

Social media-based Learning to improve pre-service teachers' research skills

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The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to a realisation about the importance for teachers to provide alternative, flexible strategies for learning. A challenge, accelerated by COVID, is to enable pre-service teachers to develop research skills that will equip them with ways to stay current with, and evaluate, emerging teaching strategies. Therefore, this paper reports on a project that determined the effectiveness of visual-based social media to develop Indonesian pre-service teacher (PST) research skills over a one-semester timeframe.

The students as partners of movement were asked to post visual reports of their lab activities in Instagram every week in which the educators supervise the activities and simultaneously, with the students, evaluate and develop the research-based posts. The evaluation and development process aimed to make the posts to be educational valid contents for public.

An Instagram-based assessment project was implemented as an initiative to enhance the research skills of PSTs. In order to determine the effectiveness of the initiative, action research was adopted as the educator methodology in one class of 65 PSTs studying Plant Taxonomy. The action research provided a rich and detailed understanding of the factors involved.

The RSD framework used in this symposium informed the project through its six facets of inquiry: embark/clarify, find/generate, evaluate, organise, synthesise/analyse, and communicate. The facets inform PST movement from closed inquiries (lecturer specified) to opened inquiries (student specified) through an RSD-based rubric for assessing the Instagram-based reports used to determine PSTs' research skills over the semester. To gain perspective on PSTs' experience, they were asked to answer a questionnaire about their perception on the use of social media-based learning to improve their research skills.

The results from the assessment and questionnaire indicate that the initiative contributed positively to develop PSTs' research skills. Project learning suggests a way of reimagining Social Media-enriched, research skill development; implementation of this initiative might enable pre-service teachers to graduate as savvy teachers who know how to effectively teach their own students flexibly and with research-based approaches.