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**AUTHENTICATION OF PRESENCE IN ONLINE COURSES
AIMED AT BUILDING SELF-REALIZATION COMPETENCIES**

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Abstract

This article presents the results of a phenomenological analysis of the reflexive reports of students from a massive open online course (MOOC) “Vocational Psychology”, using it as a case of distance online courses aimed at the formation of personal competences. The main purpose of the research was to understand the experience of introducing and interpreting reflexive data, and to clarify the purposefulness of reflexive forms “in the body” of distance courses. The qualitative analysis revealed four temporal characteristics (directions) of the presence of students in the environment of e-learning, indicating the quality of a student’s interaction with the course (authors, teachers and the content) communicated and moderated via information technology: outward and towards the past, outward and towards the future, inward and towards the past, inward and towards the future. A reflective practice was introduced in the course allowing the monitoring of authentication trends, that is, to see how different individuals’ presences, of teachers and students, are consistent in common for the whole of educational events. The article continues the authors’ research project on the problem of authentication in psychological and educational practices. The concept of involvement based on the modern ideology of education that requires the priority of authentication over identification and motivation. Currently, authentication techniques are being intensively developed, including directed and controlled reflection.

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Keywords: Reflection, presence, authentication, identity, personal competences, e-learning.



1. Introduction

In modern society and education, by means of both natural and ideological mechanisms, there is a growing tendency to increase the time of presence of students, teachers and materials in the environment of online courses. It assumes that an increasing percentage of information and educational effects will be concentrated in the interaction environment mediated by modern digital technologies, up to their quantitative dominance over the common interactions. It is also assumed that the involvement of subjects of education in e-learning will increase. At the same time the psychological nature of human presence in the online learning environment is barely studied, and the desired and the expected understanding often significantly exceeds the real understanding, real significance and effectiveness. Due to the rapid implementation of new techniques the understanding of what students actually feel and experience in online education cannot be formed naturally and requires intensive study including the introduction of techniques for gathering and analyzing new types of data. We define this problem as a problem of authentication that is the clarification of the quality of human presence in the educational environment. To perform the authentication of presence is possible through the analysis of reflexive data, because reflection shows the situation on the whole: it reflects the learner's activity and the learning environment. The initial stage of this kind of research is the phenomenological analysis of the texts expressing the experience of students of online courses. When enough data is accumulated and when the basic semantic characteristics are explicated, it is possible to start quantitative research projects and apply technological solutions.

This article presents the results of the phenomenological analysis of the reflexive statements of the students of a massive open online course “Vocational Psychology”, developed at the Tomsk State University (TSU) and implemented on the www.coursera.org platform.

2. Problem Statement

There is a growing tendency for modern education to mobilize personal potential, to build an educational process based on independence, identity, and self-organization of students. The content of the courses and, accordingly, the time of the students' presence in the course shifts from traditional classrooms to the electronic environment. The intensity of this process does not give a clear understanding of the quality of students' presence in the electronic educational environment during the development and implementation of courses. Therefore, it is necessary to study the quality of presence during the educational process and when a course is in process. Educational platforms often imply simple statistics and rough calculations of the amount of the registered students, number of visits, approvals or disapprovals, and students' performance based on the accomplished assignments. But this kind of information does not say anything about what actually happens to a person in an electronic educational environment. Firstly, students are individual and average data about all of them say little about a particular person. Secondly, such characteristics of presence are easy to imitate. We propose to use reflexive data to perform the authentication and to understand the quality of presence in the electronic environment. This allows to analyze the data and processes at varying degrees of depth and complexity, and to implement systemic and interpretative approaches.

3. Research Questions

Digital and network (information) technologies are expected to facilitate interactions between people, to resolve restrictions related to geographical, economic, and administrative barriers, improving the accessibility of both network objects (information resources) and subjects (people making decisions and initiating communications), which leads to improving the quality of human life. However, despite numerous advantages there is still an open question about what, in fact, we gain when the education is shifted to the online environment? How complete, alive, and holistic is the presence of students in the educational course? Do we perceive some educational resource as an educational event?

Unfortunately, these questions today are not political priorities; they give away to pragmatic considerations, desires, and readiness to invest in new technologies, to win in the situation of redistribution of roles in education, etc. There is no doubt that at some level this issue will become inevitable and, in some sense, it is inevitable already. For example, for copyright holders of a distance learning course seeking to monetize their educational potential, it is important to understand why their students must accomplish the course, pass the assignments, keep deadlines, and buy certificates; what does the access to the course really mean to students?

The use of electronic educational systems and distance courses is becoming more widespread in the system of higher education, changing not only the structure of curricula and the educational process (the requirements of state educational programs and standards (Budenkova, 2016)), but also creating a new intentional, intonational basis of human presence in the educational experience (Hurd, 2007). At the same time, the main element of informatization is the technical transformation of the educational environment: when the system as a whole or some of its elements is shifted into a virtual environment, which gives the subjects of education more freedom. For example, students can build their own individual learning paths (Sakovich & Pavlova, 2015); educational organizations can expand their audience, create and maintain their reputation. Technical solutions, however, must be preceded by meaningful solutions, for which it is necessary to understand reality, and not just expectations. It should be taken into consideration that in the process of transformation of the educational environment subjects of the educational process also change and begin to play other roles and therefore they need a different feedback. All this requires posing a question regarding the quality of subjects' presence in the educational environment. The problem is finding answers to these questions by means of phenomenological analyses of students' reflexive reports.

4. Purpose of the Study

This study is part of the research program on the problem of authentication of presence in modern educational environments, which has been implemented at TSU for several years. This article presents a phenomenological analysis of the reflexive opinions of students of a massive open online course aimed at the formation of personal competencies. Courses aimed at the formation of personal competencies have their own specifics, implying an active involvement from students, their contribution to the educational situation. In addition, such courses are not aimed at one particular result, but imply a multitude of results at different levels. Therefore, the degree of the achievement of the results does not give relevant information about the quality of presence. We assume that the clarification of the quality of students' presence in the

environment of the course by means of studying their reflection allows identifying fundamentals for improving the educational environment and for intensifying specific educational processes.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Materials and data.

The design of our research could be called a natural experiment. The experimental situation is the online course “Vocational Psychology”, developed at TSU and implemented on the www.coursera.org platform. This course along with other courses was integrated into the system of basic and additional education, which brings the issue of its place, role and the conditions that meet the learning objectives. The content of the course contains a comprehensive idea of a special quality of reflection related to mindsets for calling and coercion, to the formation of sensitivity to imperatives of vocation. Briefly, this idea could be expressed by the aphorism: “The one who does not live by vocation will live by coercion”, and we could add: “until he starts living by vocation”. The structure of the course includes reflexive forms in which students are invited to reflect on their experience of presence in the course. These forms were the main tools of obtaining the data. The data were processed by means of phenomenological analysis. Phenomenological interpretations were grouped into four semantic areas, formed by the dichotomies of the past and the future, the internal and the external. In the result we gained phenomenological descriptions of the meanings of the students’ presence in this course. Moreover, the students’ meanings were compared with the goals, expectations and meanings of the course authors.

5.2. Methods and measures.

The main fundamental method the research team used is the significant events research method which was developed in the second half of the XX century (R. Elliott, L. Timulak, E. Slatick, etc.). The method was elaborated further by modern scientists who also developed special forms for collecting reflexive data (J. MacLeod, M. Cooper, O.V. Lukyanov, A.A. Stipek). The reflexive forms allow adapting the data collection procedures to the specific conditions of the educational environment, including those which could be introduced into the e-course environment.

Currently, the research team mainly uses qualitative methods to interpret reflexive data such as: thematic analysis and phenomenological analysis. With the accumulation of data, we also proceed with the quantitative analysis, selecting appropriate mathematical approaches. A number of articles have already been published on this issue (Stipek & Lukyanov, 2017; Shushanikova & Lukyanov, 2016; Lutz, 2009).

6. Findings

The results of the study on the authentication of presence in the educational environment are the correspondences (of meanings) that are identified when comparing expectations (declarations) usually coming from the authors of the course and teachers, and the reflective opinions of students about the experience of their presence in the course.

Whereas our project implies a perspective for e-learning in general, and not just for improving courses aimed at developing personal competencies, we should pay some attention to the analysis of the declarations and the experience of using digital technologies.

Modern research projects in the field of e-education are mainly aimed at comparative evaluation of the effectiveness of traditional and e-learning approaches to the formation of special and general cultural competences. The results of these studies sometimes support traditional methods, and sometimes innovative and information methods. The evaluation often depends on the method and criteria of evaluation, determined by the position of the researcher (Brinson, 2015). The question of the quality of presence in the educational process is relevant because it reveals psychological dimensions, allowing to reconcile the objective characteristics with the reflexive data.

In current mostly foreign studies aimed at identifying various aspects of “social presence” and its imitation in virtual educational environment much attention is paid to the analysis of the temporal characteristics of communication and psychological distance. The concept of “social presence” that emerged in the third quarter of the last century (Hurd, 2007; Aragon, 2003) is of particular importance in studies devoted to distance learning. The phenomenon of social presence reveals a complex structure, including not only the characteristics of interaction, but also various elements of the organization of the educational environment (Aragon, 2003; Tu & McIsaac, 2010).

The problem of authentication of presence in the educational environment implies multidimensionality and chronotopy. At this stage, we have to admit that individual studies and publications can be devoted to identifying certain aspects of presence. As data accumulates, it will be possible to move on to more systematic research.

In one of our previous studies (Lukyanov & Shushanikova, 2015), we performed the analysis of the experience of existence (presence) in the distance learning environment using a phenomenological interpretation of the reflexive reports of students. It was found that one of the specific factors of distance learning is the psychological distance between the process and the content of the course on the one hand and between its participants on the other (Lukyanov & Shushanikova, 2015). In this study, we focused on analyzing the temporal characteristics of the presence, on clarifying the understanding of what meanings are revealed by the students regarding their internal and external world, past and future.

Many scientists, in particular, A.D. Korol' indicate that a dialogue is a necessary condition for emotional-value interaction in education, in which the online education has risks of disappearing due to the temporary incoherence of meanings of the participants. According to Korol this fact negatively affects the process of formation of a student's personality (Korol', 2011).

Basic fundamentals for understanding the role of a dialogue for a person are revealed in the works by O. Rosenstock-Huussy. In his philosophy speech is a means of establishing peace between people of different times, speech is a necessary condition for the formation of any general cultural competence, personality, human involvement in the social process, creative activity, and interaction in the social environment (Rosenstock-Huussy, 2008).

As a tool for categorizing and systematizing the experience of the presence in the distance course, we applied the binary dichotomy past-future and internal-external. According to O. Rosenstock-Huussy's philosophy of a dialogue every human argument, expressed in language, refers necessarily to one of the directions of presence: inward and towards the past, inward and towards the future, outward and towards the past, and outward and towards the future (Rosenstock-Huussy, 2008). A man himself is the center of these directions and is called to keep himself in the tension and integrity of these times. A man is called to

experience the past and the future as the present (the present, the real past and the future), and the inner and outer as complete, truly his outer and inner. We assume that e-education should strive to create authentic conditions for the presence of a person not only in his own, electronic environment, but also in real life.

The *hypothesis* of our research is: in the online course, in which an adequate experience of reflection is introduced, the presence of students is sufficiently authentic. This hypothesis cannot be yet proved quantitatively, because it requires specification not only regarding the problem of presence in online learning in general but also in each course in particular and even regarding each student. The study was designed with an aim to fill this hypothesis with meanings and understandings based on real experience.

The reflexive forms were composed in such a way that the students who responded to them were oriented into the four directions: outward and towards the past, and outward and towards the future, inward and towards the past, inward and towards the future. It was assumed that the study of the reality of these directions would be performed not only on the scale of the course, but also on the scale of the events included in the course. Events could be of different scales, for example, performing the assignments, watching video lectures, studying a particular topic, a text or some other course materials.

The meaning of the phenomenological interpretation in the context of the four temporal directions is to assess how complete the presence of students is and in what directions the risks of existential vacuum, existential frustration, incompleteness, and lack of presence could emerge. Tables 01, 02, 03 and 04 present examples from students' reflexive reports, topics of reflection and phenomenological interpretation with regard to these four temporal directions.

Table 01. Outward and towards the past

Reflexive statements	The topic of reflection	Interpretation
"I remembered how much music can inspire and cheer me up. I even went to a concert and enjoyed music quite differently" "I could not listen to that music, it was too heavy for me, even depressing"	Reflection on the results of activity	The students were given an assignment to listen to the Rachmaninov's second concert, to read the historical background of the concert, and to reflect on their impressions. This is a variant of the task for simple reflection -- a reflection of an action. In this reflexive text, we see how the student renews his attitude to the world based on his past experience: "I remembered", "I enjoyed". It is important to understand what happens to the attitude of the student to the world. If the task does not "fall" into the reflexive field (that is, into the outward past), the student does not manage to use the time of performing this task as a basis for the educational event. Negative variants of reflection are more likely evidence of a negative attitude, rather than a reflection of an educational event. In this regard, it could be assumed that the tasks related to actions require alternatives, there must be several variants of assignments. Online educational platforms are limited in this direction. Alternative tasks significantly impede the automation of control of the task performance.
"The lectures of the course made me think about those things that were not previously in the focus of my thoughts" "In general, I thought about how a lying speech could spoil life. It was a long time ago. The study of this topic confirmed my thoughts, made this issue relevant again and even pleased me"	Reflection on the course environment: Course as a source of discovery and thinking Course as a source of change	A major part the course consists of the video-lectures. It is important to understand the specifics of these lectures, and how they differ from other types of video materials. Reflexive reports show that the essential points of any MOOC video-lectures are their specific exactness, focusing, and customization.

<p>“I seriously considered meanings of words; the reaction of others to my ‘verbal gifts’ became unexpectedly pleasant for me” “The texts are not easy, they teach attentiveness and patience” “Unfortunately, I feel a sense of burden, because I do not understand the goals of this course. I feel as if I am wandering in the darkness” “The structure of the course is not quite clear. Lots of questions arise from the very beginning: why this topic is being discussed; what the intentions of the authors are; what results I should expect from performing the tasks “The information I gained in this course helped me to expand the boundaries of perception, to open one more facet” “This is not what I expected from the course. It did not help me to move forward. Although some of the materials were interesting”</p>	<p>Course as a source of events</p> <p>Reflection on the reasons for the course (ineffectiveness</p> <p>Expression of misunderstanding of the objectives of the course and its content / disagreement with them</p> <p>Expression of the usefulness of some elements of the course</p> <p>Criticism</p>	<p>Negative reflection, in this case, is more informative than positive. In cases where focusing is not possible, lectures make it difficult to stay in the course and frustrates students. Perhaps the structure of the course should have some rehabilitation practices, which would direct students to those assignments and texts that would help them to establish or restore the correct focus. Students with a rich educational experience (undergraduates, postgraduates) say that they ‘get’ the content not from the first listening, but from the second or third. At the same time, their past experience gradually ‘rises’, and then the meanings of the lectures become clear.</p>
<p>“I was interested in the topic of punishment. I have children, for me, it is very important. Thank you” “I realized that in many spheres of my life I live by coercion. I understood the reason for my misfortunes. Some tasks that were given in this course, I apply in my daily life now. For example, regarding music and an exercise to feel happy. When I accomplished the drawing assignment I realized that drawing calms me down and helps me to listen to my inner world.”</p>	<p>Expression of the importance of the course content in relation to the life of a person</p>	<p>The course is aimed at the formation of specific competencies for self-realization that is why an important aspect of mastering the course is the integration of the reflected experience and the application of the gained knowledge into life. This involves the emerging outward past, which was being created. Some topics or elements of the course that appear in the statements of the respondents are the main points of mastering the material and forming relevant competencies. This justifies “classical” tasks in the course, that is, tasks which repeat, reproduce classical practices, algorithms, means of self-realization.</p>
<p>“The task regarding the gift of words brought sincere joy to the person I gave the gift to” “[Completing the course assignments led] to positive reactions and feedback from my close people”</p>	<p>Reflection on external events</p>	<p>These statements relate to a creative activity consisting in “making a gift out of words”. The course, which includes assignments that contain external (directed to the world) activity, acts as an initiator of external events, through which a correspondence is established between the received knowledge and its practical application and the formation of an emotionally-motivated attitude to the learning process. This could be defined as a trust-building process. That is why these activities should be given at the beginning of a course.</p>

The analysis of the reflexive experience of MOOC students has not yet led us to a sufficiently complete description of the meanings of presence in the e-learning environment. Nevertheless, our studies allow formulating recommendations regarding the development of training content for courses which imply the emergence of self-realization competencies.

The presence directed to the outward and towards the past is organized by tasks for simple reflection (reflection of actions, impressions). It is important that the action is related to the past experience of the students, or that the students are able to connect the activity with their past experiences. The experience of the outward past (trust experience) should be organized in the initial part of the course using “classical” tasks, reproducing effective and simple practices.

Table 02. Outward and towards the future

Reflexive statements	The topic of reflection	Interpretation
“I would like to have some feedback regarding the assignments I accomplished”	Reflection on the course environment Suggestions for the course	These kinds of opinion indicate that the student forms his temporal perspective together with the authors of the course. Often enough the authors do not actively interact with the students on the platform. After all, distance courses were created to reduce teaching duty and to free the students from dependence and constant interaction with teachers. It could be assumed that one of the conditions for intensifying distance learning and increasing its role in the educational process is the introduction of a new professional activity connected with feedback generators. It does not have to be the authors of the course, but they must be professionals in the topic.
“I began to pay more attention to those actions that give me positive emotions, I started to lose extra weight because my emotions switched from eating to activity” “[I experienced in connection with the course] disappointment. I have a feeling that the information is irrelevant to the topic, unnecessary. But I plan to accomplish the course, I am curious how it will end” “Something [related to the course] made me write, read, and search. In the end, I hope to understand something new”	Reflection on external changes Hope for results, expectations	The student forms the dominant of his attention with regard to temporal perspective. In this statement the perspective is short-term. Perhaps, the course should be built with the aim of forming short-term perspectives. Unlike classical educational courses, which are created as monuments and designed to form long-term perspective, distance courses are not monuments but are train tickets, which are sometimes free. And the ‘train’ must stop at train stations. Negative assessment, disappointment, accompanied by hope, points to the future and indicates a certain credit of trust, which serves as the fundamental to stay tuned.

In creating a distance learning system there is a risk to reduce everything to technical aspects, for example, to reduce learning conditions to a timeframe (to deadlines). If we pay attention to how the temporal perspective of students is being formed, we could see that the presence of students in the online course is determined not so much by the future as by the present. The temporal perspective is very short, and in this case, the student’s attention cannot be ‘bought’ by certificates or other distant meanings. The stability of the presence is ensured by the significance of the course to the students, and not by some other benefits.

Table 03. Inward and towards the past

Reflexive statements	The topic of reflection	Interpretation
“I reconsidered my point of view regarding punishment and execution (although I do not quite agree with the description of what was given in the lecture, however, this could be explained with my perception of execution (violence, murder)”	Reflection on sensations and impressions	This reflexive statement is connected with a fragment of a video-lecture, in which we briefly discuss a very complicated phenomenon. The genre of video-lectures is not meant to give a complete description of a studied phenomenon; they do provide sequential arguments, but only final statements and a summary. Students are supposed to work with their fundamentals and convictions. This reflexive statement is a good example showing that beliefs are indeed being revised. Former beliefs do not disappear, they are placed in the field of reflection, and therefore, they are ready to be reviewed.
“It was clear to me a long time ago that the information flow (speech, language, text, music) is a means of internal adjustment for the environment, and is	Reflection on relations and attitudes	Like in the previous statement, in this case, it is clear that beliefs and attitudes are being revised, but in their own way, originally. The lecturer did not talk about the “information flow” (especially

<p>not just a means of conveying information. This lecture made me remember this thought and I would like to start using this knowledge”</p>		<p>language) being “a means of internal adjustment for the environment”. This idea belongs to the student. The student reflects on the lecture and recalls this idea from the past. The student ‘stays’ in the environment of his experience and thoughts.</p>
<p>“I thought about the topic and understood a meaning of the words a little differently than I used to. I rarely think about these things in everyday life, and when I worked with them I almost never considered their profound meaning”</p>	<p>Reflection on thinking</p>	<p>Such reflections could be classified as simple or direct interpretations. The respondent talks about his experience of performing the task. The task was aimed precisely at “thinking”. Reflection more accurately shows whether assignments and lectures are perceived correctly and whether they achieve their goal. Such reflexive statements bring us to the conclusion that the imperatives of the course meet the goals.</p>
<p>“For me, it was a discovery that coercion and calling interact with each other. There is nothing in the pure state. And to find your calling, you need to go through coercion”</p> <p>“The most important ‘discovery’ for me personally was the state of language and speech. A lot of slang and swear words clogged my memory and decreased my brain performance. Now I’m actively working on this matter”</p>	<p>Reflection on discoveries, obtained knowledge: Regarding the external</p> <p>Regarding oneself</p>	<p>Like in the previous paragraph, the respondent reflects on what is explicitly indicated in the course. It is important to note that the students qualify the positions on which the course is built as their own discoveries. They not only perceive and accept information, but they also discover and open it, that is, they identify themselves with an educational event. This could be an important aspect in the understanding of the intonation of a distance course. Although such reflections might seem to be very simple because they do not indicate critical thinking.</p> <p>The reflection on one’s state of being, or on the state of one’s language and speech, is also a good proof of the reality of the assignment and of the receptivity to imperatives of the course. The course directly stated the importance of healthy language and speech.</p>
<p>“I expressed an important message for me to my close person using his language, I wrote a fairy tale (which I had never done before), and learned about a couple of new books to read”</p>	<p>Reflection on the activity (on the accomplished)</p>	<p>The authors suggested to students perform several assignments of the course in their daily life. This is a common technique in distance learning when the task involves an experiment. But how to check these tasks? It is obvious that such tasks are important and bring positive educational effects. Technically it is difficult to check these assignments, and the reflexive data, in this case, is the only adequate option.</p>
<p>“I was thinking about starting new supportive habits: music to form the right mood. I also thought about a new hobby: to write texts as a useful approach to self-organization”</p>	<p>Intentions</p>	<p>The multidimensionality of the texts in the course content is criticized by some students and at the same time is very useful for the others. In this case, the respondent demonstrates that the course with an imperative to pay attention to oneself and one’s own life could be useful in forming personal competences.</p>

Summarizing the meanings revealed in the context of the direction of reflection inward and towards the past, we could state that this mode of presence allows authenticating the accuracy of assignments and messages, the availability and provocative wording.

Table 04. Inward and towards the future

Reflexive statements	The topic of reflection	Interpretation
“[My own efforts have led me] to the desire to accomplish the course”	Reflection on impressions	In modern demagoguery, it is common to incline students to perceive their life and learning as projects. We insist that a distance course is not a project which ends with the final test and a certificate. The distance course is the path, and in the case of our course, it is the beginning of the path, the initiation. And each student has his own path and the results are also different. We should not talk just about the results. There should be many different results. This reflexive statement shows the need to form the initial part of the course not in a motivating form, but in a form of identification so that a student understands that this is his path, not someone else’s, and it is not a project.
“My inner conflict regarding the fact that I was very tired of my family disappeared. I realized that this is normal when the family not only gives energy but also takes it” “Listening to and reading materials about the influence of music made me think about music in my daily life; I need to consider what music should surround me”	Reflection on internal changes: Changes in the way of thinking Changes in attitudes and perception	If we talk about personal competencies we must consider changes in attitudes. The course should have some psychotherapeutic and educational effect. And this is possible to achieve. The first statement indicates the awareness of stereotyped, inadequate, and egocentric attitudes. The second statement indicates changes in attitudes towards the environment, and the intention to improve it in accordance with the respondent’s identity.
“My reflections made me think and consider more carefully the pattern “think-express-why in these words”, and, accordingly, consider more attentively the words of my partners in conversations” “It was clear to me a long time ago that the information flow (speech, language, text, music) is a means of internal adjustment for the environment, and is not just a means of conveying information. This lecture made me remember this thought and I would like to start using this knowledge”	Reflection on behaviour: Changes in behaviour and its patterns Readiness to change and take an action	Such reflexive statements in a literal sense show the formation of personal competences. They could be directly compared with the expectations declared by the authors of the course.

In general, the mode of reflection directed inward and towards the future shows to what extent the presence in the electronic course is educational and therapeutic. This, of course, is not the main objective for every course, but firstly, a sense of frustration in this mode of presence could prevent the student from staying in the educational environment and accomplish his path. Secondly, if we believe in the dream of modern technocrats about the fact that e-learning will “conquer” the traditional forms, then the issue of the educational effect of the course will become relevant.

7. Conclusion

Qualitative research and analysis of cases do not allow making evidence-based statements. Our research was aimed at understanding the experience of introducing and interpreting reflexive data, clarifying the hypothesis about the purposefulness of reflexive forms “in the body” of distance courses. The generalized hypothesis that distance courses aimed at the formation of personal competencies could be authenticated through the analysis of reflexive statements, in this study the following points were clarified:

- Even with the reflexive statements being simple in context and structure they are useful because they indicate the temporal characteristics of the presence of a student in the electronic educational environment. The accumulation of such data makes it possible to assess the integrity and completeness of the presence of the student in the course and enhancing the risky modes of presence with the participation of teachers in the form of discussions and assistance. We are able to form more precise recommendations regarding structure, assistance and improvement of the communication services by the analysis of the quality of presence through the reflection reports that provide new data along with the existing data based on assessments and technical information.
- We recommend reflexive forms should become a required element of distance education, at least for some category of distance courses. Without clear understanding what is happening with the presence of students in the course environment, distance learning risks becoming a system of technical imitation of educational activities and risks losing the most important point that is characteristic for intensive and adequate education: the dialogue between the teacher and the student and the student with the material, which in electronic education does not happen directly but by information technologies. The moderation with information technologies implies many inconsistencies: in time (the authors of the course and the implementation systems of a course live in different times), in convictions (the course does not imply ideological training, but simply “immerses” in the teacher’s speech), in the intensity of presence (the authors of the course give less attention to it, whereas students are new each time and their renewal could be much more intense than a teacher could withstand), etc. The number of inconsistencies will grow as e-learning develops.
- Further study of this kind and the accumulation of reflexive data could facilitate the development of e-learning not only in technical terms but also in accordance with the achievements and requirements of the humanities.]

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