

Sharing behaviors among teachers

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Teachers need ongoing professional development in order to achieve significant pedagogical changes. Studies show that the nature of the current professional development, based mainly on face-to-face training and courses, does not take the necessary pedagogical changes. There is a need of changing in perception of professional development. 'Community of Practice' (CoP) is based on cooperative learning and allows interaction between teachers in the community for the purpose of learning and the construction of new knowledge. Building a CoP should examine teachers' needs and consider their sense of community in order to facilitate information sharing.

The purpose of the proposed research is to help develop a new model of a virtual community of teachers, based on cooperative learning and discussion. This is for the purpose of constructing knowledge and building a database. This will lead to a significant professional development of teachers and to pedagogical changes. A first step in achieving this goal will be shown in this study by characterizing the activity patterns of teachers in the community, analysis of the sharing characteristics of the community and measuring the participants' sense of community within the community.

The study will examine two CoP of teachers, defined as a closed group on Facebook. The research will be implemented by three methods: a) Content analysis which examines the indices of teachers' sharing behaviors and identifies the contents transferred. b) Sense of Classroom Community Index that will measure the teacher's sense of community. c) Interviewing the CoP's developers, which allows to test other features of the community.

This study will contribute to the understanding of teachers' sharing behaviors and the sharing characteristics of the community. On a practical level, it will enable examination of the impact of these characteristics on the CoPs, where there is no knowledge sharing.