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TRANSFORMING ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION WITH CANVA FOR CREATIVE AND VISUAL LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Canva is a cutting-edge technology for developing evaluations in higher education, and this study investigates its application. Traditional assessments often rely on text-based formats that may not effectively engage all learners or support the development of essential 21st-century skills. Canva provides a creative and user-friendly platform that allows educators to design visually appealing, interactive, and student-centered assessments such as infographics, digital journals, and collaborative presentations. Its features, including real-time collaboration, artificial intelligence tools, and integration with learning management systems, help enhance student engagement, support various learning styles, and encourage critical thinking and creativity. Based on constructivist and social learning theories, the study highlights how Canva fosters deeper understanding and promotes teamwork among students. It also emphasizes the platform's usefulness in both online and blended learning environments, offering flexible and inclusive assessment approaches. The findings suggest that Canva can improve traditional assessment practices by making them more meaningful, accessible, and aligned with the needs of modern education.

Keywords: *Canva, assessment, educators, learning, education*

Introduction

Assessment is a core component of effective teaching and learning, providing valuable feedback for both instructors and students. Traditional assessment formats often rely heavily on textual responses and standard test papers, which may not cater to diverse learning styles. In contrast, Canva offers a creative platform for designing formative and summative assessments that are visually engaging, student centered and aligned with 21st-century skills. Several studies have emphasized the importance of incorporating visual and interactive elements in assessments to enhance student motivation, comprehension, and retention (Susanti et al., 2024).

With Canva's wide range of templates, educators can design dynamic quizzes, mind maps, infographics, and reflection journals that support visual learning and critical thinking. For instance, students can demonstrate understanding by creating infographics summarizing key concepts or digital posters showing the links between causes and effects in scientific or historical contexts. These alternative assessments promote deeper cognitive processing and allow students to engage with content meaningfully, rather than merely recalling facts. According to Ulya (2024), students who participated

in an evaluation based on infographics demonstrated better conceptual understanding and were more engaged compared to those assessed through traditional written methods.

Canva also supports collaborative assessment formats. Through real-time editing and shared access, group projects such as digital storytelling, team-created presentations, and multimedia reports can be easily developed and submitted. This aligns with Vygotsky's social development theory, which highlights the role of interaction in cognitive development. Additionally, instructors can use Canva to create rubrics and feedback sheets, which can be shared with students as part of the assessment cycle. The visual clarity of these tools facilitates transparent evaluation and promotes student self-assessment and peer feedback.

Furthermore, Canva's integration with platforms such as Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams enhances its utility in digital assessment workflows. Educators can embed Canva created content into learning management systems (LMS), allowing for seamless distribution and submission tracking. The platform's design features also make it easier to differentiate assessments based on learners' needs, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility.

Canva is not only a tool for content creation but also a valuable resource for reimagining assessment practices in higher education. By fostering creativity, collaboration, and visual literacy, Canva based assessments can provide a more holistic view of student learning and align more closely with the demands of an education in the digital age.

Despite the increasing use of digital tools in education, traditional assessment methods often fail to engage students meaningfully or support diverse learning preferences, particularly in online and blended learning environments. Many educators still rely on text-heavy tests and static assignments that do not fully harness the creative or collaborative potential of digital platforms. This gap highlights the need for alternative assessment approaches that are visually engaging, interactive, and adaptable to various academic contexts. The objective of this study is to explore how Canva, a user friendly and AI-powered design platform, can be effectively utilized for innovative assessment design in higher education, to enhance student engagement, promote creativity, and supporting formative and summative assessment practices in a digital learning environment.

Literature Review

Assessment in education has undergone a significant transformation with the integration of digital technologies. Despite their continued relevance, traditional pen-and-paper exams frequently fail to foster critical thinking, creativity, and engagement, particularly in the context of 21st-century learning (Andrade, 2019). Alternative assessments that involve multimedia and visual communication have gained traction in recent years, particularly in constructivist and student-centered learning environments.

Canva, as a digital design platform, provides a powerful tool for creating visually rich and interactive assessment materials. According to Ulya (2024), the use of visual tools such as infographics in assessments enhances student comprehension, particularly for abstract and complex topics. Similarly, Susanti et al. (2024) found that students assessed through Canva-based materials showed higher motivation and interest compared to those evaluated through conventional methods. These findings support the broader educational consensus that multimodal assessments contribute to deeper learning and improved retention (Mayer, 2009).

Furthermore, Canva aligns well with formative assessment practices. Educators can use Canva to create digital journals, concept maps, and tools for group project templates that help monitor student understanding throughout the learning process (Black & Wiliam, 2009). Canva's collaborative features also support peer assessment and self-reflection activities, consistent with Vygotsky's emphasis on social interaction as a driver for learning.

Significance of the study

This study highlights the growing potential of Canva as a tool not only for instructional content creation but also for innovative assessment design in higher education. By leveraging Canva's visual, interactive, and collaborative features, educators can develop assessments that better engage students, accommodate diverse learning preferences, and promote higher order thinking skills.

The significance in the post-pandemic educational landscape, where online and blended learning models have become prevalent. With Canva's accessibility across devices, integration with Learning Management Systems (LMS), and AI-powered tools, instructors can streamline assessment processes and enhance digital literacy for both teachers and students. Moreover, this study offers practical insights for universities and policymakers aiming to modernize curriculum delivery by incorporating flexible, inclusive, and creative assessment practices that go beyond traditional testing formats.

Benefits of the study

This study explains how Canva can help improve assessments in universities. It allows educators to create fun, creative, and student-friendly tasks. Canva also helps students build important skills like teamwork, creativity, and using digital tools. It works well with online platforms like Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams. Table 1 lists the benefits of the study and how Canva improves instruction and makes learning more engaging.

Table 1: Benefits of the study

Benefit	Description
Enhance Assessment Innovation	Promotes the use of Canva for creating alternative assessments that are visual, interactive, and student-centered.
Supports 21st-Century Skills	Encourages the development of creativity, digital literacy, collaboration, and design thinking among students.
Improve Teaching Practices	Provides educators with practical strategies to design formative and summative assessments using AI-powered and collaborative tools.
Integrate with Digital Platforms	Demonstrates how Canva integrates with LMS platforms like Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams to streamline workflow.
Supports Education Transformation	Aligns with global trends in digital education by offering flexible, engaging, and modern alternatives to traditional assessment methods.

Through providing educators and representatives with pertinent information, this study encourages a reconsideration of conventional assessment methods and the utilization of digital resources that complement contemporary learning goals. In a variety of academic fields, the study demonstrates Canva's potential as an assessment tool that aids in the creation of more efficient, welcoming, and stimulating learning environments.

Features in Canva for Assessment and Learning

The integration of digital tools in education has transformed how assessments are designed, delivered, and experienced by students. Canva, as a versatile and user-friendly platform, offers a wide range of features that support innovative assessment practices in higher education. These features not only enhance the visual quality of learning materials but also promote student engagement, collaboration, and creativity. Table 2 below highlights key Canva tools that provide practical benefits for educators, students, and institutions seeking to modernize their assessment strategies.

Table 2: Related Features in Canva for Assessment and Learning

Feature	Description	Use in Education
Templates Library	Thousands of customizable templates for infographics, posters, reports, worksheets, and presentations.	Design visually rich assignments, rubrics, or student projects quickly.
Real-Time Collaboration	Multiple users can edit the same design simultaneously.	Supports group work, peer editing, and collaborative assessments.

Magic Write	AI-powered text generator within Canva Docs and designs.	Helps students brainstorm, draft reflections, or summarize content.
Magic Design	AI generates design layouts based on uploaded content or prompts.	Speeds up creation of assessment visuals like comparison charts or timelines.
Presentation Mode	Interactive presentation tools, including transitions and animations.	Useful for student-led presentations or digital storytelling assessments.
LMS Integration	Canva integrates with Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, and others.	Makes it easy to distribute, collect, and track student submissions.
Folder and Version Control	Organize content and revert to previous versions.	Helps manage different versions of assignments or shared group work.
Canva Docs	Combines document writing with design elements.	Ideal for reflective journals, visual essays, or digital portfolios.

Canva empowers educators with practical, creative, and accessible tools that transform traditional teaching and assessment methods. Its versatile features support the development of visually engaging, collaborative, and interactive learning materials that cater to diverse student needs. By integrating Canva into educational practices, educators can enhance student engagement, streamline content creation, and foster a more dynamic and inclusive learning environment.

Conclusion

Incorporating Canva into assessment design represents a shift toward more student-centered, visually engaging, and technologically aligned evaluation methods in higher education. As demonstrated in prior research, Canva based assessments can increase student motivation, foster creativity, and enhance comprehension by allowing learners to express their knowledge through infographics, presentations, and other digital media formats.

By providing a flexible platform for designing both formative and summative assessments, Canva addresses the need for diverse evaluation strategies that support 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and digital fluency. Moving forward, educational institutions should consider training educators in Canva based assessment design and encouraging its integration into teaching and learning practices. Doing so will help create more meaningful, engaging, and equitable learning experiences for all students.

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