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Original article

## Digital educational resources for Sociopolitical Theory. Its impact on Medical Sciences of Sagua la Grande

Recursos educativos digitales para Teoría Sociopolítica. Su impacto en Ciencias Médicas de Sagua la Grande

Recursos educacionais digitais para a Teoria Sociopolítica. Seu impacto nas Ciências Médicas de Sagua la Grande

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### ABSTRACT

The Sociopolitical Theory subject began to be taught in the Medicine career after the "E" Study Plan was approved in 2019. Teaching this subject is a challenge, because it is not part of the basic subjects of the professional profile. In order to achieve motivation and, therefore, a better teaching-educational use in the Faculty of Medical Sciences of Sagua la Grande, a proposal of digital educational resources was used. Hence, the objective is to socialize the result of the application of the proposal of digital educational resources for the subject Sociopolitical Theory that was done from virtual environments in the Medicine career of the Faculty of Medical Sciences of Sagua la Grande in the year 2022. For the same, we worked with the lesson plans and the minutes of the Subject Groups, applying the methods of documentary review, questionnaire and observation to classes, which allowed us to obtain as results that the proposal of digital educational resources was effective. Students were more involved in the elaboration of digital educational resources to be used in classes; a greater motivation for the contents of the subject was achieved; an active participation and the academic performance of the second-year students of the Medicine career were positive. It was concluded that the use of digital educational resources constitutes an alternative to improve the teaching-learning process and the motivation of students in the Sociopolitical Theory subject.

**Keywords:** Sociopolitical Theory; digital educational resources; Medical Sciences;

Sagua la Grande.

### RESUMEN

La asignatura Teoría Sociopolítica comenzó a impartirse en la carrera de Medicina a partir de que se aprobara el Plan de Estudio "E" en el año 2019. Impartir esta asignatura constituyó un reto, porque no forma parte de las materias básicas del perfil profesional. Para lograr la motivación y, por ende, un mejor aprovechamiento docente-educativo en la Facultad de Ciencias Médicas de Sagua la Grande, se empleó una propuesta de recursos educativos digitales. El artículo tiene como objetivo socializar los resultados de la aplicación de la propuesta de recursos educativos digitales para la asignatura Teoría Sociopolítica que se hizo desde entornos virtuales en la carrera de Medicina de la Facultad de Ciencias Médicas de Sagua la Grande. Para ello se trabajó con los planes de clases y actas de Colectivos de Asignaturas, aplicando los métodos de análisis documental, cuestionario y observación a clases. Los principales resultados estuvieron la mayor implicación de los estudiantes en la elaboración de los recursos educativos digitales a emplear en clases; una mayor motivación por los contenidos de la asignatura; una participación activa y un mayor rendimiento académico de los estudiantes de segundo año de la carrera de Medicina. Se llegó a la conclusión de que el empleo de recursos educativos digitales constituye una alternativa para lograr mejorar el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje y la motivación de los estudiantes en la asignatura Teoría Sociopolítica.

**Palabras clave:** Teoría Sociopolítica; recursos educativos digitales; Ciencias Médicas; Sagua la Grande.

### RESUMO

A disciplina de Teoria Sociopolítica começou a ser ministrada na carreira de Medicina após a aprovação do Plano de Estudos "E" em 2019. Lecionar esta disciplina foi um desafio, pois não faz parte das disciplinas básicas do perfil profissional. A fim de obter motivação e, portanto, um melhor uso pedagógico-educativo na Faculdade de Ciências Médicas de Sagua la Grande, foi utilizada uma proposta de recursos educacionais digitais. O artigo tem como objetivo socializar os resultados da aplicação da proposta de recursos educativos digitais para a disciplina de Teoria Sociopolítica realizada a partir de ambientes virtuais na carreira de Medicina da Faculdade de Ciências Médicas de Sagua la Grande. Para isso, trabalhamos com os planos de aula e as atas dos Grupos Teóricos, aplicando os métodos de análise documental, questionário e observação às aulas. Os principais resultados foram o maior envolvimento dos alunos na elaboração dos recursos educacionais digitais a serem utilizados nas aulas; maior motivação para os conteúdos da disciplina; uma participação ativa e um maior rendimento acadêmico dos alunos do segundo ano da carreira de Medicina. Concluiu-se que o uso de recursos educacionais digitais constitui uma alternativa para melhorar o processo de ensino-aprendizagem e a motivação dos alunos na disciplina de Teoria Sociopolítica.

**Palavras-chave:** Teoria Sociopolítica; recursos educacionais digitais; Ciências Médicas; Sagua la Grande.

## INTRODUCTION

Sociopolitical Theory emerged as a subject for Higher Education in Cuba in the 1990s, although other subjects related to politics were previously taught. It was taught for the first time in the Accounting and Finance major, and in 1995 it was officially instituted as a subject of the Marxism-Leninism discipline for the country's Social, Economic, and Humanistic Sciences majors. As of the 1999-2000 academic year, it was also introduced for the Distance Education modality.

In the case of Medical Sciences, it was not until 2019, as part of the improvement of Cuban Higher Education, that this subject was included in the new Study Plan, called "E", for the Medicine career. Study Plan "E" seeks for students to acquire political, ethical, legal, humanistic, economic, environmental and scientific knowledge; so that they achieve sufficient preparation to defend the Cuban Revolution from the exercise of their profession, once they graduate.

Following this guideline, the discipline Marxism-Leninism was introduced into the curricular plan, which is made up of three subjects: Marxist Philosophy, Political Economy and Sociopolitical Theory. Among the general objectives of the discipline - which appears in the same Study Plan- is: *"to contribute to the training of a health professional with a solid classist, revolutionary, critical and creative preparation that allows him to face the complex problems of contemporaneity professionally and socially"*. Each of the subjects that make up the discipline is focused on achieving this goal.

Closely linked to the objective of the discipline, the Sociopolitical Theory subject studies the main currents, processes and

political relations, emphasizing socialism and the Cuban political system. This gives the subject a high theoretical and practical value, as well as a deep ideological sense, especially in the current context, as stated in the Study Plan itself. However, teaching Sociopolitical Theory is a challenge for teachers, especially in careers such as Medicine, where the subject is not part of the basic subjects corresponding to the professional profile. In these cases, the challenge is greater.

For this reason, it is necessary that the university professor be updated in all those aspects that can broaden the spectrum of pedagogical didactics, to strengthen his work and promote more effective learning. One of these aspects is training in the use of Information Technology and Communications (ICT) applied to education (Trujillo Sainz, 2020). With the scientific-technical development, the use of ICT has gained greater importance in education systems, because they have demonstrated their effectiveness for the student to achieve more cognitive independence. In Cuba, educational policies focus on the use of ICT to achieve better results in the teaching-educational process.

Since the end of the 20th century, the preparation of teaching support materials was already oriented towards working with the Sociopolitical Theory subject, taking into account the peculiarities of the course in which it was to be taught. Since support materials are all those resources that facilitate the carrying out of teaching activities, ICTs are included in them. In this sense, in the Methodological Guidelines for the work with the subject in the Medicine career, the need to allow the widest use of ICTs is emphasized, applying them responsibly and critically.

Teaching scientific knowledge supported by technology is undoubtedly an essential

didactic resource in these times, because it means integrating, revaluating and giving new meaning to the daily culture of students (Barros Bastida, and Barros Morales, 2015). Didactic resources would be all those materials -whether printed or digital- that facilitate the learning process. Hence, they include digital educational resources (RED).

REDs have been defined as those digital materials, designed with an educational intention to inform, transmit, reinforce learning, develop skills and evaluate knowledge. They must be used with a didactic purpose that responds to exercise, practice, simulation, tutorial and individual use in small groups (Cepero and Pérez, 2022).

The studies that have been carried out on the use of digital educational resources in education are diverse. Some examples can be mentioned, such as the articles by Rodríguez Morena (2016), Pérez-Ortega (2017), Granda et al. (2019), Caro and Vázquez (2020) and Rodríguez et al. (2017).

The incorporation of digital educational resources to the teaching-learning process has multiple advantages that should be taken advantage of, with greater emphasis on the Medicine career, to teach subjects that require greater motivation in students. Starting from there, and from the need for resources for the Sociopolitical Theory subject -which were non-existent in the Faculty of Medical Sciences of Sagua la Grande in the first course of its teaching- the idea of preparing and compiling digital materials of different types. The result of this work is included in the article by Torres et al. (2022).

The proposals set out in said article have been applied since the first year that the subject was taught in said Faculty as they have been elaborated or compiled, but the

proposal for digital educational resources in its entirety was applied in the year 2022. Therefore, which aims to socialize the result of the application of the proposal of digital educational resources for the Sociopolitical Theory subject that was done from virtual environments in the Medicine career of the Faculty of Medical Sciences of Sagua la Grande in the year 2022.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

An investigation was carried out at the Faculty of Medical Sciences of Sagua la Grande in the year 2022, using as a population the 61 second-year students of the Medicine career, who receive said subject in their fourth period. The sample was selected through a non-probabilistic sampling by criteria, choosing 38 students from the four brigades that make up the second year of the degree and students who did not give their consent to participate voluntarily were excluded.

To carry it out, the practical method of documentary review was used to review the current state of the subject, its importance and to corroborate the correct use of digital educational resources in the different organizational forms of teachers (FOD). For this, an updated bibliography search was carried out on the subject and the class plans of the subject, the minutes of the Subject Groups, the controls to classes carried out by the head of department and the reports of the Learning Evaluation Process were consulted. In this sense, it was also necessary to use the historical-logical, analytical-synthetic and inductive-deductive theoretical methods.

A questionnaire was applied as one of the empirical methods of scientific knowledge. This was carried out individually to the

selected sample of the total population, with the objective of knowing their assessments about the use of digital educational resources during the development of the classes of the Sociopolitical Theory subject. Said questionnaire was prepared according to the Linkert scale, which allows the students' answers to be qualified with the aim of facilitating the obtaining of results. The questionnaire was applied after finishing the subject, closing the fourth period of the degree.

It should be taken into account that, in addition to this questionnaire, we worked with the results obtained in the questionnaire that had initially been applied to the sample of second-year students who received the subject for the first time in the 2020-2021 academic year. This was useful, to the extent that the proposed digital educational resources were made or compiled gradually, so they were applied in the same way in the different academic years between 2020, when the research project began, until the year 2022 in which the course that has just ended took place. From these questionnaires, data were obtained that illustrated how the quality of the teaching-learning process and the motivation of the students for the subject improved, based on the use of digital educational resources.

Another questionnaire was implemented to the professors who teach the subject in the faculty, following the same objective of the questionnaire applied to the students. The class observation method was also used to explore the potentialities and weaknesses that were presented in the use of digital educational resources in the teaching activities developed to enhance learning in the subject.

## RESULTS

Based on the methodological guidelines of the subject program regarding the use of ICT and the benefit thereof, a proposal for digital educational resources from virtual environments was used in the 2022 course in the Sociopolitical Theory subject, prepared or compiled by the professors of the Department of History-Philosophy, of the Faculty of Medical Sciences of Sagua la Grande between 2020 and 2021, although these were used as they were being prepared, as demonstrated by the minutes of the Subject Groups, archived in the History-Philosophy Department.

From the introductory class, work with computers, televisions and mobile phones was observed, as they are the material resources available to the Institution and the students. Although the use of traditional didactic resources such as the blackboard or the printed bibliography was also appreciated, the majority use of digital educational resources in all teaching activities of the teaching-learning process was highlighted. This could also be verified from the class plans of the subject filed in the file of the same and in the class, controls carried out by the head of department.

The elaborated proposal contains ninety-two digital educational resources to work with students of the Medicine career from virtual environments, although these can be used in other careers. The proposal contains different types of resources such as audiovisual media, Powers Point presentations, digital texts, databases, questionnaires and others, which have the function of being transmissive, active and interactive to achieve a better inclusive teaching-learning process with motivated students. and always accompanied by an adequate pedagogical proposal. The resources are available in the institutional

repository, the virtual health classroom, and the WhatsApp social network. (Torres et al., 2022)

In the questionnaire applied to the selected sample, 85.71% of the students thought that their teachers always used digital educational resources to teach the contents of the subject, constituting a majority in relation to the 14.29% who expressed that they were only used sometimes. 90.48% think that the digital educational resources that their teachers used were always or almost always adequate to teach classes and a minority of 9.52% thought that the resources were adequate only sometimes.

These data coincide in part with the results of the questionnaire applied to the professors who teach the subject at the faculty. They expressed that they always used resources to teach their subject and they think that they were almost always adequate, since this depends on many variables such as the individual characteristics of each brigade and each student. The head of the Department of History-Philosophy, who carried out the observation of classes during their controls, reflected in the guide that the teachers always used digital educational resources to facilitate the approach to the contents of the classes and that they were adapted to the methodology used in the development of the activity. The methods used in all the teaching organizational forms (FOD) were between joint development and independent work, which facilitated work with digital educational resources of different types.

100% of the students listed, among the digital educational resources most used by teachers in Sociopolitical Theory classes, videos. Meanwhile, 91.67% added power point presentations. 33.33% included books and 9.52% maps. The digital educational resources mentioned by the students agree with those referred to by the teachers. In the

review of the lesson plans, it was also possible to verify that the most used resources were audiovisuals -videos, fragments of films or documentaries, audios, bibliography in digital format -books, magazines- and power point slideshows. Maps were used very rarely.

These data reflect the ratio of the percentage of students who considered that digital educational resources were used only sometimes, since, as can be seen, only 33.33% of the total considered books as digital educational resources. However, they were among the most used by the teachers, as reflected in the lesson plans, the minutes of the Subject Groups and the class controls. It is significant to mention how no student referred to the database, the tutorial, the questionnaires, the debate forums and the WhatsApp groups as digital educational resources.

It is noteworthy that the teaching-learning process improved with the use of said proposal in the 2022 academic year, since the results of its application are qualitatively superior if we compare them with the results of the questionnaire applied in the first course in which it was applied. taught the subject. In said questionnaire, for example, 52.38% of the students thought that they were only sometimes involved in the elaboration of the digital educational resources that were used in the subject, constituting the majority of the sample.

The teachers had the same opinion, referring to the fact that in the first year in which they taught the subject, they only sometimes used the resources of the context to create digital educational resources. In this sense, they explained that they only used the students' mobile phones to search for concepts at certain times of some teaching activities, the preparation of diagrams, power point presentations and the search for

audiovisuals that would help them present in seminars and practical classes, as educational organizational forms. However, other more interactive resources were not used.

Higher Medical Education institutions are considered leaders in the development of digital educational resources. In this sense, the sector has the Infomed sectoral network, created in 1992 and which is the largest in the country. It has the Virtual Health University (UVS) and the Virtual Health Library (VHL), through the Moodle platform, which is an open-source product that promotes the use of free software, which is a priority of the Cuban State (Fernández and Fernández, 2014). The Moodle platform is free to use on the web to achieve the inclusion of all students, teachers and professionals in the sector.

Like all the subjects in Medical Sciences, Sociopolitical Theory has also been set up on this platform since it began to be taught in September 2020. However, in the first course in which the subject was taught, only to guide the search for the bibliography, lessons, tasks and glossaries to be used in practical classes and seminars. The most interactive activities such as chats, forums, questionnaires and workshops were not used, losing the possibility of achieving greater dynamics, cognitive independence and motivation on the part of the students.

This situation was corrected from the application of the proposal of ninety-two digital educational resources that was carried out in the year 2022, that is, in the course that has just ended. Although, it must be recognized that it has not yet been possible to include all students in the activities prepared in the virtual classroom mainly for technical reasons, so work must continue on the basis of achieving this and taking other alternatives, as has been done, in the cases

that are pertinent, in such a way that the deficiencies or limitations of technology do not slow down or affect the learning of any student.

Regarding the participation of students during the use of digital educational resources in class, it is observed in the questionnaire applied in 2022 that 90.48% of the students affirmed that the teachers allowed them to participate actively. In addition, 93.95% reported that they were always or almost always allowed to interact with their peers to ensure greater learning.

The teachers affirmed that they always allowed their students to participate actively and that they almost always allowed them to interact with their classmates, depending on the type of teaching activity that was carried out. For example, practical classes are more feasible teaching activities for students to exchange opinions among themselves to organize the debate, although they also have this possibility during seminars. In conferences, time is more limited, but they can always interact with each other. A greater interrelationship between the students was achieved in the debate forums on certain topics of the subject on the Moodle platform, but mainly in the WhatsApp groups, where there was a greater exchange even with the teachers.

In the observation guide, the head of the department expressed that the teachers always promoted activities for the students to construct the meaning or meanings of the contents and their application in the classroom to improve academic performance. It also confirmed that the students felt more motivated with the digital educational resources that were used in the classroom, they participated more actively and that the teachers took their opinions into account at the time of class development; as well as that they promoted self-learning

activities, based on teaching tasks, studies and independent work, basically, with the use of digital educational resources.

97.31% of the students considered that with the use of digital educational resources they achieved better learning in the subject and the remaining 2.69% stated that they did not know if these had an influence on their learning. The teachers agree that with the use of digital educational resources, a better teaching performance was achieved, since the students were more motivated by the content they received. The head of the Department, in turn, agreed that it was possible to guarantee that the students understood and interpreted the subject better because they did so in a more dynamic way. These results were appreciated in academic performance.

In the Report of the Learning Evaluation Process of the subject of the fourth period of the 2022 academic year -kept in digital format in the Department of History-Philosophy and the Methodological Office of the Faculty- it was recorded that, of the total of 61 second-year students of the race obtained grades of 5 and 4, 96.71%, with the highest grade being the most acquired. Only 3.27% obtained a grade of 3. These results are very positive, and were higher than the results of the first course in which it was taught. It has been observed that the results in the subject have been upward from 2020 to the present.

90% of the students assured in the questionnaire that they liked the topics that were taught. This result is interesting, since in the introductory class of the subject an approximate percentage of students had reported that they were not interested in the contents of the subject, because they were not related to the degree or considered it boring. The data was inverted at the end of the period and the use of digital educational

resources probably influenced these results, taking into account that 97.22% of the students expressed that it was important for teachers to use digital educational resources in classes and that the 100% stated that they would like more digital educational resources to be used to improve content learning.

The students report that the subject allowed them to expand or acquire in some cases their political culture, obtain knowledge and understand the importance of being informed about national and international events, because they learned that politics is everyone's business, since its application benefits them. or affects. They also consider that the subject taught them to critically observe what is said on social networks and the media in general. They emphasized that they were allowed to express their opinions based on convincing arguments, based on triangulated research, and to respect the opinions of their peers and teachers in group discussions. They also reported that they were able to manage their own knowledge from research and elaboration of power point and diagrams.

## DISCUSSION

In the teaching of this type of subjects, students have traditionally had a passive role (López et al., 2019). Their little participation in the learning process is undoubtedly one of the reasons why they consider the topics to be dealt with uninteresting and unrelated to their professional interests. Lopez et al. (2019) consider that it is not possible to continue exchanging in the classroom, claiming that students are passive subjects of knowledge.

For this reason, it is considered that alternatives should be sought to achieve motivation for the Sociopolitical Theory

subject, which will in turn lead students to become active subjects of knowledge to achieve the quality of professional that is intended to be formed, based on to the needs of the times. ICTs allow the development of possibilities for methodological innovation that result in the achievement of a more effective and inclusive education. With its use, the initiatives of teachers increase to create digital educational resources that encourage student participation in the contents of the subjects in a more active and motivating way.

Among the main advantages of using digital educational resources are: bringing students closer to content in less rigid spaces, with which they are more familiar and which allow them greater autonomy; they feel more involved in learning; they understand the need for the constant search for information; they approach abstract concepts through sound, images, animations, hypertext language and even simulations; teachers reduce their effort by relying on dynamic presentations; learning is faster; it covers more content and communication between students and teachers is improved (Fernández and Fernández, 2014).

Rodríguez Morena (2016) affirms that teachers must continue to develop the ability to generate different "entry doors" to the same content, in order to ensure that all students acquire knowledge according to their learning abilities. The authors of the research think that managing different sources of information in the classroom with the students allows the creation of these various doors to knowledge, because each one of them will search in a personalized way for that educational resource through which it is easier for them to understand the contents. Hence, strategies were drawn up to achieve a greater involvement of the students, which was demonstrated with the results obtained.

On the other hand, the link between theory and practice turns students into producers of knowledge, develops the capacity for critical reflection, achieving more independence and assimilation of the contents that they themselves create, creating technological skills and interrelating contents. of different subjects (Pérez-Ortega, 2017). This makes possible the comprehensive training of future professionals, which is precisely what the new Study Plan is focused on. The participation of students in this sense is essential for the result of the teaching-learning process to be effective. The involvement of the students in the elaboration of the resources also had positive results, as could be seen.

However, the use of ICT in educational processes does not ensure that learning is effective. The inclusion of digital technologies in the classroom must be accompanied by methodological strategies designed and implemented by the teacher - that promote spaces for collaborative and cooperative learning, that favor learning management and the acquisition of digital skills (Valarezo and Santos, 2019), where the critical spirit prevails. The subject groups are the most propitious spaces to achieve this in this case.

In the minutes of the Sociopolitical Theory Collective and in the lesson plans, the specific objectives and activities that were carried out with each digital educational resource that were used throughout the subject are well reflected. They were accompanied by precise teaching tasks, aimed not only at the formative but also at the educational part of the classes, and debate was always promoted, fostering student leadership.

The authors considered that by correctly using the proposal of digital educational resources from virtual environments, they managed to improve the teaching process in

the subject of Sociopolitical Theory, since they agree with what was expressed by the authors referenced throughout the investigation. The use of digital educational resources made the learning process more dynamic by directly involving the students, taking the contents -sometimes very theoretical- to formats that were easier to understand or even to practice, always accompanied by well-founded pedagogical proposals, with Clarity in the declared training and educational objectives.

The impact of the application of the proposal of digital educational resources in the Sociopolitical Theory subject from virtual environments in the Medicine career of the Faculty of Medical Sciences of Sagua la Grande was effective. Students were more involved in the elaboration of digital educational resources to be used in classes; a greater motivation for the contents of the subject was achieved; as well as an active participation and the academic performance of the second-year students of the Medicine career was positive. It was concluded that the use of digital educational resources constitutes an alternative to improve the teaching-learning process and the motivation of students in the Sociopolitical Theory subject.

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The authors participated in the design and writing of the work, and analysis of the documents.

#### Quote as

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