

Subject matters in virtual learning

Theoretical background and experiences from a European virtual learning course in the teacher education are presented. The work of a kindergarten teacher is often interaction face-to-face. The work with co-workers is primarily group work happening in the same space and time. The processes include personal, intimate and private matters, which often are confidential and develop through a sustaining mutual understanding and trust. These conditions contrast with the characteristics of virtual learning environments, as they are often time and place independent, not face-to-face, and the group work happens through discussion groups, shared files etc. Development of an enduring and trustworthy interaction is questionable. Virtual has no absolute value, but it depends on the subject. The more the subject deals with delivering and producing knowledge, the better. For personal, social and emotional processes the virtual environment can not still compete with actual interaction in the same time and place. This conclusion is considered in the light of Kairamo's (1999) model of network teaching and it includes examples from Helsinki University of Technology.