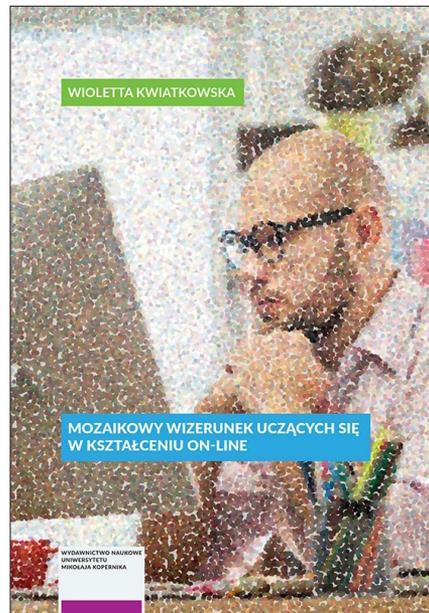


## Short review of the book *A Mosaic Image of Learners in University Online Education* by Wioletta Kwiatkowska

*Wioletta Kwiatkowska, A Mosaic Image of Learners in University Online Education (Mozaikowy wizerunek uczących się w uniwersyteckim kształceniu on-line), Nicolaus Copernicus University Press Toruń 2018, 363 pp.*

The monograph devoted to the image of remote learners is the result of my many years of academic interest and research devoted to the didactic aspect of on-line education. Its primary goal was, first of all, to determine individual factors that could be relevant to the surveyed students' – taken from various fields of study and with experience in this form of learning – opinion regarding their learning achievements, and, secondly, to explain the impact of these factors on learning outcomes in the classroom and online. The primary intention was to examine the degree of increase and decrease of knowledge on a selected sample of pedagogy students, and to determine the relationship between them on the basis of the form of classes and individual factors. In addition, another premise was to present an image of online learners according to their needs, abilities, and preferences. It was also important to con-



front theoretical conclusions, opinions, and judgments – concerning the model of an online student – with the respondents' statements gathered during research explorations.

Taking into account the above assumptions, I tried to also show the specific character of learning through the internet, and how to adapt educational activities to improve the results of online learning and to improve the educational projects of e-learning courses. The development of the internet and remote technologies has had an effect on multiple educational consequences. Pedagogical work is still scarce in Poland. The subject matter of the problems under consideration undergoes a clear change from informational and technical aspects to methodical ones, emphasizing personal and educational dimensions. The virtual classroom becomes the place of presence for students and instructors; their individual and social experiences; learning; encounters and action, which contributes positively to the development of knowledge, competences, and interests.

The structure of the monograph includes theoretical, methodological, and empirical layers. The work is preceded by an Introduction, and closes with a Conclusion and Appendices. First presented were theoretical considerations, which form the basis for empirical research. Selected contemporary theories and concepts of learning were discussed, trying to show how they can be applied to the format of online education, including an attempt to understand the situation and the role of the learner. Also important is the analysis of scientific work and contribution to the development of a theory of online education of theoreticians and researchers from the last few decades. The third chapter is devoted to selected individual factors that determine the online learning process. The state of research was presented not as a separate chapter, but integrated into the addressed issues.

The research problem required multiple approaches, which could only be obtained by using various research methods and accepting their mutual complementarity. I present the results of quantitative research, in which I use the pedagogical experiment method, which enabled the analysis of the influence of individual factors on learning outcomes in different form so education (offline, online), expressed in the form of increase and decrease of knowledge.

In the sixth chapter, I use qualitative research to try to capture selected contexts of the experience of learning over the internet acquired by students, and to use this experience as a background for constructing their image. The seventh chapter complements my investigations with visual presentations made using the collage technique and the narrative of the online students who participated in the study, showing their meaning.

Emerging from the analyses is an image of a student who is trying to adapt to the new conditions of learning, still in need of guidance and support of the instructor and other participants in online classes, aware of their own imperfections, willing to learn and acquire new experiences. My analyses led me to formulate conclusions presented under each subsections concerning research. It is impossible to present all of these conclusions here, hence I will only draw attention to a few of them:

1. The form of conducting classes (stationary, remote) was not a reason for differentiating the results of learning and teaching, as well as for the decrease of knowledge in the group of pedagogy students under consideration. The obtained learning outcomes were comparable.
2. It turned out that the higher the level of the systematic skills of the respondents, the greater the increase of their knowledge. Therefore, if we absorb didactic materials on a regular basis, as a result of systematic work, then we have an opportunity to obtain better results.
3. The results obtained indicate that the assessment of the degree of need to take classes in the form of e-learning correlates significantly statistically with the effect of participation in classes in the form of increased information skills. Respondents who assessed the need to take e-learning classes as higher, more often believed that participation in such classes resulted in increased information skills.
4. Students emphasized the importance of the teacher's substantive and methodical presence in the online course. They believed that the teacher is a key figure in this format, because he or she initiates, coordinates, and verifies the entire educational undertaking, which increased the chance of success.
5. Students in virtual classrooms face new problems not only of an educational, but also socio-psychological and tool-related or

technical nature. The new form of instruction requires them to acquire new knowledge and skills related to learning in a virtual environment. The respondents themselves pointed to the need for self-improvement, for confronting their weaknesses, and for changing their habits and even mental disposition. This may testify to the willingness and need of continuous personal development on their part, using various forms of education. Students drew attention to the necessary observation on the part of the instructor, getting to know the learners, their interests, and ways of learning. They key for them was contact with the teacher and other people in the group, the sense of their presence, as well as the teacher's design of online classes and correctly developed digital materials, as well as coming up with various initiatives, asking questions, and posing problems.

6. Online education has a justified presence in higher education as one of the forms of didactic work, which should be accompanied by stationary ways of acquiring knowledge, skills, and social competences, as well as their evaluation. A flexible selection of the proportion of the curriculum implemented using traditional and remote forms should be conditioned by the current needs of the learners and the potential benefits of such an approach.
7. There is a need to intensify activities at universities in the area of disseminating online education, and to take into account the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of learners necessary for remote education.

The work *Mozaikowy wizerunek uczących się w uniwersyteckim kształceniu on-line* [*A Mosaic Image of Learners in University Online Education*] is the first monograph that deals with the characteristics of an online learner from such a broad perspective. Taking into account previous work on this issue (e.g. R. M. Palloff, K. Pratt, *The Virtual Student. A profile and guide to working with online learners*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco 2003; H. Hills, *Individual Preferences in e-Learning*, Gower, Burlington 2003), I tried to create a relatively consistent, though multifaceted picture of a student learning online. Due to the vast amount of acquired research material, I see the need to continue and develop the investigations undertaken in this work.

The monograph is dedicated to scientists and researchers who lead to theoretical and empirical research in this area and to all people who are engaged in the methodic online teaching, the preparation of e-learning platforms resources and the creation of e-learning courses. The considerations developed in the book also promote active participation of students and teachers in distance learning courses.

### ***About the Author***

***Wioletta Kwiatkowska***, assistant professor at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. Member of Polish Pedagogical Association and Polish Cognitivist Society. Her scientific interests revolve around education online, teaching methodology and individual differences in learning. She is the author of the book *Mozaikowy wizerunek uczących się w kształceniu on-line* (2018) (The mosaic image of learners in online learning), *Wykład w kształceniu na odległość* (2011) (Lecture in distance education) and co-author and coeditor of other books, including *Aktywność uczących się w przestrzeni Internetu* (2014) (Activity of learners in the Internet space), *W kręgu edukacji informatycznej i medialnej* (2010) (Some Thoughts on IT and Media Education) and also other numerous articles published in scientific journals. Currently, the author focuses on women and IT from an ethnographic perspective.

