Chapter 9

Electronic Portfolios for Career Exploration

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ABSTRACT

The author discusses the inclusion of job shadowing as a critical element of an electronic portfolio in the context of an all-girls school in Guatemala. The chapter also describes the reasons behind and the development of electronic portfolios for the School. It concludes that job shadowing and student success in career exploration are related and of particularly benefit to the student if started at an early stage.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Instituto Experimental de la Asunción, founded in 1956 by the Assumption Sisters Order, is an all-girls Catholic school located in Guatemala City, Guatemala. For more than 50 years, their educational project has aimed to shape the intelligence and the heart of every girl so that they will fulfill their vocation and become strong, resilient women.

In accordance with the school’s mission, in 2005 the forward-looking school counselors wanted to increase the students’ awareness of the importance of exploring and planning their professional careers, as it was recognized by many national and international organizations that women who received a formal education could have a greater impact on the economic, political, and social life of their communities.

To address these new requirements, a “Career Exploration” class was established in 2005 (later in 2008, it became a Module for “My Life Plan Project”) the objectives of which were:

- To encourage students to choose a career based on their interests, values, abilities, and talents;

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• To recognize their talents, abilities, and skills, and publish them on an electronic portfolio;
• To experience the world of work by means of shadowing a professional related to their career choice;
• To promote a healthy and positive self-esteem amongst students.

WHAT WAS DONE

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) had then recently produced in 2004 a set of National Standards for Students “to identify and prioritize the specific attitudes, knowledge and skills that students should be able to demonstrate as a result of participating in a school counseling program.” These standards were reviewed by Asunción’s counselors, and a subset as follows was considered particularly relevant to the school in relation to student competencies:

Academic Development

• STANDARD C: Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community.
  ◦ A:C1.2 Seek co-curricular and community experiences to enhance the school experience
  ◦ A:C1.3 Understand the relationship between learning and work
  ◦ A:C1.5 Understand that school success is the preparation to make the transition from student to community member
  ◦ A:C1.6 Understand how school success and academic achievement enhance future career and vocational opportunities

Personal /Social Development

• STANDARD A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.
  ◦ PS:A1 Acquire Self-knowledge
  ◦ PS:A1.1 Develop positive attitudes toward self as a unique and worthy person
  ◦ PS:A1.2 Identify values, attitudes and beliefs
  ◦ PS:A1.10 Identify personal strengths and assets

Career Development

• STANDARD A: Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.
  ◦ C:A1 Develop Career Awareness
  ◦ C:A1.6 Learn how to set goals
  ◦ C:A1.7 Understand the importance of planning
  ◦ C:A1.8 Pursue and develop competency in areas of interest
  ◦ C:A1.9 Develop hobbies and vocational interests
  ◦ C:A2 Develop Employment Readiness
  ◦ C:A2.6 Learn how to write a résumé

• STANDARD B: Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction.
  ◦ C:B1 Acquire Career Information
  ◦ C:B1.2 Identify personal skills, interests and abilities and relate them to current career choice
  ◦ C:B2 Identify Career Goals
  ◦ C:B2.5 Maintain a career-planning portfolio
  ◦ C:C2 Apply Skills to Achieve Career Goals
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