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Feeling affectively connected in computer mediated communication: a proposal of dimensions to capture the relevance of social presence for effective learning in online discussions

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Aims

◎ Analyse how *social presence* allows the participants to increase the meaningfulness of their learning process. ([Rourke, Anderson, Garrison & Archer, 2001; Garrison & Archer, 2005; Gunawardena & Duphorne 2000; Swan & Shih, 2006; Tu & McIsaac, 2002](#))

◎ Proposal of dimensions likely to define and illustrate *social presence* in a collaborative learning situation

Starting point: socioconstructivist perspective of teaching and learning

- ◎ Learning is a process of sense-making and meaning construction.
- ◎ Learning is a social process: meaning is constructed and shared among participants.
- ◎ The teacher has a central role in this process (teaching presence).
- ◎ *Aids among peers are another source of educational influence (teaching presence of peers).*

(Coll, 2004; Coll & Onrubia, 1997; Derry & alt. 2000; Kozulin, 1998; Mercer & Coll, 1994; Newman, Griffin & Cole, 1989; Tharp & alt., 2000; Vigotsky, 1979; Wertsch, 1985)

Social presence and knowledge construction processes in virtual environments

- ◎ ***Social presence*** is crucial to promote learning, yet, very complex, since multidimensional.
- ◎ ***Social presence*** might be related to the participants' satisfaction and to a lower level of drop-offs.
- ◎ ***Social presence*** must be put also in relation to ***teaching presence*** and ***cognitive presence*** of the participants.

(Rourke, Anderson, Garrison & Archer, 2001; Garrison & Archer, 2005; Gunawardena & Duphorne 2000; Swan & Shih, 2006; Tu & McIsaac, 2002).

Questions

- ① **What affective, emotional and relational aspects can be related to *social presence* in virtual learning environments?**
- ① **What dimensions allow us to empirically describe and analyse these aspects in collaborative learning?**
- ① **Is it possible to identify some sort of emergent pattern or profile from the data?**

Method (I)

© **Context**

A Higher Education course on “Educational Psychology”, School of Teacher Education -UB; one teaching module on the subject '*inclusive school, individual differences, and pupils' diversity*'.

© **Participants**

A teacher and her 17 students in a blended course of Educational Psychology in a School of Teacher Education working in teams of 3-4 students.

Method (II)

◎ **The task**

- ◎ They use the platform Moodle to communicate and collaborate.
- ◎ The students must elaborate two assignments on the module's topic (synthesis of theoretic concepts, classroom observation and analysis).
- ◎ They work for 3 weeks with the teacher's direct support and 3 more weeks without it.

Analysis: procedure, units, data

⊙ **Multilevel model of content analysis**

Combining individual and group-level perspectives

(Chiu & Khoo, 2005; Arvaja et al. 2007, Bram de Wever et al. 2007).

⊙ *Basic unit of analysis*: any posting fragment carrying any manifestation of social presence.

⊙ *Contextual unit of analysis*: individual posting within a discussion thread.

⊙ **All the individual postings of the participants were analysed:**

⊙ **Team 1 >> 40 postings**

⊙ **Team 2 >> 75 postings**

Dimensions and categories of analysis (I)

⊙ D1. The individual as performer of the task

- ⊙ Competence
- ⊙ Incompetence
- ⊙ Interest or satisfaction
- ⊙ Lack of interest or satisfaction

⊙ D2. The individual as team participant

- ⊙ Willingness to collaborate
- ⊙ Unwillingness to collaborate
- ⊙ Neutral expressions concerning personal implication in collaboration with the team

Dimensions and categories of analysis (II)

⊙ D3. The individual as a team member in relation to the team work

- ⊙ Team's competence and satisfaction in front of success
- ⊙ Team's competence and positive expectations in front of failure
- ⊙ Team's incompetence and dissatisfaction in front of failure

⊙ D4. The individual as a team member in relation with other members

- ⊙ Group identity
- ⊙ Interpersonal communication
- ⊙ Belonging to the group

Results (individual level –I)

	D1				D2			D3			D4			PS	
G1	CO %	IC %	SA %	IS %	FV %	DF %	NE %	CS %	CI %	II %	IG %	RE %	PG %	Fr.	%
P1.1	50	33,3	0	0	16,7	0	25	13,6	26,7	0	25	36	25	30	24,5
P2.1	0	33,3	0	100	33,3	0	25	31,8	26,7	0	21,9	20	50	32	26,2
P3.1	0	33,3	0	0	16,7	0	0	9,09	6,67	0	3,13	0	0	7	5,73
P4.1	50	0	0	0	33,3	0	50	45,5	40	100	50	44	25	53	43,4
G2	CO %	IC %	SA %	IS %	FV %	DF %	NE %	CS %	CI %	II %	IG %	RE %	PG %	Fr.	%
P1.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8,33	0	0	66,7	16,7	0	4	8
P2.2	100	0	50	75	54,5	0	0	8,33	33,3	50	33,3	50	50	21	42
P3.2	0	100	50	25	45,5	0	0	83,3	66,7	50	0	33,3	50	26	50

Results (individual level -II)

Phase 1

Phase 2

	G1.4									
	D1		D2		D3			D4		
	co	ic	fv	ne	cs	ci	ii	ig	re	pg
3					XR			XR	XR	
6								XR	XR	
7						XR			XR	
9					XR			XR	XR	
10						XR		XR	XR	
12	XR		XR		XR	XR		XR	XR	
15			XR	XR		XR			XR	
17								XR	XR	
20					XR					
26										
33				XR				XR		
38			XR		XR		XR		XR	
39						XR		XR		
41					XR			XR	XR	
46		XR	XR							XR
55			XR		XR			XR		
57								XR		
59					XR			XR		
71							XR	XR	XR	

Results (individual level -III)

		G2.3								
		D1			D2	D3			D4	
		ic	sa	is	fv	cs	ci	ii	re	pg
Phase 1	2									
	4					EM				
	5									
	8									
	9								EM	
	10					EM			EM	
	15					EM				
	18									EM
	19						EM			
	20			EM		EM				
Phase 2	23					EM				
	24				EM					
	26									
	29	EM				EM				
	33				EM					
	34	EM			EM	EM		EM		
	37				EM	EM				
	38		EM				EM			
	40				EM					

Results (team level)

Table 1

	D1	D2	D3	D4
G1	5,08	13,55	33,05	48,30
G2	22,91	22,91	35,41	22,91

Table 2

	D1				D2			D3			D4		
	co	ic	sa	is	fv	df	ne	cs	ci	ii	ig	re	pg
G1	1,64	2,46	0	0,82	9,84	0	3,28	18	12,3	1,64	26,2	20,5	3,28
G4	6	4	4	8	22	0	0	24	6	4	6	12	4

Conclusions I

- ◎ **Access to study how the participants make sense of the learning task and the learning process, how they confront difficulties and success, as well as their contribution to a positive social climate for collaboration.**

- ◎ **Two perspectives: the individual by herself and the individual as a team member in relation with the peers.**

Conclusions II

- ◎ Global account for the whole teaching and learning process.**
- ◎ Longitudinal look at whole activity in order to draw the evolution of social presence along the learning process.**
- ◎ Explore emergent *'profiles'* of social presence, both individually and at a team level.**
- ◎ Interpret the results of the analysis of social presence in relation to the analysis of the teaching presence and the cognitive presence.**

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THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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