Using Instagram in Classroom: Didactic recommendations and guidelines to develop an educational E-portfolio

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Abstract: **Instagram as an educational resource allows a wide variety of actions such as uploading photos, videos, audios, live broadcasting, generating texts, sharing information, promoting alternative evaluation processes that allow respecting the principles of continuous evaluation, contributing to collaborative work by promoting interactions and minimizing space and time problems, responding to different learning styles, generating universal learning designs, and promoting creativity, among other aspects. Although the use of Instagram in education is not currently widespread, many proposals can be observed which employ this social network in different ways. This paper presents the use of Instagram as an e-portfolio through a framework consisting of 4 phases. In addition, it concludes by highlighting the many benefits such as making learning more explicit for both teachers and students; helping reflection, self-knowledge, and critical spirit; promoting continuous assessment of learning or contributing to the sense of personal achievement, among others.**

Keywords: **E-portfolio, social networks, Instagram, education, continuous evaluation, formative evaluation.**

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades there has been a major revolution in the world of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). As a result, digital resources have impacted all sectors of society, even becoming one of the most present elements in the daily life of all people [1]. Among the new developments, social networks have become a very present resource in the daily life of the subjects [2].

These social networks consist of a system that facilitates communication, fosters social relationships, and allows the interconnection of individuals with the same purposes or interests [3,4]. Moreover, it is a tool with enormous potential in the educational field [2]. In this sense, there are numerous studies that focus on the analysis of its use as a resource for innovation in the classroom.

These studies highlight many benefits not only for students but also for teachers [5, 6]. In this sense, it contributes to the increase of different aspects such as student participation, interactions between individuals, exchanges of information and ideas, digital competence, or collaboration and cooperation, among others. It is also a tool that allows respecting the pace of each student and facilitates the application of universal learning designs. However, the use of social networks in education also entails limitations. On the one hand, teachers, who in addition to having training deficits related to this aspect, have high levels of mistrust about its use in the classroom. On the other hand, in the students, it can cause different types of psychosocial, attentional, and behavioral problems [7, 8]. Regardless of these elements, social networks contain an enormous pedagogical power.

Among the great variety of existing social networks (Twitter, TikTok, Facebook, etc.), Instagram seems to play an essential role as it is the most used by the general population and, especially, among the youngest. Therefore, we cannot overlook: 1) the enormous pedagogical power and 2) the great proximity between this social network and the students.

In general terms, Instagram as an educational resource allows a great variety of actions such as uploading photos, videos, audios, live broadcasting, generating texts, sharing information, promoting alternative evaluation processes that allow respecting the principles of continuous evaluation, contributing to collaborative work by promoting interactions and minimizing space and time problems, responding to different learning styles, generating universal learning designs, and promoting creativity, among other aspects.

Although the use of Instagram in education is not currently widespread, a large number of proposals can be observed which use this social network in different ways: for the creation of subject content, as a challenge tool, for the preparation and implementation of activities, for the improvement of students' oral skills, as a repository, for group work, for the exchange of materials, or as a display of activities, among a long etcetera. In addition, it is being developed in areas as varied as literature, languages, health, biomedicine, pharmacy, education, ... [9, 10, 11, 12].

Therefore, given the benefits of the use of this social network in education, and after analyzing the great viability of this tool as a resource for educational innovation, in this chapter we present a framework for its application in the classroom based on different distinct phases. Specifically, we will focus on the use of Instagram as a digital space of the students themselves in which, with creative freedom, they must solve activities and/or reflect on various contents of the subject throughout the school year. That is, in short, using Instagram as a digital portfolio.

II. E-PORTFOLIOS AND INSTAGRAM

An educational portfolio consists of a collection of documents, work, practices, tasks or, in short, evidence that aims, on the one hand, to collect the experiences of the teaching-learning process, and, on the other hand, to show the evolution and personal and individual development of the teaching-learning process [13]. It is important to note that the portfolio does not consist of the collection of all the work done by students, but only of those that best demonstrate their progress.

Although the use of portfolios as an educational tool is much more widespread in early childhood education stages, its richness and countless benefits lead to consider it as a tool of great wealth for higher stages as well. Among its benefits are promoting learning and making it more explicit for teachers, families, and students themselves; developing a variety of skills and abilities; contributing to reflection; encouraging the assessment of learning evaluation by teachers and students; contributing to the feeling of personal achievement, which fosters increased motivation, among many others.

However, the main difference between its use in the infant stages and the rest of the stages lies in the degree of autonomy. While in the lower grades the portfolio is made by the teacher and the selection of the evidence is based entirely on his/her criteria, in higher grades it is the students who, with complete autonomy, select the evidence to be included in their portfolio. In this second type, the richness of this tool lies in the reflection on the decision of these materials. In addition, not only the samples/evidence would be included, but also a self-reflection of the student where he/she would explain the reasons for his/her selection.

The evidence to be included in a portfolio can be of any type: videos, images, graphics, tasks, audios, ... Traditional portfolios are characterized by a physical support (file cabinet, collection notebook, etc.) However, this support limits the capacity to include the great variety of evidence that can be used. Therefore, e-portfolios have emerged in response to this situation.

E-portfolios are digital portfolios that, due to their nature, offer greater flexibility and versatility in the collection and presentation of evidence. In this regard, Instagram plays a key role due to the unique characteristics of this social network, which allow the inclusion of a wide variety of content types, such as audios, videos, texts, and images, among others. Thus, its post-based interface allows both the upload of any type of evidence and the possibility of accompanying it with a title and text in which an explanation of the chosen thought process can be included. In addition, the ability to comment on publications allows the teacher to carry out a constant process of feedback and dialogue that contributes to further encourage reflection. Thus, the use of Instagram as an e-portfolio should not be used as a final product, but as a process of continuous construction-feedback-reconstruction. A process that will further enrich the learning process, the development of the students and the complete achievement of the educational objectives.

However, the implementation of Instagram as an e-portfolio requires clear planning and well-defined guidelines. Therefore, in the following section we propose a framework for introducing this technique in the classroom based on 4 well-differentiated phases.

III.   PHASES FOR USING INSTAGRAM AS AN E-PORTFOLIO IN THE CLASSROOM

For the use of Instagram as an e-portfolio in the classroom we propose 4 phases.

A. Phase 1: Introduction and explanation of the experience.

In a first moment it is essential to explain the functioning of the educational portfolio showing its potentialities, its functions, its objectives, as well as different examples. In a second moment, the Instagram social network should be shown, and its main functionalities explained. The third step is to describe the purpose of creating an e-portfolio. Finally, the creation of a personal class Instagram should be requested, as well as the definition of a set of rules and guidelines for publications.

Among these rules and guidelines, the following elements should be prioritized. On the one hand, at no time should restrictions be placed on the format; on the contrary, creative, and innovative publications should be encouraged. To this end, a wide variety of examples of format and form can be shown to illuminate and guide their creations. On the other hand, the importance of reflecting on the publications produced should be emphasized. That is, together with the evidence they wish to include, they should add a reflection on concepts such as: Why include such evidence? What do I want to show with it? In what sense does it show my development/learning? What difficulties have I encountered in my learning? How can I improve?

Finally, it is important to plan the minimum number of publications (one per session, one per week, one per month, ...). This aspect can be defined or, on the contrary, given total freedom. Independently, it is advisable to request a final publication (or final publications) that includes a final general reflection related to the learning acquired throughout the course. This can be guided by questions such as: what have I improved? how have I improved? what can I improve more? how useful are the lessons learned in this course for my future professional self? Etc.

B. Phase 2: Support and gradual liberalization of students

During the first sessions it is important to dynamize the use of Instagram. Therefore, it is proposed to leave a few minutes of class time for them to think and reflect on what evidence to incorporate into their portfolio. In these sessions it is important to establish a guide by the teacher to familiarize students with this strategy. For this purpose, questions can be asked to the students to serve as a guide and orientation. This support should be very intense at the beginning but should gradually disappear as the student gains autonomy. Once the student acquires autonomy, the teacher should only serve as a guide and advisor at times when the student needs it.

C. Phase 3: Joint and continuous feedback

This phase should be carried out throughout the whole process and two types should be differentiated. On the one hand, we find the teacher's feedback. In this sense, the teacher should encourage continuous feedback on the student's evidence and reflections by making comments on the publication. This continuous feedback will allow transforming the portfolio into a living and dynamic resource and not a final product. This will allow a continuous and formative evolution, and not a final and summative one. In this feedback, questions can be asked to encourage further reflection or to propose and recall evidence that can be incorporated.

On the other hand, it is also interesting to encourage feedback from other colleagues. In this way, and also using the comments to the publications, it should be encouraged to comment on colleagues' portfolios with a constructive and improvement approach. For this purpose, aspects to comment on can be proposed, such as: creativity, originality, synthesis, reflection, variety of resources, etc.

D. Phase 4: Final discussion

In the last phase, a discussion group led by the teacher with the participation of the whole class group is proposed. The questions that generate the discussion group should deal with the students' own personal experiences when creating their portfolio. In addition, students should also be encouraged to express their own perception of their evolution throughout the teaching-learning process. Some of the guiding questions could be:

- What has the completion of the portfolio meant to you?

- What has it meant for you to use Instagram for such a purpose?

- What has been the most difficult thing in your process of elaborating the different entries on Instagram?

- Has this process served to foster your motivation, learning, reflective capacity, awareness of progress, ...? Why?

- Has it been fun or challenging?

- What evolution/learning have you experienced throughout the process?

- What else would you like to comment on your experience of participating in this project?

IV. CONCLUSION

The objective of this work was to show the use of Instagram as an important tool for the creation of e-portfolios in the educational field. To this end, in this work we have proposed a framework consisting of 4 distinct phases that *Introduction and explanation of the experience; Support and gradual liberalization of students; Joint and continuous feedback; Final debate*.

The use of Instagram as an e-portfolio is an opportunity to promote learning and make it more explicit for both the teacher and the students themselves; develop various skills and abilities (including the use of digital technologies); contribute to reflection, self-knowledge and critical spirit; encourage continuous evaluation of learning from three perspectives: teacher, student and peers; contribute to the sense of personal achievement, which fosters increased motivation; and increase greater participation and involvement of students by using a resource close to their daily lives.

Therefore, the great possibilities offered by this social network make us stress the importance of encouraging teachers to use Instagram as an educational resource. To do this, it is necessary to promote training -both initial and ongoing- of teachers in these areas, showing the richness of using social networks in education.

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