

Expanding Horizons: Contribution of an Online Community in the Professional Learning of Teachers in Pakistan

Asma Khan*

Abstract

This qualitative study explored the role of an online community for English teachers, English Companion Ning (ECN), in the professional learning of university English teachers in Pakistan. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, weekly guided tours of the ECN, field notes, ECN artifacts/documents and researcher memos. Charmaz (2014) constructivist grounded theory approach was used to analyze the data. Findings indicated that the Pakistani teachers analyzed and discussed their teaching related concerns with teachers globally through the platform of ECN. These teachers got an opportunity to improve their teaching methods by reflecting on their pedagogical practices and solved their professional issues in the supportive and collaborative environment of the ECN community. This study suggests that teachers of different subject areas should explore, join, and learn from different online professional learning communities and social networking sites to improve their professional learning.

Keywords: online community; teacher professional learning; teacher support; collective knowledge sharing.

* University of Education
Corresponding author email: asma.yousafzai@gmail.com

Introduction

The literature on traditional face-to-face teacher professional learning has identified many traditional professional learning programs as one-shot, episodic, and based on a transmission model of instruction where instructors transfer the knowledge to the learners (Clement & Vanderberghe, 2000; Dede, 2006; Lock, 2006; Murray, 2014; Staudt, Clair, & Martinez, 2013). As a result, most of these traditional ‘sit-and-get’ professional learning programs have generally remained ineffective in bringing about some change in teachers’ pedagogical practices (Riding, 2001). Due to the limitations of traditional professional learning programs, need of the time is to develop an approach to professional learning that is continuous, collaborative, accessible, interactive, and relevant to teachers’ work (Riding, 2001). Research suggests that the teaching techniques and methods in professional learning programs should help teachers unlearn their previous beliefs and notions of traditional classroom settings and equip them to think and apply knowledge in ways different from their traditional experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

The formation of online spaces for teachers is considered a new approach to teacher professional learning as it has addressed many challenges of traditional teacher professional development (Barab, Kling, & Gray, 2004; Sari, 2012). Research has demonstrated that online spaces can provide sustainable support to teachers and help them to interact and collaborate at any time and from anywhere in the world (Lock, 2006; Sari, 2012). Additionally, online spaces such as online communities and social networking tools can foster ongoing learning, social interaction, knowledge sharing, and acquisition of new skills and ideas (Bostick, 2013; Duncan-Howell, 2010; Lammers, 2012; Lightle, 2010; Sari, 2012).

Due to the above-mentioned advantages of online spaces in the area of teacher professional learning, teachers are replacing traditional face-to-face professional development with online professional learning (Liu, 2012; Liu, Carr, & Strobel, 2009; Sari, 2012). Though a good amount of research is available on the use of online spaces for teacher professional learning in countries such as the United States, Australia, Taiwan, New Zealand, Korea, and Sweden (Duncan-Howell, 2010; Hur & Brush, 2009; Olofsson, 2010; Sari, 2012; Seo & Han, 2013; Wright, 2010), scant research has been conducted on the utilization of technology for educational and/or professional purposes in Pakistan (Hodgson & Shah, 2016). As a result, the traditional “limited, fragmented, one-shot or short term, pre-packaged” professional learning programs still dominate in Pakistan (Hussain, 2009,

p. 109). Further, most of these one-time, instructor-led professional development programs provide teachers with less opportunities to interact, collaborate, and share knowledge with each other in a collaborative and supportive environment (Aslam, 2011; Memon, 2007). Considering these issues related to face-to-face teacher professional development in Pakistan, this study was conducted to investigate how these issues might be resolved if online professional learning was made possible in Pakistan. This study sought answer to the following research question: What is the role of ECN in the professional learning of university English teachers in Pakistan?

Methodology

This exploratory study employed a qualitative in-depth interview strategy to investigate the role of ECN (<http://englishcompanion.ning.com/>) in the Pakistani teachers' professional learning. This online community is global in nature as it accepts membership of participants all over the world. This study included six female participants (pseudonyms: Afreen, Ruby, Maha, Aiza, Rani, Noor) teaching English at Masters level at Sana University (a pseudonym). The criteria for selecting participants was that first, the participants should be official members of the ECN by creating an account on the ECN website and second, they should have been using ECN for at least one month for different purposes such as sharing ideas, commenting on posts, uploading teaching related documents, or participating in different discussions. Six out of 20 participants met these criteria and became participants for this study.

The data corpus comprised of 12 one hour-long in-depth interviews, field notes, weekly guided tours of the ECN, ECN documents/artifacts, and researcher memos. Each participant was interviewed twice, once in the beginning and then towards the end of the data collection period. The researcher interviewed the participants in English, however, they were given the choice to respond in English or Urdu (their native language) at their ease. Also, guided tours were conducted with each participant once a week over 10 weeks of the data collection phase. The participants used both English and Urdu in the guided tours and interviews. In order to see what the participants did online, their chats and discussion posts were downloaded by visiting their pages on the ECN. Moreover, the researcher also observed the classrooms of those participants who implemented some ECN idea or activity in their class. For documents/artifacts collection, screenshots of different discussion posts and some photos during classroom observations were taken. The data were analyzed using Charmaz (2014) constructivist grounded theory approach.

Findings

This section discusses the different roles that ECN played in enhancing the professional learning of the Pakistani teachers.

1. Collective Knowledge Sharing

One of the roles of the ECN was that it provided the ECN members* an opportunity to interact and share their insights, ideas, and teaching resources with each other in a collective environment. For instance, Afreen mentioned how she shared her point of view about different teaching methods with an ECN member (Guided tour, Afreen, April 25, 2015). Eve, an ECN member, posted on the ECN that she wanted to learn about different ESL/EFL teaching methods and asked if any ESL/EFL teachers could share their teaching methodology or approach with her. Since Afreen was an ESL teacher, she found it an opportunity to share her opinion with Eve:

Hello [Eve], I taught the subject of English Communication Skills last semester. while teaching reading, i asked the students to bring any newspaper/magazine/article they like, and when they brought, I shuffled it among different groups they enjoyed this group activity, I think, the texts now were really according to their tastes. In my speaking sessions, the role plays proved to be very interesting for the students, I being new to this course, didn't have any designed activities for the listening skills, so I took some designed activities of listening from British council website. I also downloaded some from www.4shared.com.** (ECN post, April 17, 2015)

In this post, Afreen shared with Eve how she taught reading and speaking skills to her students. The post reveals that Afreen not only described her teaching methodology in an ESL context but, due to the sharing culture in the ECN, she also shared a link with Eve. Eve then furthered the conversation by asking Afreen to share any specific videos/audios for listening skills that she used in her class (ECN post, April 19, 2015). To this Afreen responded, "I downloaded few recordings of TOEFL listening tests from <http://search.4shared.com/q/CCAD/1/Toefl%20listening>" (ECN post, April 20, 2015).

* ECN members refer to all members of the ECN community including the Pakistani teachers.

** Quotes from participants are shared exactly as they wrote/stated them.

This conversation between Afreen and Eve demonstrates that when teachers collectively share knowledge and ideas, they are much more likely to improve their professional knowledge and learning. Due to such collective knowledge sharing, Eve came to know about the teaching methods an ESL/EFL teacher uses in her class, and Afreen got an opportunity to share some of her teaching insights and resources with other ECN members.

2. Innovative and Practical Ideas

Another role of the ECN was that the Pakistani teachers gained numerous innovative and practical ideas and activities for their teaching from the ECN community. For instance, Rani shared that she got an innovative idea about staying connected with students outside the classroom from the group “Teaching with Facebook and Social Networks” on the ECN. Rani explained that due to limited class time of one hour each week, it was difficult for her to implement some of the activities during class time while teaching Shakespeare’s play *Othello* (Guided tour, Rani, April 29, 2015). She got one of the ideas from the ECN that she could create a page on Facebook for Shakespeare’s *Othello* and students could post about different characters of the play by assuming a role of a particular character on that page. Rani implemented this idea with her students and it worked well for some of them. Some of the students did not contribute much in this activity as according to Rani, most of the students use social media for entertainment purposes and therefore it was difficult for them to post something related to academics on these sites. However, Rani was hopeful for a change in students’ attitude towards social media and decided to try out this innovative strategy with her future students as she deemed it “a great way of remaining in touch with the students out of class too” (Interview 2, June 5, 2015).

3. Collective Problem Solving

Another finding was that the ECN members helped each other in solving their professional dilemmas and teaching related concerns in a supportive environment. For instance, Afreen, shared some teaching-related issues on the ECN and received support from ECN members in resolving them. Afreen was looking for some interesting grammar activities that she had to teach to her students towards the end of the semester. She shared that she had been using a prescribed book from Sana University in her class but she did not like it. She deemed the activities in that book outdated, and a mismatch to the level of her students. When she

saw that teachers on the ECN were asking questions of each other and getting solutions to their problems, she put forth her query on the ECN. As Afreen shared her concern with the ECN community, she received six ideas from different ECN members for teaching grammar. A couple of ECN members shared activities and e-books with her. She downloaded an e-book shared by Rob (another ECN member), and used some activities related to adjectives and use of direct and indirect speech with her students. During the observation in Afreen's class, I noticed that she began her lecture by giving her students the rules of teaching grammar that she got from the e-book Rob shared with her on the ECN (Figure 1).

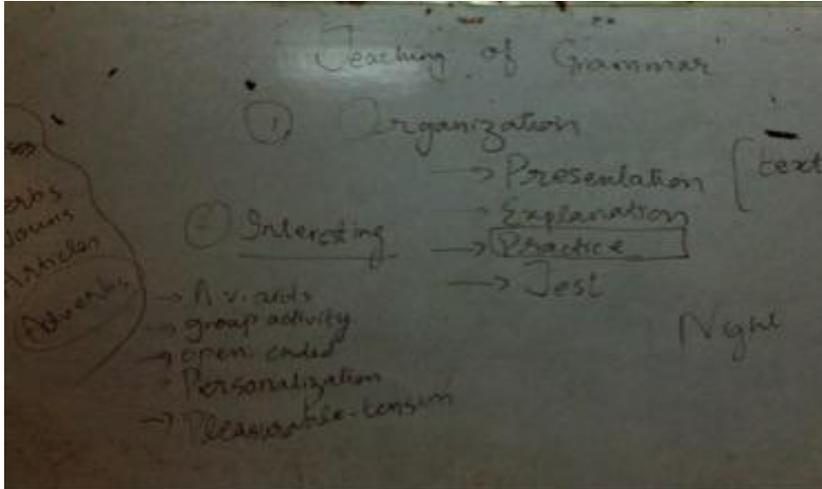


Figure 1. Afreen teaching rules of teaching grammar to the students in class.

After presenting the rules, Afreen implemented different activities in the class. For instance, in the activity regarding the use of direct and indirect speech, Afreen showed some pictures to the students. She then divided the students in small groups and asked them to share the picture's situation in direct and indirect speech within the group. After about 10 minutes, Afreen asked the students to share what they discussed in the groups with the whole class. The researcher observed that students were taking interest in those activities as they were responding actively and enthusiastically to the teacher's questions (Field notes, May 30, 2015). Later, Afreen shared with me that she liked the activities in this book so much that she recommended this e-book to the head of the English department so that other teachers could also benefit from it:

ECN solved a big issue of mine... *uss prescribed book ki activities mujhe bilkulpasand nahi hain* [I don't like the activities given in that prescribed book]...I lovethis book I downloaded from the ECN...At the end of the semester we are required to mention the books we consulted in our teaching. So I will write down the name of that ECN book and also recommend it to other teachers. (Interview 2, Afreen, June 15, 2015)

This example demonstrates that the ECN provided an opportunity to teachers like Afreen to share their concerns with others and get solutions for their problems. Through ECN, Afreen was finally able to discover some grammar activities that she liked and interested her students too.

4. Participant-driven and Context-based Discussions

This study found that most of the discussions in the ECN fulfilled teachers' professional learning needs because ECN members had the opportunity to generate them based on their own and their students' needs. For instance, Afreen was overwhelmed by the pressure of exams on the students in Pakistan and also worried about students' communication skills in such a situation. She posted this concern on the ECN to see what other ESL/EFL teachers think about this issue (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Afreen's post on the ECN about developing students' communication skills.

Afreen got five responses on her discussion post, three responses from her colleagues Aiza and Maha at Sana University, and two responses from an EFL teacher in Turkey. Aiza and Maha both added to the discussion by shedding light on the teaching and learning issues in Pakistan. Maha suggested how by “setting achievable objectives and learning outcomes” for courses, teachers can bring about a gradual change in the education system of Pakistan (ECN post, Maha, April 22, 2015). The Turkish teacher emphasized the importance of the role of teachers in such situations and shed light on the teaching/learning issues in an ESL/EFL context. Afreen discussed about this post in the guided tour that she got to know about different perspectives on this issue from teachers of different countries. She shared that she was “particularly happy” to see the posts from her Pakistani colleagues on this discussion post as they “seldom got a chance to discuss these issues in person” (Guided tour, Afreen, April 30, 2015). Afreen’s post was participant-driven because she started this discussion based on her professional need, and it was context-based because she highlighted an issue related to her context by discussing some of the teaching and learning issues in Pakistan. ECN provided Afreen an opportunity to discuss her problem with others as she said about the ECN, “I got a platform where I could raise my voice and talk about the educational problems of my country easily” (Interview 2, Afreen, June 15, 2015).

5. Opportunities for Self-Reflection

Quality professional learning must be “grounded in enquiry, reflection, and experimentation” (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995, p. 598). Findings suggested that another role of the ECN was that it provided its members different opportunities to reflect on their pedagogical practices and teaching methods. For instance, Ruby shared that her students did not take interest in presentations when she was teaching a speaking skills course at Sana University (Guided tour, Ruby, May 10, 2015). Ruby thought that there might be something wrong either with her teaching style or the presentation topics could be too boring for the students. She started reading discussion posts on the ECN in the hope of getting some tips for her students to present well in the class. One of the interesting ideas Ruby came across on the ECN was that teachers should allow the students to choose topics of their choice for presentations occasionally. She liked the idea and asked the students to share with her different topics of their own choice for presentations. Also, according to the strategy on the ECN, she permitted the students to make their presentations interesting in whatever possible ways they

could (Field notes, May 16, 2015). According to Ruby, the students got excited at this idea and shared different presentation topics with her about everyday life such as ‘Marriage Ceremonies,’ ‘The importance of Labor Day,’ and ‘Mango Season in Pakistan.’

During the classroom observation of one of the presentations on ‘Mango Season in Pakistan,’ it was noticed that all the students in the presenting group wore yellow color clothes corresponding with the color of mangoes (Field notes, May 16, 2015). Also, the presenting group decorated the classroom walls with images of mangoes and shared some real mangoes and mango juices with their teacher and classmates (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Photographs taken during students’ presentation on “Mango Season inPakistan” in Ruby’s class.

According to Ruby, her students were excited for these presentations as they came up with numerous images and props related to their topics. Previously, whenever Ruby asked her students for a presentation, the students preferred to do a written assignment instead. As Ruby adapted her teaching style for her students, “the students participated actively in the presentations” (Field notes, May 16, 2015). Ruby shared the excitement of her students in these words:

Students were very happy. They asked me, have you seen our yellow dresses? Did you like mango juice? I mean students in our culture are very happy when they are allowed to do something on their own. They think that teachers rely on us. That’s what my students started feeling. (Interview 2, Ruby, June 16, 2015)

Ruby reflected on her teaching method and decided to amend her teaching style after reading the ECN post. The students enjoyed their presentations because they felt good when they were given some authority in choosing their work. Ruby gave the credit to the ECN for this change in her own teaching practice and her students' behavior:

Researcher: What, if anything, is different about your teaching after participating in the ECN?

Ruby: Like I didn't pay attention to presentations of students. *Humain lagta hai kteacher ko he sab decide kerna chahye* [we as teachers feel that we should be deciding everything for our students], but after reading some interesting strategies on presenting I thought I will change my method and take presentations more seriously *takay students kaam ko enjoy karain aur interest lain* [so that students enjoy and take interest in their work]. I think ECN has upgraded me in this sense. (Interview 2, Ruby, June 16, 2015)

This example demonstrates the ECN contributed to Ruby's professional learning by providing her an opportunity to bring about a change in her teaching practices and making her conscious of her students' interests.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study discussed the different roles of an online community, ECN, in the professional learning of the Pakistani teachers. Unlike the experience of traditional face-to-face professional learning in Pakistan, these teachers got an opportunity to share their knowledge, insights, and resources in the collective environment of the ECN. Quality teacher professional learning theory asserts that teachers' isolation and frustration can be alleviated if they are allowed to interact and share their knowledge and resources with each other (Murray, 2014). Research indicates that collective knowledge sharing among teachers is a significant factor and a powerful tool in enhancing teachers' professional learning (Darling-Hammond, 2006; DuFour, 2004; Hord & Sommers, 2007; Lieberman & Miller, 2008; Murray, 2014). Teachers should be given the opportunities to collaborate and "share what they know" (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995, p. 597). Teacher interaction and collaboration not only helps in improving teachers' instructional

practices, but also has a positive impact on their students' learning (Murray, 2014). As demonstrated in this study, the collaborative learning environment of the ECN offered the Pakistani teachers an opportunity to reflect on their current teaching methods and enabled them to modify their teaching styles to serve their students' learning needs and interests. Such reflection helped these teachers in understanding the ways through which they made their teaching content interesting and engaging for their students.

Moreover, this study demonstrated that the Pakistani teachers in this study enhanced their professional learning as they learned and co-constructed knowledge by interacting and collaborating with a globally diverse community of English educators and experts on the ECN. They gained updated and innovative teaching ideas and activities from the ECN, which not only added new knowledge to their instructional repertoire, but also enabled them to apply that new knowledge to their own unique contexts. Further, the Pakistani teachers got a chance to share their teaching related concerns and received suitable solutions to their problems. The idea of providing a collegial and supportive environment for sharing knowledge and concerns is an important aspect of quality professional learning theory. The supportive environment in the ECN gave the Pakistani teachers a chance to analyze and discuss their teaching issues and concerns on one hand; on the other, the support and help these Pakistani teachers received from the ECN community encouraged them to help out other ECN members and motivated them to participate more in this online community. Additionally, ECN's participant-driven and context-based discussions contributed to the Pakistani teachers' professional learning as these discussions suited their teaching conditions and helped in addressing their individual professional learning needs.

This study implies that English teachers as well as teachers from different subject areas should explore and learn from various online communities and social networking sites to improve their professional learning. Research has established that Twitter (Alderton, Brunsell, & Bariexca, 2011; Davis, 2012; Wright, 2010), blogging (Luehmann & Tinelli, 2008; Yang, 2009), wikis (Wheeler & Wheeler, 2009), and Facebook (Rutherford, 2013; Staudt et al., 2013) have enhanced teachers' professional learning in different disciplines. This study similarly indicated that teachers' learning in the ECN was interactive, collaborative, supportive, and relevant to their context and individual professional learning needs. Also, these teachers enhanced their professional learning by engaging in collective reflection and problem

solving in the ECN. Considering such potential benefits, this study has implications for teachers that they should also benefit by joining different professional online communities for their professional learning.

Additionally, this study suggests that teacher educators should create awareness among prospective teachers about the use of professional online communities and social networking sites for professional learning. The educators need to “get away from the mentality that technology is but a poor substitution of the face-to-face interaction” (Charalambos, Michalinos, & Chamberlain, 2004, p. 141). When preparing prospective teachers, teacher educators can use ECN as a model for online professional learning of teachers and they can show their prospective students how teachers like Ruby modified their teaching methods based on the ECN ideas. By presenting the data from this study, the teacher educators can illustrate that professional online spaces have the potential to guide the prospective teachers’ thinking and/or can help in shaping their pedagogical practices. Due to limited time of data collection period, this study did not capture students’ views about the use of the ECN activities/resources/ideas in their classrooms and/or the impact of these activities on students’ learning and outcomes. As Murray (2014) contends that professional learning programs should “improve the classroom practices of teachers and enhance student learning” (p. 2), future research can focus on the impact of the teachers’ use of online spaces on the students’ learning.

Acknowledgements

The author is an English as a second language (ESL) teacher in Pakistan. This study was a part of her dissertation, which was sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

References

- Alderton, E., Brunsell, E., & Bariexca, D. (2011). The end of isolation. *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 7, 354-365.
- Aslam, H. D. (2011). Analyzing professional development practices for teachers in public universities of Pakistan. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2, 97-106.
- Barab, S.A., Kling, R., & Gray, J. H. (2004). *Designing for virtual communities in the service of learning*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bostick, B. (2013). *Using social media and professional learning communities as tools for novice teacher collegiality and improved self-efficacy* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1354429899?accountid=13567>.
- Charalambos, V., Michalinos, Z., & Chamberlain. (2004). The design of online learning communities: Critical issues. *Educational Media International*, 41, 135-143.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). London, England: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Clement, M., & Vanderberghe, R. (2000). Teachers' professional development: A solitary or collegial (ad)venture? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16, 81-101.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2003). Keeping good teachers: Why it matters, what leaders can do. *Educational Leadership*, 60, 6-13.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). *Powerful teacher education: Lessons from exemplary programs* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (Eds.). (2005). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*. San Francisco, CA : Jossey-Bass.

- Darling-Hammond, L., & McLaughlin, M. W. (1995). Policies that support professional development in an era of reform. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76, 597–604.
- Davis, K. J. (2012). *Learning in 140 characters: Teachers' perceptions of twitter for professional development* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.pc181.lib.rochester.edu/docview/1220692954?pq-origsite=summon>
- Dede, C. (Ed.). (2006). *Online professional development for teachers: Emerging models and methods*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- DuFour, R. (2004). What is a “professional learning community?” *Educational Leadership*, 61, 6-11.
- Duncan-Howell, J. (2010). Teachers making connections: Online communities as a source of professional learning. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 41, 324-340.
- Hodgson, V., & Shah, U. (2016). A phenomenographic study of lecturers’ conceptions of using learning technology in a Pakistani context. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 1-16.
- Hord, S., & Sommers, W. A. (2007). *Leading professional learning communities: Voices from research and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Hur, J. W., & Brush, T. A. (2009). Teacher participation in online communities: Why do teachers want to participate in self-generated online communities of K-12 teachers? *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 41, 279-303.
- Laferriere, T., Lamon, M., & Chan, C. K. (2006). Emerging E-trends and models in teacher education and professional development. *Teaching Education*, 17, 75-90.
- Lammers, J. C. (2012). “Is the Hangout...the Hangout?” Exploring tensions in a gaming-related fan site. In E. R. Hayes & S. C. Duncan

(Eds.), *Learning in video gameaffinity spaces*. 23-50. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (Eds.). (2008). *Teachers in professional communities:Improving teaching and learning*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Lightle, K. (2010). Using social media to build an online professional learning network of middle level educators. *Knowledge Quest*, 39, 48-53.

Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. (2010). *Qualitative communication research methods* (3rd ed.). London, England: Sage Publications Ltd.

Liu, K. Y. (2012). A design framework for online teacher professional development communities. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 13, 701-711.

Liu, W., Carr, R., & Strobel, J. (2009). Extended teacher professional development through an online learning community: A case study. *Journal of EducationalTechnology Development and Exchange*, 2, 99-112.

Lock, J. V. (2006). A new image: Online communities to facilitate teacher professional development. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 14, 663-678.

Luehmann, A. L., & Tinelli, L. (2008). Teacher professional identity development with social networking technologies: Learning reform through blogging. *EducationalMedia International*, 45, 323-333.

Memon, G. R. (2007). Education in Pakistan: The key issues, problems and the new challenges. *Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 3, 47-55.

Murray, J. (2014). *Designing and implementing effective professional learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Olofsson, A. D. (2010). Discussions in online learning community forums-Do they facilitate teachers professional development. *Research Review*, 2, 54-68.

- Riding, P. (2001). Online teacher communities and continuing professional development. *Teacher Development*, 5, 283-296.
- Rock, J. T., & McCollum, A. J. (2009). English Companion Ning. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 53, 87-89.
- Rutherford, C. (2013). Facebook as a source of informal teacher professional development. *In Education*, 16, 60-74.
- Sari, E. R. (2012). Online learning community: A case study of teacher professional development in Indonesia. *Intercultural Education*, 23, 63-72.
- Seo, K., & Han, Y. (2013). Online teacher collaboration: A case study of voluntary collaboration in a teacher-created online community. *KEDI Journal of Educational Policy*, 10, 221-242.
- Staudt, D., Clair, S. N., & Martinez, E. E. (2013). Using Facebook to support novice teachers. *The New Educator*, 9, 152-163.
- Wheeler, S., & Wheeler, D. (2009). Using wikis to promote quality learning in teacher training. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 34, 1-10.
- Wright, N. (2010). Twittering in teacher education: Reflecting on practicum Experiences. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 25, 259-265.
- Yang, S. H. (2009). Using blogs to enhance critical reflection and community of practice. *Educational Technology and Society*, 12, 11-21.

Citation of this Article:

Khan, A. (2017). Expanding horizon: Contribution of an online community in the professional learning of teachers in Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Distance and Online Learning*, 3(2), 25-40.