

Empowering Self-Directed Learning in History Education: The Role of Digital Storyboards

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Abstract:

This study explores the impact of digital storyboards (DSBs) on self-directed learning (SDL) among second-year history education students at a South African university. Given the increasing importance of SDL in fostering independence, critical thinking, and lifelong learning, this research investigates whether DSBs can enhance students' ability to plan, monitor, and regulate their learning processes.

Using a convergent mixed-methods design, quantitative data were collected via an SDL questionnaire, while qualitative insights were obtained through semi-structured interviews. Findings indicate that DSBs positively influenced motivation, planning, and self-monitoring, particularly among digitally proficient students. However, technical challenges, limited resources, and time constraints hindered full integration.

A 15-week intervention demonstrated that DSBs enhanced critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative learning by enabling students to interactively curate and present historical content. Additionally, digital game-based learning (DGBL) emerged as a complementary strategy, reinforcing engagement and self-assessment.

The study highlights the need for teacher training in digital pedagogy and improved technological infrastructure to maximise the benefits of DSBs. Despite existing challenges, DSBs offer a promising avenue for fostering SDL and equipping students with 21st-century skills essential for academic and professional success.