements in their teaching. As most of them are already practicing English teachers, pedagogy and content seem to constitute a base for shared knowledge. This leads to more interaction about technology as it relates mostly to English language teaching to various learners, rather than any other subject area (e.g. technology integration in math classes). Even at times when technology is not explicitly linked to English language teaching, these teachers seem to mostly take it and relate it to their English language teaching practices.

When they share the ways they use certain technologies, or their experiences with certain technologies, this fosters a discussion of affordances of these technologies, which triggers more ideas in terms of what else can be done with a certain technology. For those, for whom it is their first encounter to this certain technology, this helps them to enrich their repertoire of web-based technologies. For others, it helps develop their repertoire of various technology integration ideas, for various English content, for various types of learners.

What is powerful in this sharing is the fact that it happens regularly and continuously. Therefore, members keep up with the technology advances organically, making them always ahead of others in technology integration practice. Their TPACK is continuously refreshed with new emergent technologies while the community acts as a support with responds to help, with continuous technologically-advanced activities, and with opportunities for hands-on practice.

## **Towards Technology Leadership**

In this journey with webheads, an actively contributing member eventually becomes a technology leader in their own contexts, or in another online or offline community. While each of them was once a technology consumer, or familiar with technologies but novice to how to integrate them in English language teaching, through active contribution, they become technology leaders: they continue to explore new technologies and their affordances, implement them in their practices, share their experiences with others, engage in scaffolding, coaching, and modeling for their online or offline fellows in their technology integration adventures.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I have summarized my overall findings with respect to the culture of learning and participation in the Webheads community in an attempt to give a concise answer for my research questions. I have categorized them under four main headings: characteristics of Webheads' activities, engagement in practice, new member orientation, and the mediation of TPACK.

## CHAPTER 9

### LOGGING OFF

*“Technology does not determine culture, but they are co-determining, co-constructive forces” (Kozinets, 2010)*

When I first discovered the methodology of netnography, I was happy. It seemed to be a very ‘comfortable’ research methodology that could be carried out in pajamas, within the warmth and familiarity of my own home and my own computer. I was not going to experience any culture shock, or survival issues, for sure.

Things did not turn out to be that way. Netnography proved to be a unique approach, and understanding an online culture was not easy as it originally looked to me. As I ‘log off’ with this chapter, I discuss methodological implications of netnography with reference to my own experiences in applying it to a distributed, multi-site online community of practice of English language teachers. After that, I review possible pedagogical implications of Webheads community model and the findings of this study with respect to language teachers’ and other subject area teachers’ development of technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) through participation in an online community of practice. Then, I overview recommendations for future research. At the end, I close this dissertation with a coda.

#### **Methodological Implications**

During my fieldwork, I experienced changes and shifts in ethnographic fieldwork when it is conducted with an online community of practice distributed over multiple

places on the Internet. This led me to believe that some concepts in ethnographic fieldwork need to be reconceptualized or understood differently when they are adapted for netnography (Kulavuz-Onal & Vásquez, 2013).

### **Defining the Field**

In in-person ethnography, a community's geographical location helps determine the field boundaries. However, in netnography, field-sites can be diverse, because an online community can exist in a single site or multiple sites. A geographical location in ethnography, therefore, sometimes translates into a website, or a bulletin board or a forum in netnography, and the users of these online platforms form the community to be studied (Baym, 2000; Correll, 1995; Kozinets, 2002). Additionally, virtual worlds such as Second Life and communities that use these virtual worlds as their interactional spaces could also be field-sites for netnographers (Kozinets, 2010). For example, a researcher can study the culture of Second Life in and of itself, or the culture of a group or community that exists in Second Life. In online contexts, such single-site communities (with their resemblance to a single geographical location) can help researchers determine their boundaries. However, when the community to be investigated interacts over multiple venues (i.e. a multi-site community), determining the boundaries of the field by specifying only one site or platform may not give an accurate picture of the culture of this community. In this case, the researcher needs to identify other ways of determining boundaries in netnography and the 'field' may no longer be defined as an 'online site'.

Webheads in Action is such a multi-site community, whose members interact, communicate, and organize activities over multiple platforms via multiple CMC technologies. Rather than one particular website or online forum, what holds Webheads

together as a community are its members, their activities and their practices. In other words, WiA is associated primarily with the group's shared practice, expertise and activities that focus on web-based technologies in language teaching. Because of this, my not only my previously-defined research focus but also my familiarity with the community helped me identify the community's main activities and determine the field boundaries of this netnography according to these activities. In that sense, the 'field' in this netnography became the range of activities of this community. For example, I 'entered the field' by taking the BaW online workshop, one of the main activities of the community. During the fieldwork, I also joined the other activities (e.g. Learning2gether events) organized by the community. When I needed to 'leave the field', I discontinued my engagement with the community's activities. As such, 'entering the field' meant as 'starting to engage in the community's activities' rather than logging into an online site, while 'leaving the field' referred to 'disengagement' with these activities.

Therefore, in netnography with a multi-site online community, 'the field' and its boundaries may need to be reconceptualized, no longer as a website, an online forum, or a chat room that would be analogous to a physical location, but rather to a set of practices and activities carried out over multiple online platforms.

### **The Nature of Participation in Online Participant Observation**

Both ethnographic and netnographic research are based on the broader method of participant observation, which necessitates the researcher to establish a participant role within the community observed (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998). Although what constitutes *participation* differs from one community to another, Dewalt and Dewalt (2002) identify varying levels of participation in-person ethnography. According to them,

*non-participation* occurs when the researcher learns about the culture outside the research setting, through media, documents, or fiction, whereas *passive participation* happens when the researcher is physically present but observes the community like a bystander without interacting with the people. In that sense, participant observation method requires some degree of at least passive participation in in-person ethnographic research.

*Moderate participation*, on the other hand, suggests that the researcher is identifiable as a researcher, and only occasionally interacts with the people. Both *active participation* and *complete participation* mean that the researcher is actively engaged and involved in almost all the activities of the community. What differentiates the two is the fact that the researcher is already a member of the community in the latter (e.g. a jazz musician studying jazz musicians), while in the former, the researcher becomes a member for research purposes (e.g. ethnographers who become a cab driver for a while to study cab drivers). Drawing on Adler and Adler's (1987) typology of membership roles, they argue that non-participation and passive participation do not require a membership role, while moderate, active and complete participation require peripheral, active, and full membership in the community, respectively.

In my opinion, these levels of participation and membership do not describe experiences of a netnographer thoroughly. For example, when studying an online community, a netnographer inevitably accesses the community and its culture from a distance (i.e. through his/her computer), which would coincide with *non-participation* in in-person ethnographic fieldwork. Meanwhile, s/he needs to become a member of the community (i.e. register with the site) in order to have access to the community, which assigns a membership role to him/her. For example, in my case, I was registered with the



Yahoo Group, and according to Nancy's short description of a Webhead, I was considered to be a Webhead. Using Dewalt and Dewalt's terms, then, in online participant observation, it is possible to assume a non-participant role with a full membership in the community, while this is not possible in offline participant observation. Likewise, full membership may correspond to a complete participant observer in in-person ethnography. However, in netnography, even though the researcher is ascribed full membership, as was the case in mine, she may still maintain a passive or moderate participation as long as she does not engage in the activity and remain unobtrusive at a distance. This for example describes my participation in the evonline2002 email list.

In my netnographic experience, I came to an understanding that another notion that bears different meanings in netnography and in-person ethnography is the notion of 'presence'. In ethnographic fieldwork, being physically present in the community is a necessary condition for participant observation, because the researcher must be co-present in the community in order to be able to both participate and observe; consequently, s/he is necessarily 'visible' to other community members. In netnography, however, the researcher is present in the online site immediately after s/he logs in to the site or an online space of the community through his/her computer. However, if the researcher is not participating actively, or engaged in the community activities, others may not be aware that s/he is 'there'. In this sense, while in Dewalt and Dewalt's terms, non-participation occurs when the researcher is not co-present in the field, in netnography, it can still occur when the researcher is co-present. Similarly, while the ethnographer is automatically visible to others when s/he is present in the field, the

netnographer needs to make an additional effort in order to be visible to the community by interacting with others, and becoming involved in the community's activities. For instance, Webheads archive their synchronous Learning2gether events, which allowed me, as the researcher, to watch and observe them later. Therefore, although logging into the site and watching the recordings asynchronously would be sufficient in order to understand the characteristics of these activities, by observing others' interactions and following the discussion, I purposefully participated three of them synchronously in order to balance my visibility to the community. In that sense, in netnography, rather than simply the researcher's presence or membership in the community, it is his/her visibility to others that helps define the boundary between non-participation and participation.

Likewise, in a multi-site online community, because the community spreads over multiple venues and platforms, the netnographer may need to consistently negotiate the level of active participation to be maintained, by being an active participant in some events, while remaining more passive in others. For example, in this netnography, because the BaW workshop is one of the community's main activities and lasts only 5 weeks, I decided that more active participation (i.e. joining and engaging in the activities) was necessary in order to 'experience' the workshop like a regular participant and gain an insider (emic) perspective. On the other hand, because the email communication is continuous and it is easier to take over a conversation or lead a topic in the emails, I decided that remaining more passive in the emails would help keep a balance between a researcher role and full participation in the community. However, I believe that determining an appropriate level of participation in netnography also necessitates previous engagement with the community. For instance, in my case, I was introduced to

Webheads and its practice in BaW 2007. During that time, I actively contributed to community activities by being involved in discussions, sharing and creating content for the community. I then distanced myself from the community for three years before re-entering the field and becoming active in the role of a researcher. This previous engagement with the community helped me identify active membership and leadership roles, and typical engagement/participation patterns, which, in turn, helped balance an insider (emic) as well as an outsider (etic) perspective accordingly.

### **Observational vs. Archival Data in Netnography**

Observing is an act of watching. According to Dewalt and Dewalt (2002), in in-person ethnography, observation involves observing “physical and social scenes” (p. 70), as well as “a representative set of activities and events” (p. 76). In contrast, in netnography, since most of the activities are currently conducted through text-based communication, and settings involve webpages that are mainly textual, observation also involves “watching text and images on a computer screen” (Garcia, Standlee, Bechkoff, & Cui, 2009, p. 58, 58). As a result, what constitutes ‘observation’ in netnography differs from in-person ethnography in that it involves extensive ‘reading’ and making meaning of textual communication in addition to watching the text and images. Because of this, while observation and archived data are clearly two separate phenomena in in-person ethnography, this distinction becomes blurred in netnography given the textual (and often archived) nature of what is observed. Along these lines, I believe that there are two types of netnographic data that blur the line between ‘observational’ and ‘archival’ in netnography: emails, and recorded synchronous sessions.

At first sight, email communication appears to be a form of archival data since it is textual and can be downloaded and archived by the researcher (Kozinets, 2010). However, in this netnography, I experienced that it can also be considered observational data. To illustrate, WiA mainly communicates through the Yahoo Group email list while they also create separate group email lists for each annual BaW workshops for communication between workshop participants. The former remains the main communication platform and has always been active since 2002, while the latter changes every year and gradually becomes inactive with the next year's workshop. Because the BaW email list is considered a part of the main BaW workshop 'activity', I decided not to archive the BaW emails; I only 'observed' them, by reading the emails from time to time, and summarizing the email discussions in fieldnotes. I considered this procedure sufficient in order to understand the function of the BaW email lists within the main BaW workshops. The reason for this was because my research question explored the characteristics of the 'main' activities, and the BaW email list was not the main activity itself, but a tool (among others) used to carry out one of the main activities (i.e. BaW workshops). In contrast, I both 'observed' and 'archived' the interaction in the main Yahoo Group email list, for further coding and analysis, since it is the main communication activity for the WiA community, with an average of 5 email exchanges per day (and 143 per month) during my fieldwork. For this reason, I considered it as a primary data source for participant observation and as one of the main activities of the community.

Complementary to participant observation, fieldnotes are also a crucial data source not only in in-person ethnography but also in netnography. Particularly when the

online fieldsite is already publicly accessible, they represent the unique contribution of a netnographer since s/he adds “valuable interpretive insight” into what is already publicly accessible on the Internet (Kozinets, 2010, 113). Therefore, the netnographer takes fieldnotes of not only what is seen on the screen, but also his/her interpretations, and reflections derived from this lived experiences. However, when everything is archived and accessible, especially in the case of textual data (e.g. emails) that can be treated both as observational and as archival data, determining what to inscribe in the fieldnotes may pose challenges for the netnographer. Along these lines, for example, the content of my fieldnotes of emails varied depending on whether or not the emails were ‘archived’. As can be seen from the following excerpts from my fieldnote data, when emails were both archived and observed (i.e. the emails in the evonline2002 email list), the focus was more on my experiences, interpretations, and reflections on the discussion in those emails rather than descriptions of the email interactions (in both excerpts, I italicized my experiences, interpretations, and reflections for emphasis):

“I’m looking at main email list recent digest. [Name] asks for a screencast tool. A member sends a link to a list of such resources. [Name] also replies back with a recommendation for Jing. *I’m familiar with Jing, but haven’t used it myself before. I have used CamStudio for screencasting.* I clicked on the link to the list sent by one member. The list says “20 Free Screen Recording Tools for Creating Tutorials and Presentations”. *I see CamStudio there as well. This list is a very comprehensive one with brief reviews for each too. I look at what other tools there are quickly. At the same time, I forgot this option. I can actually prepare screencasts for my students in my graduate class as well. For their technology-*

*infused culture-teaching materials, I can show how to use some of the technology tools, by using a screen recording tool, as they seem to be struggling with it, and we don't have much time to go over each different tool in class.*

I see that Screenjelly says that you can share your screen recordings via Twitter and Facebook as well. *This sounds cool!* There is another one, called Webineria. It says that you can add your voice and edit the recorded file later. *I wonder how that happens. That's actually nice, because from my previous experience, I know that when you record and talk at the same time, there is usually unnecessary talk, and the recording could actually be half way shorter. I remember CamStudio's video quality was not good. I wonder how these options are in terms of video/visual quality.*

I'm now looking at Digest #3441. On March 9, [Name] writes about TESOL wiki and blog. She asks those who will participate in this year's convention to enter their info on the webheads wiki created for TESOL 2011. There is also a "Webheads & Friends" blog. She gives links to both in her email. *This seems to be a tradition now. I remember her creating a blog for the 2007 convention as well. I don't remember if there was a wiki by then, but [Name] certainly had created a blog for the convention people, and they were as if broadcasting from the convention. I didn't participate in the convention at that time, but was able to follow what's going on from that blog. She seems to have, intentionally or not, assumed that role for herself in the community. I chose to click on the wiki first.*" [The fieldnotes that follow afterwards describe the blog] (Fieldnotes, March 10, 2011)

As can be seen from this excerpt, about 60% of my fieldnotes included reflections, experiences, and impressions, while about 40% summarizes or describes the email communication observed. On the other hand, when the email communication was not the main activity of the community (i.e. BaW emails) and thus only observed but not archived for further analysis, the fieldnotes consisted of more detailed summaries or descriptions, but less reflection:

“I am looking at and reading today’s emails on BaW email list. [Name] sent a tutorial for Tweetdeck in one of the emails. *It seems to be new to many people including the coordinators.* [Name] (one of the coordinators) says that she’s going to put these instructions to the “Doubts” page. She also suggested her to write this tutorial previously; that’s why, [Name] sent this email with instructions. Several other members sent their thanks to her in other emails. *I realize that I have not seen this “Doubts” page on the wiki before, so I decide to visit it today later.*

There is another tool recommended by a participant, Symbaloo. *I have not heard this tool before. It also seems to me that people tend to let others know about their achievements and others always respond with encouragement in these emails.*

*There are also out-of-the-syllabus activities taking place apparently.* From these emails, I see that several members have chatted about Tweetdeck last night, and together they explored this tool. Now many of the emails in today’s digest are about Tweetdeck, and their experiences last night. *I feel impatient to explore and learn what it is.*

I just saw a message from [Name], an Arab participant. She shares a video link with the group. The link is about current protests in Tunisia and Twitter. *I'm curious to see it.*

Another tool, nicenet.org is recommended with a brief review by a participant. The participant says that it is similar to Twiducate.

A participant is sharing a widget she put on their department's website and asks others to visit it. Another participant comments that her students also like such widgets as well. Others also give feedback, so that she could check it."

(Fieldnotes, January 28, 2011)

As opposed to the previous excerpt, this one includes about 30% of reflections, and it presents a summary of the emails since I did not archive these emails. When emails are not considered a main activity and a separate detailed analysis is not intended of those emails, they are not archived but can be treated as observational data only. In these cases, I inscribed summaries of a series of emails in my fieldnotes as part of observations.

In addition to the emails, real-time multimodal interaction (e.g. webconferences) recorded and archived constitutes another type of data that can blur the line between observational and archival data in netnography. In this community, the weekly synchronous Learning2gether events are recorded and archived on a wiki and a blog. Therefore, it was possible to participate in these events synchronously or view them asynchronously at a later time, which is also a common practice of those webheads who cannot attend synchronously. In that case, I became both a participant and an observer in the event when I participated synchronously because I not only became visible to other participants but also engaged in the discussion. However, when I watched the recorded



event later asynchronously, although I did not ‘participate’ or contributed to the discussion, I was still able to observe the event and people’s interactions and actions from the recording in a “spectator or bystander” role (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002, p. 19, 19), and took fieldnotes based on these observations. In contrast, in in-person ethnography, video recordings would most likely be considered archival data, or documentations of an event in which the researcher was most likely a co-present participant during the time of the recording.

Additionally, with these synchronous and recorded sessions, the netnographer is engaged in observations of multichannel interactions that need to be considered in inscribing fieldnotes. In these cases, the netnographer needs to follow the written as well as spoken interaction. The following excerpt from our fieldnotes data further illustrates how observations of these sessions were inscribed in fieldnotes:

“... The session is titled as “The Future of Learning in A Networked World”  
[...] Vance – session leader. He introduces the participants and gives brief background information about each of them.[Name] and [Name]– are listed as moderators. *I guess because they are invited as guests previously by Vance, they are given moderator privileges during this session.* The other participants are [Name], [Name], [Name], and [Name]. [...] [One of the moderators] is joining in from Australia. [...] Webtour is enabled, and it lets the participants to click on different pages on the screen at their own will. **On the chat window** at the same time, there is a bit of talk about Australia. [...] **On the whiteboard screen**, there are these items:

Technologies to watch Aust – NZ Horizon Report 2010

Mobile Internet Devices, eBooks – 1 year

Open content, Augmented reality – 2-3 years

Gesture-based computing, Visual data analysis – 4-5 years

*I learn in this session that gesture-based computing refers to the touch-based devices, and devices that are controlled by physical activities, such as wii.*

[...]After a while, **[Name] joined the session** [...]. During the session, **participants are talking about Netstick**, something that you connect to your mobile provider to have access to Internet I guess. *I haven't used one myself, and I haven't seen one myself. Apparently, especially those participants who have to travel a lot, are more familiar with them. They say* that they are available for purchase in computer stores, convenient for travelling, and you are just always connected. [...] Then **the discussion moves towards** the use of mobile devices in class. [...] They later discuss how in some countries social networking sites such as Facebook is blocked in school computers. **[Name] says – “this is the kind of think we are up against... This technology is everywhere but banned inside educational institutions”.** *I kind of agree with him. I don't like to forbid something that is widely used around the world in schools; [...]* **On the chat window** [Name] also shares her opinion about the issue – as long as students are on task I would not care what they bring to class.” (Fieldnotes, May 20, 2011)

As can be seen, my fieldnotes consisted of the actions including when a new participant joined the discussion and what was shared on the whiteboard; interactions through the chat window or microphone; and my own ideas and reflections on the session content.

Drawing on these examples, in an online community, the primary means of communication and community activities can provide both archival and observational data. The research questions and the characteristics of the community, then, remain the determining factors in deciding what should be treated as archival and what as observational data, as well as how to inscribe fieldnotes about these textual and multimodal data.

### **The Impact of Medium of Communication on Interview Dynamics**

Interviewing in qualitative research is an essential method since it enables a researcher to “understand the world from the subjects’ points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, 1). In face-to-face interviews, perhaps the only medium of communication that needs to be considered is the language of the interview, especially when the first language of the researcher and the interviewee is not the same. In online interviews, however, another important consideration is the type of CMC technology chosen by the researcher.

While synchronous textual communication, such as chat and instant messaging, can serve as a medium of conducting online interviews (Markham, 1998; Salmons, 2010), face-to-face online interviews are also possible with the use of a video-enabled voice-over internet protocol (VoIP) such as Skype. Use of such technology enables the netnographer to make use of the social cues available in the interview context, and to get a sense of the participant’s identity (ethnicity, gender, age, etc.). Although some of this information is retrievable or observable in textual communication, the dual channels (auditory and visual) provide richer contextual information and clues. Moreover, online

interviews can now be conducted over multichannel online meeting spaces such as Elluminate, which allows application sharing, two-way audio, text chat, and a shared whiteboard at the same time (Salmons, 2010).

There is no doubt that the nature of the CMC technology used in the interviews affects the interview dynamics in different ways. For example, Markham (1998) conducted her online interviews through text, and realized that mere textual communication without nonverbal cues affected how she presented herself and how she interpreted others. “Online, I can’t see the other person’s face, hear their voice, or get any sense of who they are beyond the words I see scrolling up my own screen [...] I get to express myself as a writer, in writing, more than in any other aspect of my life” (p. 71). In addition, she also admits that by conducting interviews via online chat, it is “difficult to manage the basic elements of conversation, such as taking turns at the appropriate time, nodding, or mm-hmm-ing...” (Markham, 1995, 71).

Although new advances in new CMC technologies allow conducting real-time, face-to-face, multichannel interviews online (Salmons, 2010), these technologies also impact interview dynamics. I further illustrate these differences by highlighting my experiences with the use of Skype, and the video-conferencing tool Elluminate.

First of all, in this netnography, because the community members are technologically sophisticated, the choice of the VoIP to conduct interviews was a matter of ‘conforming to the community norms’ (Garcia, Standlee, Bechkoff, & Cui, 2009) by selecting the common tools used in their regular communication and activities. As such, I chose Skype as the tool to conduct the interviews because of its common use by Webheads.

Although Skype interviews enable video, not all participants were comfortable with activating their webcam during our interviews. One participant, Beren (a pseudonym), explicitly stated in our preliminary chat on Skype prior to the interview that she prefers not to enable her webcam at that point because she was not in a good mood. Similarly, another participant, Amal (pseudonym) indicated prior to the interview that she feels nervous when video is enabled, so we conducted our interviews without the webcams activated. The fact that the videos were not enabled put more pressure on me to give oral cues of ‘active listening’ (with more frequent backchannel vocalizations such as ‘mm-hmm’ and ‘okay’), whereas I replaced these verbal responses with more non-verbal indications of listening (e.g. nods and smiles) when videos were enabled with two of my informants.

Another dynamic affected in online video-enabled interviews is because of the notion of ‘virtual eye contact’ (Yuzer, 2007). Eye contact can be understood differently over a VoIP because a webcam is usually placed on top of the screen, whereas the participant is seen in a window on the screen or on the screen itself. In order to establish exact eye contact with the participant, the netnographer may need to look into the webcam, which does not allow him/her to see the interviewee. Similarly, if s/he wants to see the participant, s/he needs to look at the participant’s video on the screen, which results in the eye contact being skewed. In my case, I found that looking directly at the webcam (instead of the video image of the interviewee on the screen) to be more distracting and less natural when conducting online interviews. It was more difficult to focus on what the participant was saying, and it was similar to just listening to the participant but focusing on somewhere else at the same time. Therefore, eye contact in

VOIPs is clearly not the same as eye contact in face-to-face interviewing, and skewed, virtual eye contact seems to be treated as a natural dynamic in online interviewing. I especially gained this impression when two of my informants who activated their webcams also did not look into the webcam directly, but their looks were skewed. I then took this as the norm, as I consider them frequent users and experts of these web-based communication technologies.

Another particular aspect of online interviews that I conducted over VoIPs was the fact that all began with a few lines of text messages in the chat window before the actual call. In my case, for example, when the interview time came, instead of directly calling the participant, I used a quick greeting in the chat window to signal the beginning of the interview (such as “Hi Amal!”) as the first step. Once my informant said “Hi!”, this indicated that she was actually ‘there’. I followed up this quick exchange with a direct signal to start the call (e.g. “Are you ready for our interview?”, “Shall I call you now?” etc.). Once I received the confirmation, I called the participant. Immediately after the call started, what typically followed was the sound check before even us greeting each other. In that sense, I noticed that the questions “Can you hear me?” or “Can you see me?” can be regarded as typical questions that start an online interview as opposed to face-to-face interviews.

The notion of overlapping talk is another dynamic to be affected by the choice of a CMC technology. Qualitative interviewing is seen as a co-constructed dialogue between an interviewer and an interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In my case, I experienced that the choice of CMC technology may interfere with some of the natural features of dialogue. For example, although I offered a Skype interview with Vance Stevens, he

suggested that we turn it into a Learning2gether event, in which case we conducted the interview over Elluminate. On Elluminate, one needs to activate his/her microphone in order to speak, and silence it to allow others to speak. In our case, this prevented overlapping talk and thus natural turn-taking that could occur in a dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee. It was difficult to prompt Vance with another follow-up question on the basis of his answer, as he tried to address each question as fully as possible in one turn. Meanwhile, when the interviewee began answering a question, it was impossible for me to provide active listening cues orally. Therefore, in order to demonstrate active listening behaviors, I posted short comments on the chat window in response to what Vance or others were saying. This allows for a possibility of the online interviews to be treated as a multimedial and multimodal acts.

### **‘Survival’ Skills Needed in Online Fieldwork**

While in-person ethnographers may be faced with several ‘survival issues’, ranging from diet changes, disease risks, to cultural and climate adaptation, netnographers seem to have the luxury of inhabiting familiar spaces when conducting research online. However, one area that might be reconceptualised as a ‘survival skill’ for a netnographer is technological expertise.

Because online communities rely on CMC technologies for their existence, advanced comfort level with specific technologies that a community uses becomes an essential survival skill for the netnographer. For instance, in this netnography, because this community’s interest and expertise revolves around web-based technologies and their application in language learning and teaching, members use these technologies extensively in their interaction and activities. This necessitated me not only holding

accounts on several online networks and sites such as Facebook, Skype, Yahoo Groups, Second Life, and Twitter, but also having moderate experience in using them. In one specific instance, when one Learning2gether event was held in Second Life (SL) for example, although I already had an avatar on SL, because I was not active there, I had to first figure out how to ‘teleport’ myself to Edunation, which resulted in my being late to the session. Additionally, having to control my avatar’s movements during the event distracted me during the session and affected my participant observation in the event. As can be seen from the fieldnotes below, this resembled something akin to ‘culture shock’ that an in-person ethnographer might experience:

“I joined a Learning2gether session on SL today. I was late because although I had an account, I was not very familiar with it. The last time I logged into my account must have been at least 3 years ago. I was able to log in and see my avatar. But then, no clue. I tried some things, I knew I had to teleport myself to Edunation but somehow I was not quite able to do so, and I became frustrated. I could hear people but not see anybody. Then I felt like maybe writing it in the chat would help. I wrote it, and then they started sending me friend requests. Some of these avatar names, I am familiar with..but some are quite unfamiliar. Then they teleported me to where they are.. Phew, huge relief, and feelings of safety..[...] At some point, our tour guide, [Name], said “this is what happens even in a virtual community like this, you first feel a culture shock”. Then I wrote in the chat window that this was what I was actually feeling when I had trouble coming to Edunation.” (Fieldnotes, April 24, 2011)



Therefore, although technological expertise could be an additional advantage in in-person ethnography, it is an essential survival skill for data collection in online fieldwork, especially in a multi-site online community that makes extensive use of various web-based technologies.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

With its characteristics, Webheads model a unique emergent online community of practice for education professionals. The fluidity of roles, membership, engagement patterns, voluntariness, and apprenticeship they display in this model, can be implemented to some extent in educational institutions. One example that I would propose would be to build connections between graduates and current students of a teacher education program, by following similar principles such as celebrating various levels of expertise, creating a space for them to interact, organizing activities online (as well as offline if suggested by the community) to bring them together in activities and encouraging current students to take active voluntary roles in these events.

The Webheads model also provides a good example of how inservice teachers' (and pre-service teachers' as well) TPACK can be fostered through interactions and engagement in an online community of practice whose practice centers on exploring web-based technologies in teaching. Because of the rapid technological advances, teachers need a constant contact and a source of support for these technologies. Even though they have an understanding of how the dimension of technology might interact with the pedagogy and content, if they are not updated with information about the new emergent technologies on a regular basis, and do not learn about various things they can do with

each technology, they will eventually be behind. In that sense, when what was once considered a piece of technology becomes no longer a ‘technology’ in our contexts. For example, in the past, when whiteboards were introduced, they were considered to be more advanced technology than blackboards. Similarly, after first color TVs were introduced, black-and-white TVs gradually disappeared. Therefore, the teacher’s use of instructional technology tools in his/her teaching should serve the 21<sup>st</sup> century pedagogical needs of their students. However, when teachers are connected with, they not only have a chance to update themselves with the emergent technologies, but also develop their repertoire of how to repurpose these technologies for educational aims. In that sense, as Hughes (2005) also observed, consistent engagement in such an online community of practice with the teachers from the same subject area especially helps teachers build their repertoire of web tools, their affordances, and ideas on how to repurpose them specifically for language teaching purposes. When they participate in the activities directly through these web-based technologies themselves, they also gain hands-on practice, and learn how to use these technologies in situated contexts through engaging in the authentic tasks enables by the community activities. In other words, they “kill two birds with one stone”: they not only become more technology proficient in their practice and learn to integrate technology in pedagogically-sound ways, but they also contribute to the collective practice of the community they belong to, which in turn nurtures their own individual teaching practice. They start taking initiatives in technology integration projects in their local teaching contexts; they connect their students to other webheads around the world, and they put into practice what they learned through the community by modifying it for their own teaching contexts.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

There is enormous potential for netnography for online educational communities. For example, one aspect of the community that I studied is that it is a global community, which inevitably fosters intercultural dialogue. This aspect might also be observed in other global online teacher communities and might be a potential research question for netnographers. Furthermore, the culture of teacher collaboration in such global online communities would be another topic to explore. How do teachers initiate, encourage, and sustain collaboration at a distance? What typical practices does teacher telecollaboration involve?

Although higher education institutions that offer distance learning programs are already a common phenomena for researchers conducting online research, virtual high schools where all the instruction is carried out entirely online still offers interesting online educational contexts for netnography since such schools has recently started to emerge. What does a classroom look like in a virtual high school? How are teacher-teacher, teacher-student, teacher-parent, and student-student interactions enacted? How is the teaching/learning culture in these schools mediated by the CMC technologies?

Another emerging online educational context for netnographers would be the growing number of virtual campuses of universities in Second Life. What does 'campus life' look like in these campuses? What are codes-of-conduct for professors, students, and administrators in these campuses? What professional dispositions are displayed by professors and students?

Overall, netnography proves to be a research approach to offer potentially rich data for ethnographers to study online educational communities. While non-existent 20

years ago, such communities have rapidly become everyday phenomena in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As teachers and students become more involved in such communities and use them as their learning networks and sources, netnographic approach seem to be a good fit to study such communities.

I also believe that this study opened the door to more questions in terms of how TPACK is mediated and developed in an online community of practice such as this one. Although I believe I have given some answers to this question, other methodologies can be implemented to uncover more specific answers. For example, one future research could employ discourse analysis to uncover how it is mediated in asynchronous vs. synchronous communication, and whether or not the same mediational patterns occur.

Finally, another future topic for TPACK research would be to conduct a longitudinal developmental study by following one particular member real-time as s/he moves towards a full participant in this community, archiving his/her emails to the community, watching the synchronous events s/he participated, conducting multiple interviews about his/her process over a year or more. Such a study would help uncover the processes a member go through when developing his/her technology-integration practice in such a community, as the member lives it in real-time.

### **Coda**

On Webheads' Flickr photosharing group front page, the group administrator, a webhead from Brazil, has put a poem by Lao Tzu, which shows how she perceives this community and how much she is proud to have contributed to it:

*“Go to the People  
Live with them  
Learn from them,  
Love them.*

*Start with what they know,  
Build with what they have.  
...But with the best leaders  
When the work is done  
The task is accomplished  
The people will say,  
'We have done this ourselves.'*

She then, has a note underneath the poem:

“Thanks, Vance, for being our inspiration and bringing so many special souls together.”

In our interview, I noticed that Vance indirectly gave an answer:

“I am often thanked for starting this community, but that is what I did, really. The thanks goes to all the people who are in the community” (Vance Interview, Dec. 26, 2011)

These two exchanges summarize what Webheads are all about, and leave me no other word to add, except:

“Thank you Webheads! See you all online!”

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A

Screenshot of the Webheads in Action main website ([www.webheads.info](http://www.webheads.info))

This is <http://webheads.info> [Webheads in Action YahooGroup](#) [Webheads in Action EVO 2002++](#) [Worldbridges: Webheads in Action.org](#) [Becoming a Webhead 2009](#) [Writing for Webheads](#) [WIAOC May 22-24, 2008](#) [Webheads Online Events Calendar](#) [Webheads Online Chat Archives 1998-present](#)

**WEBHEADS**  
Online Community of Practice of Teachers and Educators  
Practicing Peace and Professional Development through Web 2.0 and Computer Mediated Communication

Join Webheads live online, text chat and more, any Sunday noon GMT, at <http://tappedin.org>

[The original Webheads in Action Electronic Village Online 2002 Portal](#)

[Worldbridges: Webheads in Action](#)

[WIAOC 2005, 2007, 2009](#)  
Webheads in Action Online Convergences

[Becoming a Webhead 2007 / 2008 / 2009](#) [LwC](#) [Writing for Webheads](#)

Join the [Webheads YahooGroup](#) mailing list

Add your event to one of many [Webheads Events Calendars](#)

[Teresa's comprehensive list of links to Webheads activities](#)  
[Webheads Online Chat Archives 1998-present](#)

<http://del.icio.us/tag/webheads> [webhead](#) [webheadsinaction](#)  
Pageflakes: <http://www.pageflakes.com/vancestevens/13497873>  
Twitter Crowdstatus: <http://crowdstatus.com/webheadsinactioncrowd.aspx>  
Flickr photo-encounters: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/webheadsinaction/pool/>

Technorati tag search: [webheadsinaction](#)



You are welcome to take this badge for your website or blog, compliments of [Ibrahim Rustamov](#)  
BaW08 from Tajikistan, Feb 2008  
*actual size much larger*

2007 Convergence Partners: 

Hear Michael Coghlan play and sing the Webheads Theme Song [HERE](#)  
<http://webheadstheme.wikispaces.com/>

 **cristinacost** what's a webhead: @VanceS says it's kinda hippie - u know when u meet one.SO cool.so true! :-)  
*22 minutes ago from TwitterFox*

## Appendix B

Informed Consent Form Approved by the USF Institutional Review Board



### Informed Consent to Participate in Research

#### Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study

IRB Study # 3093

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You are being asked to take part in a research study. Research studies include only people who choose to take part. This document is called an informed consent form. Please read this information carefully and take your time making your decision. The nature of the study, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and other important information about the study are listed below.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there are no more additional risks in this study than you might face in daily life.

We are asking you to take part in a research study called:

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

The person who is in charge of this research study is Derya Kulavuz-Onal. This person is called the Principal Investigator. However, other research staff may be involved and can act on behalf of the person in charge. The researcher is being guided in this research by her faculty advisor, Dr. Camilla Vasquez.

The research will be conducted online through Webheads in Action community website and email lists.

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#### Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to:

- Understand the development of technology integration practice in an online community of practice of English language teachers through participant observation
- Understand the role of participation in an online community of practice on teachers' professional learning with respect to pedagogically sound technology integration into language teaching.

The study is being conducted as a dissertation study by a doctoral candidate.

### **Study Procedures**

The researcher will mainly collect data through fieldnotes and participant observation of the activities and events of the Webheads in Action online community of practice. She will also collect and analyze email communication data that occurs throughout her 6-month participant observation. Voluntary participation of the selected members are sought for the focus group and individual interviews that will be conducted to triangulate the data obtained in addition to the fieldnotes and the email communication data.

If you take part in the interviews in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a 1-hour focus-group interview and/or a 1-hour individual interview that will be conducted via a Voice-over Internet Protocol such as Skype. For this reason, you will need to provide the researcher with your VoIP ID/username so that the researcher can add you to her contact list.
- The focus group interviews will take part around March 2011, whereas the individual interviews will take part in around May 2011.
- The interviews will be recorded via Audacity in order for the researcher to be able to transcribe them for further in-depth analysis. Only the researcher and, if necessary, the faculty advisor will have access to these recordings. The recordings will be maintained for 5 years after the end of the study. They will be kept in the researcher's password-protected computer and will be deleted after these 5 years.

### **Total Number of Participants**

About 15 individuals are anticipated to take part in the study interviews.

### **Alternatives**

You do not have to participate in this research study.

### **Benefits**

The most important potential benefit of this study will be the awareness you gain of your professional learning within an online community of practice with respect to pedagogically sound integration of technology into language teaching.

### **Risks or Discomfort**

This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

### **Compensation**

You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study. However, a copy of the final dissertation will be made available to the community members, once it is approved by the university and the dissertation committee.

### **Cost**

There will be no additional costs to you as a result of being in this study.

### **Privacy and Confidentiality**

We will keep your study records private and confidential. Certain people may need to see your study records. By law, anyone who looks at your records must keep them completely confidential. The only people who will be allowed to see these records are:

- The research team, including the Principal Investigator, and her faculty advisor.
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study. For example, individuals who provide oversight on this study, such as the Department of Health and Human Services, may need to look at your records. This is done to make sure that we are doing the study in the right way. They also need to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety.
- The USF Institutional Review Board (IRB) and its related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study, staff in the USF Office of Research and Innovation, USF Division of Research Integrity and Compliance, and other USF offices who oversee this research.

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name. We will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

### **Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal**

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study.

### **You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints**

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, or experience an adverse event or unanticipated problem, call Derya Kulavuz-Onal at 813-507-4581, or

email her at [kulavuzd@gmail.com](mailto:kulavuzd@gmail.com) .

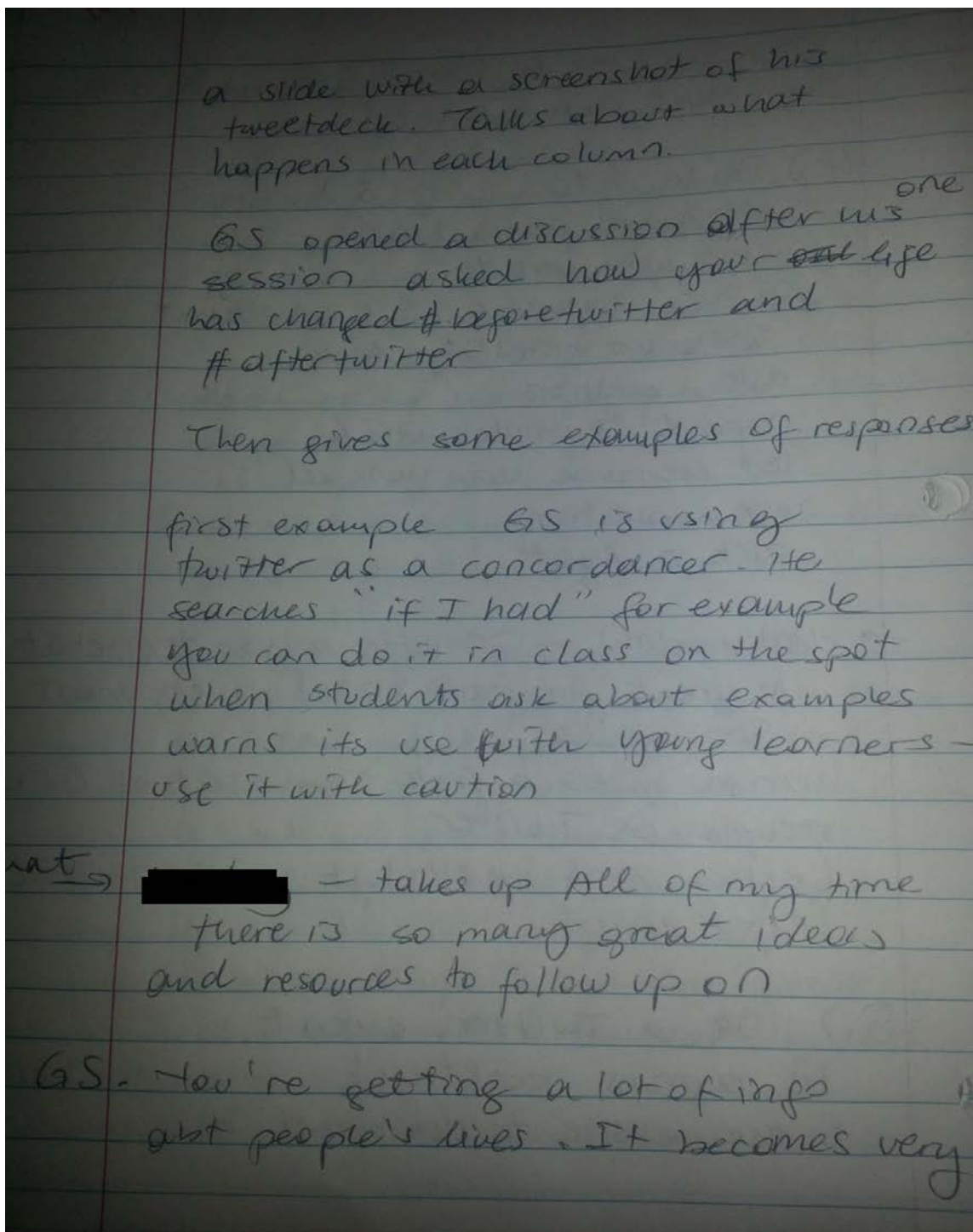
If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, general questions, or have complaints, concerns or issues you want to discuss with someone outside the research, call the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638.

**Consent to take part in this Research Study**

If you agree to participate in the interviews, please respond to the researcher Derya Kulavuz-Onal via email at [kulavuzd@gmail.com](mailto:kulavuzd@gmail.com) to confirm your participation. The researcher will then inform you about the time, date, and venue of the interviews.

## Appendix C

### Sample Handwritten Fieldnotes





## Appendix D

### Sample Typed Fieldnotes (Manually-Coded)

<p>February 4, 2011 10.00 am</p> <p>Today there is the second live session for this week. It is about interactive online activities. The first slide's title is "making activities for your students - cooking up a storm" [REDACTED]</p> <p>Teresa is the session leader, and [REDACTED] is the presenter. [REDACTED] is the second moderator. First, Teresa gave some information about how to use, basic things, then she started the recording. Teresa then told the date, and started introducing the presenter. They are all at remote places. The presenter uses "cooking" as a metaphor for preparing materials. For live sessions, Elluminate is being used. Webheads community has a virtual office in Elluminate. People are chatting at the same time as the presenter is presenting.</p> <p>Like other participants, I make some comments at times, as I want to get more involved and feel like "one of them" during the session. Some other participants say "sure, agree" to my comment. With this, I feel like they know me, I feel a sense of belonging.</p> <p>The presenter talks about the importance of prior knowledge, interest, and motivation. So, she is first making connections with pedagogy before she goes on. She then talks about authenticity in materials. She argues that there also needs to be an emotional link, and students have to connect.</p> <p>Somebody said "urban dictionary". I have not heard it before. <a href="http://www.urbandictionary.com">www.urbandictionary.com</a></p> <p>While presenting, the presenter also shares her experiences. She is pointing to cognitive levels of students, achievable activities, and variety.</p> <p>At the same time, in the chat area. Somebody is having technical problems, and others are trying to help giving suggestions.</p> <p>The presenter also gives ideas for authentic resources available online, and some other Web 2.0 resources. There are a few new sites I have not heard before such as <a href="http://howjsay.com">howjsay.com</a>. She also uses "recipe book" as a metaphor for other tools to be updated and save. She also recommends</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Week 4 - 2nd live session</p> <p>Coord - session leader Mod - 2nd moderator Coord - starts recording &amp; introduces the presenter</p> <p>Learningtimes.org sponsoring Webheads' virtual Elluminate Simultaneously presenting &amp; chatting</p> <p>My exp: contributing to chat to feel like one of them chatting - building sense of comm</p> <p>presenter - connections to pedagogy</p> <p>My exp: new tool</p> <p>Presenter - sharing experience in material development</p> <p>chatting - for technical p. &amp; troubleshooting</p> <p>My exp: learning new sites the presentation (session)</p>
---	--

global nature

a sense of intercultural/global community

coordinators Daf & Teresa

Below is the pictures of the two moderators, and their names and a link to the BaW 2011 Team.

Under this info, there is a little icon flushing and saying: pin yourself in our guestmap. This icon and tool looks unfamiliar to me, and I find it interesting to include in a wiki, and feel like trying next time.

As this is the first week, I first want to visit the week 1 activities (Screenshot #2). There is information on the objectives, and the activities for this week. One starting activity was the diagnostic survey, and I completed it. The survey was created with Survey Monkey, which is a free survey tool available online. There were several questions related with my previous experiences with online learning and teaching as well as my experiences with internet tools and applications.

I notice that I missed the first live session, but the coordinator created a page for this session just after the session ends. The session gave a tour of the Tapped-In, one of the places that this community use that I know previously. On the page, there is information about the tour guide, coordinators, moderators, participants, chatlog, screenshots from the session. The session was held in Tapped-In.

Under the participants info: the coordinators say that "The five continents were represented with over 30 participants!". This I believe makes the connection and reminding the participants how global and intercultural this community is.

The wiki page overall looks very organized, and easy-to-navigate. It is helpful for the participants that there are pages that they can contribute to the content of this wiki.

January 14, 2011  
2.43 pm

pictures -

New tools catches my attn for further exploration - my learn

diagnostic survey  
free tools - survey monkey

live session  
live session page  
Tapped-In tour  
info on live session page

global community - diverse participation in the live session

Baw wiki interface - organized participant contribution (helps participant learn by doing - situated learning)



## Appendix E

### Interview Protocol with BaW2011 Coordinators & Moderators

- 
1. Tell me about yourselves (location, education, profession, current job, length of your involvement with Webheads, Electronic Village Online, and BaW workshops).
  2. How are the coordinators for this workshop determined?
  3. How do you decide to become a coordinator?
  4. Please describe your roles as coordinators.
  5. Please describe any training you get as coordinators.
  6. Please describe how you plan and design this workshop.
  7. Who are involved in the workshop planning and design process?
  8. What are the benefits and challenges of coordinating this workshop?
  9. Would you like to add any additional comments about your experiences as coordinators of BaW'11?

- 
1. Tell me about yourselves (location, education, profession, current job, length of your involvement with Webheads, Electronic Village Online, and BaW workshops).
  2. Have you moderated a BaW workshop before? If so, how many times, and when?
  3. How are the moderators for this workshop selected?
  4. How did you decide to become a moderator?
  5. Please describe your roles and responsibilities as moderators.
  6. Please describe any training you get as moderators.
  7. What are the benefits and challenges of moderating this workshop?
  8. Would you like to add any additional comments about your experiences as moderators of BaW'11?

## Appendix F

### Interview Protocol with the Five Individual Members

---

1. Tell me about yourself (location, education, profession, current job, length of teaching experience, length of teaching experience with technology)
2. Please tell me about your story with Webheads.
  - a. How long have you been involved with Webheads?
  - b. How and when did you start?
  - c. What were your experiences in the beginning? How much were you involved then? What were your contributions to the community?
  - d. What are your experiences now? How much are you involved now? How would you describe your current contributions to the community?
  - e. How (in what ways) do you think your experiences have changed, and evolved?
  - f. What kind of activities have you participated within the Webheads community?
  - g. What kind of collaborations have you had with other Webheads?
  - h. What does the Webheads community mean to you?
3. Please tell me your story with teaching with technology.
  - a. When and how did you start using technology tools in your teaching? How would you describe these initial experiences?
  - b. How would you describe your current practices in using technology in your teaching?
  - c. In what ways do you think Webheads community has played a role in your professional learning and development, specifically in terms of technology integration into your teaching practices?

## Appendix G

### Themes for the Interview with Vance on Learning2gether

- The transition from WIAOC to Learning2gether
  - Why was there a need?
  - How did the idea come about?
  - How did the project start?
  - What is the difference between WIAOC and Learning2gether? In what way are they similar?
- Learning2gether Events
  - How is a presentation set up? What happens after that?
  - What signifies these events?
  - What are the characteristics of the events?
  - Why is it “Learning2gether”?
  - What is the significance of these events to the overall community?
  - How do you see your role (Vance) in the whole project?

## Appendix H

### Sample Manual Coding of the Interviews

6

Story of joining webheads

H: it was a crazy community. They don't stop sending. Imagine using this with a dial-up connection. So it took me like 3 hours to finish reading ... but they were precious..so from there I met Vance, and then I moved from there to, I've learned about Becoming a Webhead, BaW 2005. This 6-week teacher development online workshop. Then I joined them.

D: 2005

H: also..... continued, emails emails.. after the first week I was amazed by how to .... Participate, for each and every participant introduction, they responded with a story, they told us stories, they told us about their memories, especially Teresa. She has like her own fingerprints on each and every single introduction. Then I got started with the workshop, starting from the 2<sup>nd</sup> week. So when I joined BaW in 2005, actually I didn't have much experience. With technology. Not more than surfing the net as I told you, handling word documents, powerpoint presentations. I thought I was just a consumer. I remember we even discussed, laughed about this last week in our moderator group of Becoming a Webhead 2012, I reminded them that the first thing I learned with Becoming a Webhead was how to take a screenshot. I was with them in Tapped In in our Sunday chatting and meeting and Vance mentioned take a screenshot, I said how do you take a screenshot? And I felt like I'm so small with those intellectual educators. But you know the thing which just glued me with this their patience you know, you don't feel that you're learning something they just make you feel like you're part of them, this is very normal, without even saying it. how they extend you so that was in 2005. After I just joined this mailing list, I was amazed, and then I started like spontaneously responding, and having fun, putting, because I don't have sense of humor, I used to have sense of humor, actually. ☺ so, I started to tell this like joking, and having fun, and it was amazing. I was the only participant from Africa, at that time. I remember also one of the participants asked do you have tigers in the streets or lions, and then I answered by saying, yeah, I'm having a lion on my lap now ☺ this is

Teresa & her influence on others

tech before webheads

first thing she learned → how to take screenshots

webheads' attitudes - part

you're not a novice learner, you're a part of the community right away

cross-cultural exchanges

and so on. So I used these points to start an interview with Maria. I told them what about interviewing a teacher from Argentina and asking her whatever you want to know about that country. And they were very excited, they prepared questions. And then they prepared questions and they couldn't imagine how we are going to interview her, and how we are going to see her life and so on. Some of them or many of them were not used to Skype. So they just like "ok the teacher said prepare questions, okay we'll prepare them and let's see". And once we entered the computer lab, once they saw Maria live, and they talked to her and she could see her, and talk with them, they were very very excited. Each one of them got out and hold the mic to ask her the question, and those who were not interested before the interview actually regretted it so much. Because they don't have the question, they didn't prepare the question, they didn't share in this interview. Then later on we use the interview to make a photopeach, a presentation of what we had. And Maria asked me to do an interview with her students too. They prepared questions and they asked me, and we had that interview. Then we put both of them on PhotoPeach and actually our friends in the Becoming a Webhead course encouraged us so much and they left very encouraging comments and they were very proud of us. Then we decided to make a Facebook group since our students spend most of their time on Facebook playing or sharing some stuff, not doing something really important. So, we decided to make this Facebook group, and recorded ArgentEgypt to have both Argentina and Egypt. Then we started talking with our students about many topics. We had some talks about... festivals in our countries and some traditions and we shared it together. One of our conditions on the group that we have all to write and to share things in English, we shouldn't use Arabic, or we shouldn't use Spanish for Maria's students. And it worked. Step by step we started encouraging them to go on and write and share. They liked the group so much and they made friends. My students made friends with Maria's students, and they started chatting. Sometimes we go in the group, me or Maria, and start chatting with the students. We talk about a range of topics, food, traditions, festivals, things to those cultures, some language points, discussing for example, are you an early-bird or a night-owl and what does this mean and so on. And they respond to it. Then the surprise or the rewards was that we were invited by Vance Stevens to talk about our project. Then we started organizing what we have done into points. We started with this and then we moved to the next step.

Egypt → Argentina

project process

student reactions

Argentina → Egypt

carried the project to a long-standing international community on Facebook

collaborated w/ Maria online to prepare the presentation

sts unfamiliar w/ Skype

project communication took in the comp. lab

showcasing their work through Photopeach presentation

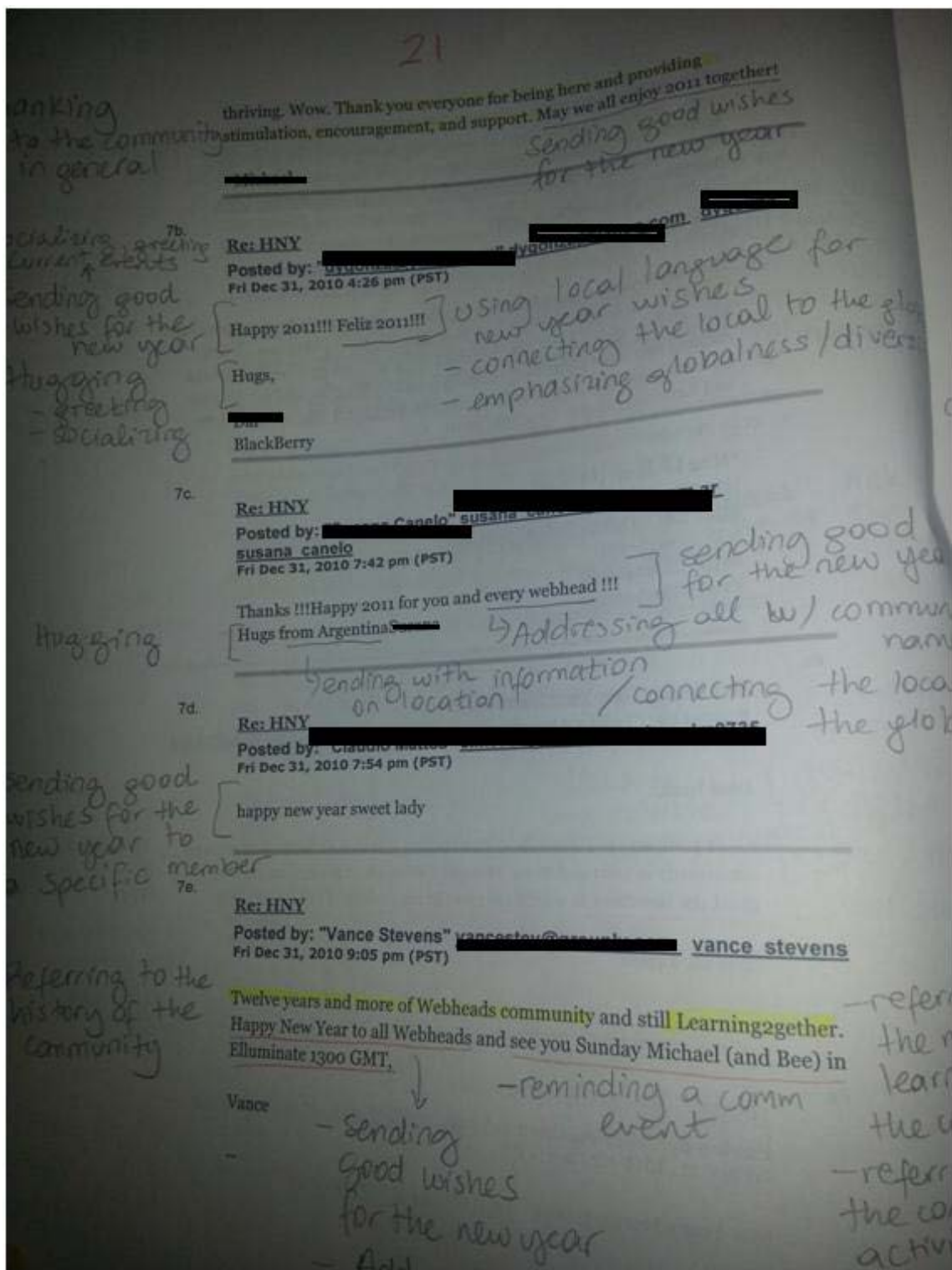
shared Photopeach with Baw friends encouragement by they were proud

cross-cultural exchanges among students - teacher monitor rules & regulations by teachers

The reward at the end → invitation by Vance to present their project on L2getit

# Appendix I

## Sample Initial Coding of the Evonline2002 Yahoo Group Emails





1a. Re: TESOL 2011 Convention, Blog, and Accommodations

2. Tabs in Blogger From: [redacted]

[View All Topics](#) | [Create New Topic](#)

### Messages

1a. Re: TESOL 2011 Convention, Blog, and Accommodations

Posted by: [redacted]  
Mon Jan 17, 2011 8:03 am (PST)

[redacted],  
I can't wait to meet you, my podcasting mentor! How cool is that???  
Speaking of Blogger tabs, I have been wondering how you did that. Our EVO  
blog is so different from other Blogger blogs I have seen/created. Have they  
started offering new templates or did you do that yourselves? Please  
enlighten me.

I will create the TESOL blog as soon as I have heard from some more  
webheads regarding which host they prefer.

*Seeking  
exp/info*

*learning from  
each other*

*Tech  
afford  
podcast*

2.

### Tabs in Blogger

Posted by: [redacted]  
Mon Jan 17, 2011 10:21 am (PST)

[redacted] and all,

[redacted] asked about tabs in Blogger:

-----  
Speaking of Blogger tabs, I have been wondering how you did that. Our EVO  
blog is so different from other Blogger blogs I have seen/created. Have they  
started offering new templates or did you do that yourselves? Please  
enlighten me.  
-----

You can set up a Navigation Bar in Blogger - consisting of tabs - to allow

*ech  
instructions  
Trouble-shooting*

*Blogg*

## Appendix J

### Initial Sheet Created for the Initial Codes and Categories

#### Addressing to the community

- As webheads

- As friends

- As family

#### Asking for support

- For a personal project

- For a community project

#### Announcing outside-community event / Seeking participation for an outside-community event

- For professional development

- For other purposes

#### Clarification

- Requesting clarification

- Providing clarification

#### Community Artifacts

- Sharing links to community artifacts

- Sharing information on community artifacts

- Collaboratively building artifacts for community use

#### Community events

- Invitation for a community event

- Confirming attendance to a community event

- Commenting on a community event

- Sharing the link to an archived community event

- Sharing information on a community event

- Giving instructions for participation in a community event

- Documenting information on a community event

#### Congratulating

- On an individual success

- On community success

#### Connecting the local to global

- Using native language

- Emphasizing location

- Sharing news about local events

- Sharing news about global events

- Emphasizing the global diversity in the community

- Sharing updates from personal life

#### Community values and discourse

- Hugging

- Kissing

- “Practicing peace”

- Sharing the meaning of the community for oneself



- Community as family
- Community as friends
- Community as school
- Complimenting the community
- Acknowledging the community as a support
- F.U.N
- Discussing current events
- Giving support
  - Voting on a project
  - Completing a survey
  - Volunteering for an interview
  - Checking out a link, blog, wiki, etc.
- Guidance
- Joking
  - Making a joke
  - Sharing a joke
- Requests for coordination (Can I suggest to all to post this message to your FB wall?; do not hesitate to pass on this info to anyone)
- Seeking experience (Has anybody tried this? – Wenger’s category)
  - For a computer-based language learning program
  - For teaching a specific language (other than English)
  - For using a web tool
- Seeking opportunity for/arranging a f2f meeting -- and responding back
- Sending good wishes
  - Sending good wishes for a project
  - Sending good wishes in return
  - Sending good wishes in general
- Sharing anecdotes
  - Related to profession
  - Related to other
- Sharing digital identities/web presence
  - Ending with a skype, messenger, second life ID
- Sharing example use of a web tool
  - In the email content
  - In the signature area
- Sharing experiences
  - With a web tool
- Sharing ideas
  - On one’s technology use
  - On a teaching/learning approach
- Socializing
  - Celebrating a holiday
  - Personal updates (e.g. I came back from a fantastic trip to Buenos Aires)
- Technological Troubleshooting

Thanking (code if the email is all/mostly about thanking; not thanks used as a closing?)

For support given

For support in advance

For help offered

For help in advance

In return for good wishes

To the community

To a specific member

Updates

About a project for which support sought

Using others' work for class purposes

Complimenting on the work of others

Sharing others' work w/ outside community

Intercultural exchanges

**TPACK-related**

Technology (T)

Problem-solving – somebody has a problem, describes the problem, and asks for how to solve it, with what technology(ies), help offered, help taken in relation to this problem, etc.. these all would show

Trouble-shooting – more about the technical issue related with some specific tech

Discussing affordances

Compare-contrast btw technologies

Sharing experiences w/ T

Sharing updates w/ a T

Pedagogy (P)

When there is a mention about learners

Content (C)

When there is a mention about ESL, EFL or other sub-contents within these, or other instructional contents

Technology & Pedagogy (TP)

Technology, & Content

Pedagogy & Content

Technology, Pedagogy, & Content

## Appendix K

### Final Categories for Community-oriented Engagement

Main Category	Description		Examples	
<b>Support Code: SUPP</b>	1	Requesting Support for a project	A project would be somebody's school project, master thesis, survey, presentation, checking out a link, or a community project, endeavor that volunteers are sought for, etc.	"I'm currently doing some research into perceptions 'native' and 'non-native' English-speaking teachers. I would appreciate it if you could take a few moments to complete the appropriate survey below"
	2	Providing support	Voting, completing somebody's survey, volunteering for an interview, sending a reference name or an article, checking out a link, volunteering on a community project, etc.	"Done!" "I completed your survey!" "Mission accomplished!"
	3	Congratulating	Congratulating one another either on an individual or a community success; Sending good wishes for either an individual or a community project	"Best of luck with your research!"
	4	Coordination for support	Encouraging coordinating others' involvement in projects/activities, etc.	"Let's help [Beren] with her study!"
<b>Fostering Community Identity and Discourse Code: CID</b>	General description: This category is for the use of community discourse that has been identified previously in observations, and the use of language that describes/implies the meaning of this community for oneself			
	1	Hugging	Ending the email with a hug or hugs	"Hugs,"
	2	Kissing	Ending the email with a kiss, or kisses	"Kisses,"
	3	Family	Addressing, implying, or mentioning the Webheads community as a family	"Dear Webheads family" "Welcome to our Webhead family!" Once a Webhead, forever a Webhead!
	4	Friends	Addressing, implying, or mentioning the Webheads community as friends	"Dear Webhead friends" "Thank you so much all dear webhead friends" "You helped me a lot with your friendly welcome messages"
	5	Compliment	Complimenting the community	"Webheads rock!"

	6	F.U.N	When members use the word in the email like this F.U.N (read as “fun”, but stands for Frivolous Unanticipated Nonsense)	“Have F. U. N!”
	7	Use of GMT	GMT stands for Greenwich Mean Time. The community uses this time to organize events, meetings, etc.	“We’re meeting at 13.00 GMT on Sunday” “We use GMT as a common time denominator”
Connecting the Local to Global Code: CLTG	1	Cross-Cultural Exchanges /Mentioning / Emphasizing global diversity in the community	When a member uses his/her mother-tongue, or a language other than English; when they give background information to each other from various cultures	“Ahlanwasahlan!” “Warm alohas!” “Beijos” (About a joke shared by another) “Normally we say Jesus saves, meaning he saves souls.”
	2	Stating current location		“Greetings from free Egypt!” “Best from Brazil!”
	3	Breaking News/Current events/ Sharing updates anecdotes in relation to these events		“Congratulations on throwing the dictator out” (referring to the Egyptian revolution) “... I cannot breathe just watching the news on TV and the images of <b>the earthquake and tsunami</b> . There are many Webheads <b>in Japan</b> . I am worried about them”
Collaboration on Community Events, Artifacts, & Projects CCode: CEAP	General description: Events that are dominantly organized by Webheads are Learning Together weekly meetings (L2gether), Becoming a Webhead online workshops (BaW), Electronic Village Online sessions (EVO). Community artifacts and/or projects would be: wikis or blogs created for community use; community’s logo; Webheads t-shirts, etc.			
	1	Sharing Updates, announcements, information, guidance Seeking Collaboration		(Vance’s emails announcing Learning2gether event of that week) “I still have not created the TESOL blog! But I will...soon” (Vance’s emails seeking for presenters for the Learning2gether events)
	2	Confirming Participation / Attendance		“I will be there”

	3	Archiving/Documenting Information		“The link to CafePress to order the t-shirts can be found on webheads.info”
	4	Coordination for community events		“I meant to send the logo along a couple of days ago, but I’m not in Portugal at the moment and don’t have access to it. Maybe Joao can upload it to the WiA YG files area.”
	5	Brainstorming ideas		(Thread on how to use the money gathered on t-shirt purchases)
<b>Enhancing Professional Development</b> Code: PD	Any type of engagement (announcing, inviting, sharing links, sharing information, sharing resources, etc.) on professional development events, projects, sites, etc. other than the community events, or projects (IATEFL, TESOL, books to the interest of the members, textbooks or websites or other resources, etc. on English language teaching or instructional technology, etc.)			
<b>Socializing</b> Code: SOCIAL	1	Sharing jokes, teasing each other		(in a n email somebody shared a long joke titled with “Jesus Saves” for example. Page 97-98, message 2a) Dear “Empress of Russia” ☺ (a member says this to Teresa as she is doing a workshop in Yakutsk, Siberia, Russia) Dear Cat herder (a member says this to Vance who has been known as the co-founder of this community)
	2	Celebrating holidays, birthdays, etc.		“EidMubarek.. Happy Ramadan to those who celebrate it..” “Happy New Year” “Happy International Women’s Day”
	3	Sharing updates from personal life		“I came back from a fantastic trip to Buenos Aires!”

New Member Orientation Code: NMO	4	Organizing face-to-face meetings, Sharing photos/updates from f2f meetings		“Today, Tuesday, at 18.00, I am meeting [Name] at Café Biela (president Quintana 600). I’d love to meet other Argentinian Webheads if you happen to be in town.”
	1	New members’ introductions		“Hello everybody, This is [Amal] from Egypt. I’m a new member in your group..”
	2	Welcoming new members		“Ahlanwasahlan! Welcome!” “Welcome to the Webheads, [Amal]!”
	3	Providing info about the community to a new member		“If you’re interested in exploring Second Life more, we have regular language teacher meetings” “the recordings to all our Learning2gether events are here...”

## Appendix L

### Final Coding Scheme for the Practice-Oriented Engagement

<p><b>Main category: Technology -- (Code: T)</b></p> <p><u>General Description:</u> This code is for technology mentions in the data. These usually occur alone without any discussion of its relation to pedagogy or content. As this is the main area of the community’s practice, it occurs more, and this is the reason why it was divided into sub-categories to examine the range of engagement.</p>		
#	<i>Sub-category title &amp; description</i>	<i>Examples from emails</i>
<b>T1</b>	<p><b>Seeking help with Technology</b></p> <p>Posing a problem and asking for help with it; seeking ideas or suggestions with technology; consulting others on which technology to use for a particular purpose; seeking experiences with technology; seeking technology resources; consulting others or requesting their help about/with a technical problem they face with a particular technology</p> <p>In many cases this might take the form of a question that is preceded by a contextual description of the problem.</p>	<p>“I need to create a screencast that can then be downloadable in some format that can then be played on a DVD player (e.g. AVI).”</p> <p>“Could you please suggest any resources that might help them understand how Moodle works &amp; how to set up their courses?”</p> <p>“Can I suggest to all to post this message to your Facebook wall?; do not hesitate to pass on this info to anyone”</p> <p>“Does anyone have any idea about the new released version of ForeFox 4?”</p> <p>“I’ve been asked to express an opinion on this Chinese language learning program – it’s an approach I’ve never seen before. I’d be interested in knowing if any of you have seen a ‘mixed’ approach – some of the target language embedded within English – such as this to language learning before, and also whether or not you have insights to offer. Of course, if any of you are familiar with teaching Chinese, that would be even better.  <a href="http://www.experiencechinese.com/products/chineseyourway">http://www.experiencechinese.com/products/chineseyourway</a>”</p>

<p><b>T2</b></p>	<p><b>Technical trouble-shooting&amp; Problem-solving</b></p> <p>Offering help, guiding or directing a person having a technical issue with a particular technology</p>	<p>“I would like to offer to mentor them in Adobe (I have a room, we can meet) – I use Moodle regularly for years..and would work with them, show them the ‘how to’ the ‘why’ etc. and show them my courses.”</p> <p>“you must delete the stop at the end of the URL. I got the same message at first and then realized what was wrong and it worked.”</p>
<p><b>T3</b></p>	<p><b>Sample technology use</b></p> <p>This occurs when members share their own creations with various technology tools either purposefully or incidentally (i.e. in the signature area, when engaging in another discussion). This code is used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when the shared link exemplifies how the member uses the tool,</li> <li>• when the members shares a video, a personal blog, wiki or website, a class blog or wiki or website they created,</li> </ul> <p>When members provide more than one link in the signature area, just code it once. The members may just explain how they use one tool; therefore, it does not have to have a link.</p>	<p>“I have started subtitling Dave Cormier’s videos on Universal Subtitles... Here they are..<i>(provides the links to these videos she subtitled)</i></p> <p>“To check for times in your area/time zone, please see this link at the WorldClock.. &lt;<a href="http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/city.html?n=178">http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/city.html?n=178</a>&gt;” <i>(this shows an example of how he uses the tool to organize events for global participants)</i></p> <p>“we tried to find videos that illustrated the different styles of error feedback on the internet and simply couldn’t. Thus, as proud Webheads, we decided to create our own videos, which are already on Youtube..” <i>(then provides the links to those videos they created)</i></p> <p>“I use Hipcast these days for similar purposes. .. See the (link) for the most recent example”</p> <p>“I am currently experimenting with flipping the classroom with my college students. I am using material from ESL Pod... Each Thursday I assign four of these ESL Pod lessons on a business English theme and recommend that the student do one a day. ...”</p> <p>“</p> <p>---</p> <p>Vance Stevens  <a href="http://adVanceEducation.blogspot.com">http://adVanceEducation.blogspot.com</a>”</p>



<p><b>T4</b></p>	<p><b>Discussing affordances of technology(-ies)</b></p> <p>Discussing affordances of one or more technologies; Compare-contrast between various technologies. At this time, they may or may not be obviously sharing their experiences. When they share their experiences with specific technologies, this should also be coded under this category. These occurrences might usually go with technology suggestions.</p>	<p>“I’ve tried Screencast-o-matic, but when I get to the “Export” button it gets stuck, and I never get anything downloaded. Have also tried downloaded freeware called “Screencast recorder”, which seems to be recording, but then, when I press “Done”, shows me no final product (?). Screentoaster seems not to be available any longer... Screencr only produces screencasts to show via Twitter, or so I think..”</p> <p>“Have you tried Jing? <a href="http://www.jingproject.com">www.jingproject.com</a> . It makes a video very easily”</p>
<p><b>T5</b></p>	<p><b>Sharing technology resources</b></p> <p>Sharing resources on technology (usually in response to a help requested, and by providing links or references to outside resources in relation to a technology). These are usually <u>not created by members</u>, thus they are outside resources. (If they are created by members, then it would be coded as “sample tech use” (T3).</p>	<p>“Look at <a href="http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com">www.teachertrainingvideos.com</a> for help if you need it”</p> <p>“The moodle forum is very active and informative with lots of easy to follow documentation. <a href="http://docs.moodle.org/en/Teacher_documentation">http://docs.moodle.org/en/Teacher_documentation</a> “</p>
<p><b>T6</b></p>	<p><b>Tech updates</b></p> <p>Sharing, discussing, and or updating others with new technologies, web tools, applications, OR with news and changes on current technologies, etc. This could also occur when a member <b>forwards</b> to the list a <b>news article</b>, a news story, etc. on technology from a newspaper or a similar source.</p>	<p>“Does this mean that Dimdim is going the way of Ning? (forwarded message) Dimdim has been acquired by salesforce.com . Your free account will remain active until March 15, 2011...”</p> <p>“I want to share this new app with you: Fotobabble.”</p> <p>“Another reason for putting large numbers of human heads together to solve a massive problem. Published in the NY Times. (<i>What follows is a long full-length News article from New York Times about Captchas</i>)</p> <p>“Second Life recently closed their special Teenage Grid and youngsters,...”</p>

<b>Pedagogy (P)</b>	
Discussing a teaching learning approach, discussing teachers and or learners, pedagogical issues, education, etc.	<i>(while summarizing the content of a TED video and suggesting others to watch it)</i> “ <b>why don’t we get the best out of people?</b> Sir Ken Robinson argues that it’s because <b>we’ve been educated to become good workers, rather than creative thinkers. Students with restless minds and bodies</b> – far from being cultivated for their energy and curiosity – are ignored or even stigmatized, with terrible consequences. <b>we are educating people out of their creativity,</b> ’ Robinson says”
<b>Content (C)</b>	
Discussing or mentioning various contents of English language teaching (Business English, EAP, ESL, EFL, Spoken English, reading writing, speaking, grammar, listening, etc.)	“..here’s a last-minute reminder that the next in our series of webinars takes place later today at 14.00 CET. The topic this time is <b>English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)</b> ”
<b>Technology &amp; Pedagogy (TP)</b>	
Discussing or mentioning technology(ies) and its affordances in relation to pedagogical benefits.	“ <b>Eportfolios</b> are an excellent way for mature 21 <sup>st</sup> century <b>learners to track and reflect on their learning goals and accomplishments.</b> They are ideal tools for mature <b>learners</b> to perform <b>self-assessment</b> ”  “I recently got interested in it as I am <b>designing some dashboards for my Excel worksheets of class student attendance, performance, etc.</b> ”
<b>Technology &amp; Content (TC)</b>	
When members discuss a technology and its affordances for teaching English content.	“This month I wrote up a list of tips <b>for using TED videos in conversation lessons</b> ”
<b>Pedagogy &amp; Content (PC)</b>	
When members discuss teaching learning approaches and various learning styles, needs, in relation to various ELT content.	“Many <b>American jokes</b> are so associated to <b>culture</b> that <b>you need to not only be bilingual to understand them but bicultural...</b> So the joke is so associated to culture and even history that if you are not an older American you may not appreciate the humor. And this <b>is the frequent problem with using these kinds of jokes with students...</b> ”

**Technology & Pedagogy & Content (TPC)**

When members discuss/mention a technology in relation to its affordances for teaching English with consideration of pedagogical issues described in Pedagogy section above; when members discuss/mention how to use a technology in teaching something specific in English language teaching and how it might have pedagogical benefits.

“**Pocketcultures.com is gold for the classroom** as contributors try to give readers an **informed cultural view of different parts of the world and its people**”

“Moira Hunter gives a talk on **Architectural and Design-based Education** and Practice through **Content & Language Integrated Learning using Immersive Virtual Environments for 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills**”

“This is **such a great app for using digital images to get students talking** (and taking pictures). I can see this as a basis for projects of **great cultural interest**, and for **content-based learning**”

“... and I presented a mini course at Casa Thomas Jefferson last week about **teaching the oral skills**. One of the days was about **giving feedback on students’ oral mistakes**. We tried to find videos that illustrated the different **styles of error feedback** on the internet and simply couldn’t. Thus, as proud Webheads, we decided to **create our own videos**, which are already on YouTube. So here are the links..”(This email for examples could be classified as “using videos to illustrate how to teach oral skills and how to give feedback to students on their oral skills”)

## Appendix M

### Complete Chat Log from Rita's Live Session on Google Apps in Language Classroom

Joined on February 11, 2011 at 7:08 AM  
(My participation is highlighted)

mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: hi  
mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: some kind, Marijana  
silipa [undisclosed]: :)  
Moderator (Session Leader 1): passionate and dedicated. absolutely, anisoara! two great adjectivs for rita :-)  
Moderator (Session Leader 1): welcome, rita! and thank you for being here for us once again  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): it is a very nice idea Community of Practice - I love it  
Moderator (helend [helen] 1): We are very lucky to have you come here !  
Moderator (Session Leader 1): me too, larissa :-)  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): thank you Anisoara  
silipa [undisclosed]: hello  
mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: hello rita  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): you are welcome Rita  
Moderator (Session Leader 1): daf can't be here in person but is definitely in spirit :-)  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): Daf will listen to this recording  
baw2010Lana [undisclosed] 1: Hello Ryta!  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): You can Rita  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): now all can  
Moderator (anisoara [anisoara] 1): it's ok  
Moderator (helend [helen] 1): take the blue stick with star  
silipa [undisclosed]: and loves it  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): people say just google  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): to search  
Moderator (anisoara [anisoara] 1): they're googling  
silipa [undisclosed]: yes google search is the most common and the most popular  
karolina.devrgna [undisclosed]: google it up  
silipa [undisclosed]: just google it :)  
karolina.devrgna [undisclosed]: :)  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): I think google is becoming a synonym for search - my students always go to google for the information  
silipa [undisclosed]: yes  
silipa [undisclosed]: defintly Larissa  
mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: me  
Moderator (helend [helen] 1): firefox  
Moderator (Session Leader 1): click the green check  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): just beginning  
WJcn [undisclosed]: I've never heard of it

WJcn [undisclosed]: :(  
Moderator (anisoara [anisoara] 1): no problem  
silipa [undisclosed]: heard of it  
silipa [undisclosed]: my husband uses it  
**kulavuzd [Derya] 1: i know it from my husband but never used it**  
silipa [undisclosed]: similar DErya  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): Jasmine - just try it - I haven't used it too  
WJcn [undisclosed]: :)  
silipa [undisclosed]: I am thinking of using it  
WJcn [undisclosed]: ya, i think i'll get a try  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): Marijana you can learn from your husband  
silipa [undisclosed]: always:)  
**kulavuzd [Derya] 1: I love Gmail!!**  
prasetyo [Hardi]: Now chrome has application and extension just like firefox, I like Diigo  
and delicious extension :)  
silipa [undisclosed]: yeslove gmail  
WJcn [undisclosed]: ya, it's cool  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): Hardi it is good news  
mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: but when i tried to create an account it asked me for a  
phone number  
Moderator (Session Leader 1): hmmm...  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): gmail? Marijana?  
mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: yes  
Moderator (Session Leader 1): i never give my phone number  
mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: so i couldnt go on  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): interesting - mine was fine  
Moderator (helend [helen] 1): never asked me for a phone !  
WJcn [undisclosed]: me either  
**kulavuzd [Derya] 1: me neither**  
silipa [undisclosed]: have gmail for years now  
prasetyo [Hardi]: me either  
silipa [undisclosed]: yes you can  
mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: maybe i did something wrong  
WJcn [undisclosed]: ya, i think we can creat by ourselves  
silipa [undisclosed]: I have another design  
Moderator (Session Leader 1): ty rita  
prasetyo [Hardi]: yes you can customize gmail, even the theme :)  
Moderator (helend [helen] 1): I've got a ncie picture on mine too !  
silipa [undisclosed]: :) yes theme  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): design  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): ???  
silipa [undisclosed]: my hubby has similar Rita  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): Marijana LOL  
silipa [undisclosed]: I love sea colours  
Moderator (Session Leader 1): great! ty  
prasetyo [Hardi]: I also love iGoogle, the start page, just like Netvibes

silipa [undisclosed]: Google talk?  
mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: yahoo and hotmail also save your scripts  
Moderator (Session Leader 1): absolutely! great even for monitoring std chats  
silipa [undisclosed]: we are still on gmail!? right  
Moderator (Session Leader 1): no won slide 12  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): IGoogle  
Moderator (Session Leader 1): now on...  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): Google Accounts  
silipa [undisclosed]: I left thecomp. for a while  
silipa [undisclosed]: google talk yes  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): I found Reader is very useful  
silipa [undisclosed]: Google reader? looks interesting  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): out of 21 I know only 7 at least  
silipa [undisclosed]: google talk, chrome  
karolina.devrgna [undisclosed]: docs chrome news maps  
Moderator (helend [helen] 1): 7 or 8  
silipa [undisclosed]: reader  
karolina.devrgna [undisclosed]: igoogle  
silipa [undisclosed]: 7  
Moderator (Session Leader 1): docs, chrome, gearth, maps, calendar  
baw2010Lana [undisclosed] 1: Picasa  
sonia73 [undisclosed]: 2  
karolina.devrgna [undisclosed]: few  
WJcn [undisclosed]: google docs, maps, earth scholar, calendar  
silipa [undisclosed]: yes we also  
kulavuzd [Derya] 1: google talk, goole doces, google site, maps, reader, scholar,  
kulavuzd [Derya] 1: nope  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): no  
silipa [undisclosed]: no  
WJcn [undisclosed]: none of them  
Moderator (helend [helen] 1): nope  
sonia73 [undisclosed]: none  
Moderator (anisoara [anisoara] 1): no  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): google googles???  
baw2010Lana [undisclosed] 1: no  
Moderator (Session Leader 1): i heard about swirl  
Moderator (helend [helen] 1): body browser !!!  
silipa [undisclosed]: LOL Larissa  
kulavuzd [Derya] 1: sounds interesting  
Moderator (anisoara [anisoara] 1): LOL Helen  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): Google Docs - good to know  
silipa [undisclosed]: Google ran out of name ideasgoogle googles, or body browser :)  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): about ppt for Google Docs  
Moderator (helend [helen] 1): wonderful life safer  
Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): I am tired of Google Calendar when my boss created for him but shared with me - I knew everything about him

kulavuzd [Derya] 1: people can edit at the same time

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): Google Docs is great

silipa [undisclosed]: google docs,some

Moderator (Session Leader 1): several people can edit at the same time?

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): collaborate

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): one document

fernanda [Fernanda] 1: sorry, lost connection

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): I had a group project using Google Docs and we were done for a week

Moderator (anisoara [anisoara] 1): welcome back Fernanda

silipa [undisclosed]: welcome back

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): it was a research project

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): great experience

Moderator (Session Leader 1): are you on a wireless connection, fernanda?

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): but never used with my students

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): I used as a student

kulavuzd [Derya] 1: we use it for our online classes in the Phd program here all the time for our group projects

Moderator (RitaZ [Rita]):

<http://services.google.com/apps/resources/overviews/welcome/topicDocs/index.html>

fernanda [Fernanda] 1: no, it's not wireless, but it sometimes fails

Moderator (Session Leader 1): you're in a web tour, right, rita?

Moderator (Session Leader 1): ok, fernanda

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): yes

Moderator (Session Leader 1): i heard the recording, rita

silipa [undisclosed]: I lheard

silipa [undisclosed]: yes

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): I did

karolina.devrgna [undisclosed]: yes

WJcn [undisclosed]: ya

mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: i did

kulavuzd [Derya] 1: I heard the recording too

Moderator (Session Leader 1): and we have, rita! :-)

kulavuzd [Derya] 1: a friend of mine gives synchronous feedback to her students' writing papers by using google docs and Skype at the same time

mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: that's great

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): Derya - it is really interesting

Moderator (Session Leader 1): we never got to work on plurk, rita

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): I am doing research about online feedback

mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: no

sonia73 [undisclosed]: no

kulavuzd [Derya] 1: I am

silipa [undisclosed]: not much

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): Yes

prasetyo [Hardi]: Not really  
 Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): easy steps to create website  
 Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): I ma using it for Yakut TESOL so far  
 Moderator (helend [helen] 1): Is it better than a blog ?  
 Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): much better Helen  
 kulavuzd [Derya] 1: we used to use it to collaborate with other teachers in my previous work  
 Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): it is a website not a blog posts  
 Moderator (helend [helen] 1): Umm you've got me thinking Larissa  
 kulavuzd [Derya] 1: that's true Larissa  
 Moderator (anisoara [anisoara] 1): yes  
 Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): yes  
 WJcn [undisclosed]: ya  
 mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: yes  
 silipa [undisclosed]: yes  
 kulavuzd [Derya] 1: yes  
 prasetyo [Hardi]: yes, it is great  
 Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): very nice design Rita  
 Moderator (Session Leader 1): lovely page, rita  
 Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): is it your picture taken in England Rita?  
 prasetyo [Hardi]: Are those subpages for your students?  
 Moderator (helend [helen] 1): Nice idea !  
 mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: wow... im in versailles  
 silipa [undisclosed]: Looking at Bath  
 Moderator (Session Leader 1): i'm in brighton :-)  
 Moderator (helend [helen] 1): I was at University there !  
 Moderator (helend [helen] 1): Brighton  
 Moderator (Session Leader 1): :-)  
 prasetyo [Hardi]: I am in Salisbury Cathedral  
 Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): Helen when?  
 Moderator (anisoara [anisoara] 1): I'll go to Brighton in April  
 Moderator (helend [helen] 1): 1981 -1985 prehistoric ;)  
 Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): Anisoara - great!  
 silipa [undisclosed]: Billiy Elliot  
 Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): Helen - oh really long LOL  
 mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: Paris!! :)  
 silipa [undisclosed]: helen lol  
 Moderator (Session Leader 1): very well organized, rita! clap, clap  
 Moderator (helend [helen] 1): LOL  
 Moderator (helend [helen] 1): This is a great idea for school trips  
 kulavuzd [Derya] 1: great idea Rita thanks for sharing  
 Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): Teresa?  
 Moderator (Session Leader 1): just clapping on your great organization  
 silipa [undisclosed]: mozzila  
 Moderator (helend [helen] 1): Exactly teresa



sonia73 [undisclosed]: I can't even open my gmail account with internet explorer, i have to use firefox

Moderator (anisoara [anisoara] 1): more people start using Firefox

Moderator (Session Leader 1): so we need to have 3-4 browsers installed and work with the one that functions best with whatever you're working at the time

kulavuzd [Derya] 1: yes

mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: no

silipa [undisclosed]: no

Moderator (helend [helen] 1): yes

Moderator (anisoara [anisoara] 1): yes

sonia73 [undisclosed]: Exactly !

Moderator (Session Leader 1): even pbworks and wikispaces often work better with firefox and chrome

prasetyo [Hardi]: yes, iGoogle

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): TC is good in Firefox -

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): agree

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): I love a baby

Moderator (Session Leader 1): i have an iGoogle page, but haven't really used. need to change my habits ;-)

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): me too Teresa - I started using and then stopped

mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: i dont even have gmail!! :)

Moderator (Session Leader 1): welcome, phil!

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): now need to refresh

Moderator (helend [helen] 1): Hi Phil

Moderator (Session Leader 1): bonjour!

philfrance [undisclosed] 2: hi, sorry was having lunch

Moderator (Session Leader 1): good for you!

mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: bob appetit :)

Moderator (helend [helen] 1): bon appétit

mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: bon, sorry :)

philfrance [undisclosed] 2: thanks, lots of mustard

Moderator (helend [helen] 1): :)

mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: i've just had my breakfast in argentina

Moderator (helend [helen] 1): I like bob appétit !

mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: LOL

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): I am having just my morning coffe

prasetyo [Hardi]: This is dinner time in Indonesia :)

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): YES

mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: yes

kulavuzd [Derya] 1: yes

Moderator (Session Leader 1): love it! :-)

philfrance [undisclosed] 2: just used google art project, great

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): I remember Teresa tried Google Earth last year to see Yakutsk

prasetyo [Hardi]: Yes

Moderator (Session Leader 1): a few years ago my YLs went crazy looking at our school and then some of their houses :-)

Moderator (helend [helen] 1): My family check out my back garden from the UK

silipa [undisclosed]: :)

Moderator (Session Leader 1): LOL helen

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): Helen LOL

silipa [undisclosed]: what did he yfind!? Helen

mariainesbossa [undisclosed] 1: maybe my boyfriend will try to find where I am, LOL

Moderator (lolesova [Larissa]): collaboration

Moderator (Session Leader 1): tours of cities

philfrance [undisclosed] 2: visit cities to practise describing language

WJcn [undisclosed]: to introduce the cultures

Moderator (anisoara [anisoara] 1): virtual tours

Moderator (Session Leader 1): histoic paces

Moderator (Session Leader 1): historic, right

### **About the Author**

Derya Kulavuz-Onal recently completed her doctoral studies and is about to join the Department of English at Salisbury University, Maryland, as a new faculty member in Fall 2013. She is originally from Turkey, and prior to coming to USA, she worked as an English instructor at Istanbul Technical University, School of Foreign Languages for 6 years. Beginning with her doctoral studies, she continued to teach English at INTO-USF English Language Program (formerly the English Language Institute) as well as undergraduate and graduate courses at the departments of Secondary Education, and World Languages, respectively. Additionally, she holds a BA and an MA from the Department of Foreign Language Education at Bogazici University, Istanbul.

Her academic interests intersect on the broader fields of teacher education, applied linguistics, instructional technology, and qualitative research. More specifically, she is interested in language teacher education, language teacher identities, language teacher learning and development, (online) ethnography, technology and teacher education, communities of practice, and online research.

She continues to lead her “normal” life by reading, cooking, taking photographs, swimming, travelling, blogging, and connecting with others in person or through social media. She can be reached at [kulavuzd@gmail.com](mailto:kulavuzd@gmail.com) ; her Turkish-English “Ethnographic Impressions” blog can be visited at <http://kulavuzd.wordpress.com> ; her dissertation-related work can be found at <https://sites.google.com/site/wianetnography/> ; and she can be followed at <http://twitter.com/kulavuzd> .