

Summary

The focus of the thesis is an informal education of adults in virtual learning community. Living in the today's world requires one to learn systematically and to constantly develop one's competences. Following the completion of the formal education, the adults still use non-formal and informal education and the educational potential can be found in various everyday life situations. The Internet is still gaining in importance as far as individuals' and communities' education is concerned. The Author studied the on-line learning community via the Internet forum dedicated to young mothers. The main goal of the thesis was to acquire the knowledge regarding the process of learning through the Internet forum. The process was described in respect of Peter Jarvis' existential learning model. Moreover, the Author aimed at determining the learning trajectories in respect to the Internet forum supplementing the division of the trajectories suggested by P. Jarvis who listed *non-learning and reflective* learning trajectories. She also tried to identify the factors learning via the Internet and these that impair the process. The scientific goal was to also define the role of the Internet community in the process of learning for the particular individuals. The Author wanted to draw the attention on the characteristics that distinguish learning via the Internet forum from the one in the real world. The scientific method used during the research was the analysis of the post content published by the users on the Internet forum. The current PhD thesis consists of seven chapters. The first four are dedicated to analyze the professional literature. In the first chapter the Author presents three forms of education: formal, informal and non-formal, focusing on the similarities and differences between them. The second chapter is a compilation of selected adults' learning theories. In the third chapter the object of interest is the Internet forum and its educational potential. The important part of this chapter is the introduction of the forum as the virtual learning community. The fourth chapter is dedicated to motherhood and the changes in its perception over time. The fifth chapter focuses on the methodology and is an introduction to the further analytical part of the thesis. In the sixth chapter the Author presents ten users of the forum 'wizaż.pl' and analyses their statements (posts) published at the subforum "Mama z klasą". Based on the conducted analysis of the content the Author creates diagrams and charts presenting the learning processes of the particular users on the Internet forum. In the seventh chapter the Author states the conclusions of the conducted research. In this chapter the Author presents also the trajectories of learning *via* the Internet forum. Partially they are compatible with the ones suggested by Peter Jarvis,

however some of them are distinct for the learning process *via* the Internet forum. The author attached to the work a bibliography containing a list of all items used in the text of the dissertation, as well as an annex containing a list of tables, drawings, diagrams, charts and pictures.

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