Community in a Virtual Classroom

Abstract

The main research objectives were presenting experiences of virtual classroom learners in the context of being part of a community or being indifferent towards it, as well as getting to know the value of the community in view of respondents, and the attitudes of respondents to the community. The research operated within the interpretive paradigm. The respondents were twenty six students of different majors at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. All the respondents emphasized the value of being part of a community; still, the opinions were diverse with regard to individual predispositions, skills and aptitudes of the learners. The obtained results are of great significance to the educational thought and practice and in relation to the growing importance of e-learning and its popularisation.

Keywords: community, virtual classroom, blended-learning, education

1. Introduction

During the last few decades, the overpowering influence of rapidly developing information and communication technologies on people, social life and education has been observed. This brings about great changes and generates alternative methods of communication and participation in the cultural life, as well as new areas of learning. Numerous debates and studies present certain divergences concerning the value of this influence. Opinions have been expressed that regard the crisis of culture and value, progressing atomisation of society, and weak social bonds, as well as a lack of social participation and commitment, which lead to callous indifference to human matters and moral issues (cf.: Misztal, 1997, p. 1, as cited by: Olszewska-Dyoniziak, 1998, pp. 159–160). There are also different