

Social Media and Education: A Pedagogical Approach in Vocational Education

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Abstract:

The current paper aims to present educational scenarios for the use of the Pinterest social networking tool that have been published and concern all levels of education of the global educational community. Then, a teaching proposal is analyzed with the support of this tool in non-formal education in the field of informatics, which can be a point of reference and integration of the tool in this level and specialty as preparation material for student certification exams and as a means of promotion, critical thinking and discussion.

Keywords —social media, education, pedagogical approach.

I. INTRODUCTION

The evolution of technology combined with the improvement of telecommunications has led to a large increase in the use of portable digital electronic devices in all aspects of everyday life but also in various fields such as education, making it clear that the way we now learn is constantly changing (e.g. [3]) as students try to find learning resources by exploiting the information they find to better assimilate knowledge beyond the educational "molds" applied by the school (e.g. [10]). Bachmair, Cook and Kress (e.g. [2]) argue that it is necessary for education executives to adapt to these changes as otherwise there is a risk of alienation between students and educational systems as they are structured.

Social media is a typical example of information and communication technologies that have been adopted by students as tools for exchanging information and it is a challenge for teachers to integrate them into the educational process as supportive tools (e.g. [1]). These tools support teacher-student interaction, promote creativity, and enable teachers to enrich their teaching with creative activities (e.g. [9]). One popular social

media tool that has attracted a lot of users and can be used as an educational tool is Pinterest. Its "nature" motivates students to be actively involved with the learning material (e.g. [12]). This paper consists of three parts. In the first part there is a brief report - presentation of the tool, then educational scenarios of all levels of education based on the use of this tool are presented and in the last part a teaching proposal is analyzed with the support of this tool in non-formal education (in Information Technology sector).

II. SOCIAL MEDIA AND LEARNING

The plethora of social media services are increasingly leading teachers to use them, even informally, in the learning process. Discussions on Twitter or Pinterest, for example, can emphasize the importance of selecting relevant and relevant content from a wealth of trivial information and developing critical thinking. Students can also develop the ability to collaborate while Facebook enables the improvement of communication skills. In this way (e.g.[7]) explains, social networking is a tool that presents both advantages and problems in its use in the process of teaching and learning.

Students are familiar with the use of digital media and thus less attracted to traditional teaching. In this way, modern technologies can motivate students to complete their studies as well as improve their retention and integration. The integration of online teaching aids will result in the improvement of their critical ability, the maximization of learning and the quality of participation. According to researchers, the use of social media in higher education will contribute to the adoption of active learning so that students are encouraged to develop content, search the internet and share their knowledge, information or opinion (e.g. [8]).

Finally, according to March (e.g. [11]) learning, analysis and technological change are important elements in strengthening competitive advantage as they include adaptability and balance between exploration and exploitation. The first refers to experimentation and has doubtful long-term benefits while the second refers to the improvement of existing skills with predictable and positive results.

A. What is Pinterest?

Pinterest (e.g. [13]) is a website that launched in March 2010, as a platform that promoted style for shoppers and craftsmen (e.g. [4]). It soon attracted millions of users and evolved into a multifunctional space that includes other elements of social media. It is currently ranked as the third most popular social network in the United States behind Facebook and Twitter, ahead of LinkedIn and Google+.

Pinterest works as a digital board. Provides an attractive photo and video sharing platform based on the theme. Each source is a link to the original content and thus encourages users to explore images and videos as they are in their original content. This contributes to the non-linear and cloudy collaborative learning that is made possible through social media and is a key feature of electronic clickolage (e.g. [14]). Users can add a description of up to 500 characters to a pin. Existing pins can be added to the user's table, something called repining. A user can use a heart-shaped icon that indicates they like the pin and can add comments below the description.

B. Advantages of Using Pinterest in the Educational Process

Pinterest can prove to be a useful tool in education. It can be used to organize a wide range of information and in the brainstorming process. The visual impact of Pinterest makes it a particularly useful tool to motivate students to participate. One of its main advantages is its ability to store links to resources that one discovers on the internet. We all find very interesting articles, images or videos that may prove useful at some point. The problem so far has been to find a way to store these items in a 'place' so you can recover them. Pinterest's visual nature makes it possible to retrieve previously stored sources and store them under a relevant title.

Pinterest tables can be a unique way to collaborate with other teachers as there is the ability to share ideas, video sources, news articles, graphs of information and images. In addition, they can be used to provide a structured list of resources for students on a specific topic. Teaching your students to do research on the internet can lead to distractions. Students can work together on a group activity, creating a table of ideas and resources, working independently can post ideas on the board in order to create a group 'collage'. The teacher can then visit the board, make comments and feedback on the sources that have been posted. Pinterest brings to the surface the creative side of our students' character. They can derive satisfaction from creating something that is both beautiful and educational. Students can also create a table to show what kind of sources they used to write a paper, which is more fascinating than the traditional bibliography.

C. Examples of Using Pinterest in Training Levels

In this case, Pinterest was incorporated into both a classroom management class and a sixth grade elementary school teaching course as a pioneering way of teaching. Student feedback was gathered through an online forum within the Blackboard management system. For this project a group was created on Pinterest for the lesson. Once the account was created, the group profile was

processed, creating a profile name and image and a description of the purpose.

Students were required to select at least 10 online resources that they intended to reconstruct or use in their own classrooms after graduation. These 10 items could either be pinned to one of the existing boards or students could create new categories by leaving feedback. In addition, students were asked to comment on the posts they chose to pin, to explain what they learned while using the social networking platform, and to discuss whether to use the site in the future. Students were encouraged to create their own website on Pinterest to pinpoint ideas from their colleagues and store their own posts so that they have created a website of personal interest and needs after the end of the lesson.

In the second case, students were asked to create a Pinterest account and start a personal public table with the title "(Name) Student Innovation Topics". The teacher followed the boards and asked the students to contribute to the class community board. Every two weeks the students had to create five pins and then make a unique pin on the class community table. More specifically, they were asked to pin opinion, news articles, videos, excerpts from books, photographs, blogs and songs. For each pin, students were instructed to think about reading and discussing the class and post a pin that would be relevant. All pins were checked before the lesson and integrated into the lesson plans. Throughout the semester, the classroom board group gained 115 followers and many students reported gaining new followers on their personal boards as well as on their profile due to their participation in the community board. Students were assessed based on whether they created pins by the deadline for submission of the work according to the categories mentioned above and whether their pins could contribute to the student issues they were asked to describe in each of the descriptions of the pin.

In the third case, reference is made to a case that was applied at a US university. In one paper, students were asked to create a comprehensive lesson plan that would appeal to more visual students. Content could be for any age and for any field, but it should have a strong visual element and involve the use of technology in a way that makes

sense. Pinterest has a strong impact on visual students and many choose to use it as a tool in their work program. For example, a history student chose to create a panel of generals who were active during the Civil War. Another chose to teach a national food course. This lesson asked students to create images as a "food passport". While Pinterest was only included in the course for six months, students and management quickly accepted its use. The number of followers who follow the library's tables has already surpassed text-based lists. Educational Technology students used Pinterest to give a new impetus to the work of visual literacy.

III. TEACHING PROPOSAL USING PINTEREST

In this section, a teaching proposal will be presented using the Pinterest tool in the course "Networks I", which is a course in the specialty "Computer Technician" of DIEK. This course was chosen because it includes concepts - definitions that are often not immediately understood by students. For example, the operation of ADSL (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line) technology is a difficult issue as it requires visual teaching tools to be understood by students. According to (Miller, 2009) multimedia helps students to initially gain a mental understanding of the issues that are necessary to arrive at a conceptual understanding.

The teaching unit chosen is "Network Classification", which is divided into two categories based on latitude and how to connect. The profile of the trainees are adult graduates of General or Vocational High School of all specialties. The educational goals of the unit are limited to three levels: knowledge, skills and attitudes. At the knowledge level, students will be able to define the network and identify and classify the basic types of computer networks. At the level of skills to form an opinion about the positives of the use of Networks and finally at the level of attitudes to get acquainted with the services offered by the PC Network, to be aware of the role of networks in various sectors and to demystify the complexity of networks as to their structure. The implementation of this proposal will require 4 teaching hours. The first two hours will be devoted to an introduction to Networks, a presentation of the basic features of Pinterest and a

detailed presentation of the work to be assigned. In the next two hours the students will present their work and a commentary will follow.

The students of the department are divided into two groups (10 people) and each group is assigned the corresponding topic. More specifically, the first group will undertake the presentation of the classification of the networks based on the geographical latitude while the second group will undertake the presentation of the classification of the networks based on the way of connection. This is followed by the division of the initial groups into subgroups of 4-5 people, where each group undertakes a specific subcategory of classification. Each subgroup has a representative who will oversee its proper functioning. The teacher in turn creates a Pinterest account so that the groups can create their own tables and he in turn oversees the material posted on the tables. It then distributes the tasks to be performed by each member. For example, one student will be responsible for collecting images, another for collecting videos, and the rest of the team for collecting resources from the Internet. In conclusion, the tables that will be created by the students will be adapted to their needs in order to be used as a tool for completing knowledge that will be a material for preparation for their exams.

IV. CONCLUSION–FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper makes a general reference to the use of social media in the educational process. In more detail, a presentation of the Pinterest tool as well as the advantages it can bring to teachers and students. Then a teaching scenario in the field of Informatics is proposed using this tool in order to create tables that will be learning material. The main advantage of the whole project is that students create their tables based on their learning needs resulting in the development of skills and the promotion of their critical thinking in an environment where the teacher will guide the whole process.

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