

The Efficacy of Canva as a Digital Tool for Enhancing Student Learning in Multimedia Interactive Subjects

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DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.24191/ijelhe.v20n2.2021>

Received: 18 November 2024

Accepted: 13 March 2025

Date Published Online: 30 June 2025

Published: 30 June 2025

Abstract: This study investigates the effectiveness of Canva as a digital tool for enhancing student learning in multimedia and interactive subjects. Drawing on data from 125 university students across four classes, the research explores Canva's impact on student comprehension, engagement, and note-taking performance. Participants engaged in peer-teaching activities using Canva to create multimedia-based educational content, which was subsequently evaluated using rubrics and post-activity surveys. The results indicate that students reported high levels of perceived engagement, understanding, and collaborative effectiveness when using Canva compared to traditional tools such as Microsoft PowerPoint. The platform's intuitive interface and versatile design features were particularly well-received, contributing to students' preference for Canva in educational contexts. Overall, the findings suggest that Canva can serve as a valuable pedagogical resource in visually oriented learning environments. The study recommends further exploration of its implementation across diverse subjects and educational settings to maximise its educational impact.

Keywords: Canva, digital tools, multimedia learning, note-taking, student engagement

1. INTRODUCTION

The integration of digital technology in education has become increasingly critical for enhancing teaching and learning experiences in both schools and higher education institutions. Digital tools serve not only as platforms for information delivery but also as active facilitators of student engagement and interaction. For meaningful learning to occur, educators must employ tools that are not only accessible but also capable of presenting content in engaging and pedagogically sound formats (Saykili, 2019).

Among the expanding range of educational technologies, Canva has emerged as a versatile and user-friendly platform that enables students and teachers to create visually rich, interactive content. With over 20 content formats and millions of users worldwide, Canva's drag-and-drop interface, accessible via mobile and desktop, has positioned it as a popular choice for creating educational materials (Gehred, 2020; Nurhidayat, 2021; Daff, 2022). It offers a wide selection of templates, icons, and design features that facilitate the development of learning materials aligned with multimedia learning theories (Saputra et al., 2022; Fitria, 2022).

Visual learning is particularly relevant in multimedia-focused subjects, where students benefit from the integration of text, images, audio, video, and animation. Research suggests that platforms like Canva facilitate deeper comprehension and engagement by enabling students to visualise abstract ideas and collaborate on content creation (Smaldino et al., 2019; Wijayanti, 2022). The interactive and creative nature of Canva also aligns with constructivist and participatory learning models, encouraging students to take an active role in their learning journey (Muldinillah & Rizaldi, 2021; Wahyuni & Thohiriyah, 2018; Jamaludin & Sedek, 2023).

Furthermore, studies show that Canva enhances students' creativity and communication skills, particularly in collaborative assignments and project-based learning contexts (Anggraeni & Pentury, 2022; Yundayani et al., 2019). Its ability to create a visually stimulating and flexible learning environment has been linked to improved student motivation, focus, and memory retention (Fauziyah et al., 2022).

Despite these advantages, limitations still exist. The effectiveness of Canva is often dependent on the digital literacy of educators and students. Inadequate training or infrastructure can limit the platform's full potential in the classroom (Baryshnikova et al., 2021). Additionally, while Canva has been explored as a presentation tool, its specific application for note-taking and interactive peer learning remains underexplored.

Given the increasing importance of digital tools in higher education and the visual nature of multimedia subjects, this study seeks to examine the role of Canva in enhancing student learning outcomes. It investigates explicitly Canva's effectiveness as a platform for peer teaching, note creation, and student engagement, thereby addressing a gap in the literature and contributing to the broader discourse on technology-enhanced learning.

2. OBJECTIVE

This study examines the effectiveness of Canva as a digital tool for enhancing student learning in multimedia and interactive subjects. Specifically, the research will:

1. Objective 1: Assess how Canva enhances students' comprehension of multimedia concepts through the integration of visual and interactive content.
2. Objective 2: Investigate students' preferences for using Canva compared to other digital tools, such as Microsoft PowerPoint, particularly in creating comprehensive and visually appealing notes.
3. Objective 3: Compare students' effectiveness in note-taking and their overall learning experience when using Canva as opposed to traditional tools for creating and sharing academic content.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the effectiveness of Canva as a digital tool for enhancing student learning in multimedia interactive subjects. The research was conducted with 125 diploma-level students enrolled in Multimedia courses across four classes at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). The methodology consisted of three main stages: (1) the implementation of group-based learning activities using Canva, (2) student content creation and presentation, and (3) post-activity survey evaluation.

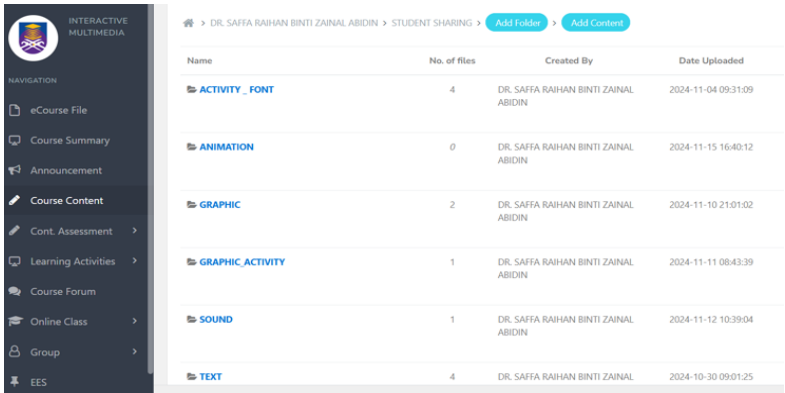
3.1 PREPARATION OF STUDENT GROUP ACTIVITIES (PEER TEACHING & CANVA SUMMARY NOTES)

Lecturers facilitated the organisation of peer-teaching groups across four classes: CDCS1101C, CDCS1101E, CDCS1101F, and CDCS1115A. Each group, comprising three to four students, was assigned a multimedia topic covering five core components: text, graphics, audio, video, and animation. These five elements represent the foundational components of interactive multimedia content. The objective was to guide students in creating notes that synthesise these elements into engaging, coherent teaching materials using Canva.

To initiate the activity, lecturers conducted orientation sessions to familiarise students with Canva's interface and features. Students were guided on creating Canva accounts, exploring the platform's templates, and choosing between slide and poster formats to suit their assigned topics. They were also instructed to rename their design files based on class and group identifiers for streamlined submission.

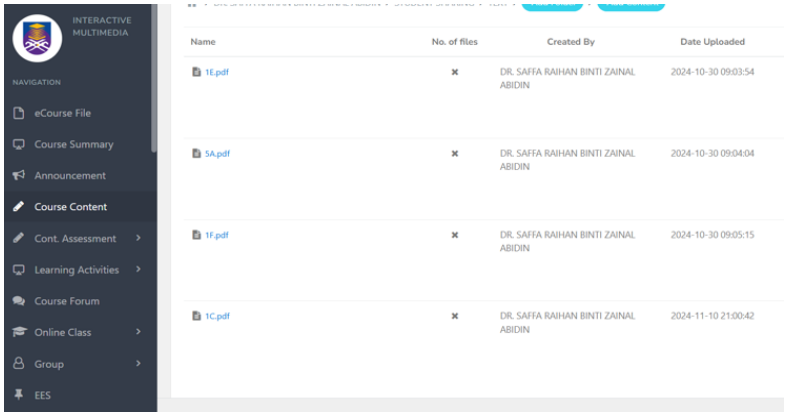
Each group worked collaboratively to research their assigned topic, design multimedia-rich notes, and prepare for peer-teaching sessions. These tasks not only aimed to strengthen content mastery but also to enhance teamwork and digital literacy. The collaborative aspect of Canva allowed group members to co-edit and contribute synchronously and asynchronously.

Lecturers reviewed drafts prior to class presentations, providing formative feedback to help refine content and presentation quality. Final outputs were uploaded weekly to UFUTURE—UiTM’s official learning management system—into designated class folders organised by topic, as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.



Name	No. of files	Created By	Date Uploaded
ACTIVITY_FONT	4	DR. SAFFA RAHAN BINTI ZAINAL ABIDIN	2024-11-04 09:31:09
ANIMATION	0	DR. SAFFA RAHAN BINTI ZAINAL ABIDIN	2024-11-15 16:40:12
GRAPHIC	2	DR. SAFFA RAHAN BINTI ZAINAL ABIDIN	2024-11-10 21:01:02
GRAPHIC_ACTIVITY	1	DR. SAFFA RAHAN BINTI ZAINAL ABIDIN	2024-11-11 08:43:39
SOUND	1	DR. SAFFA RAHAN BINTI ZAINAL ABIDIN	2024-11-12 10:39:04
TEXT	4	DR. SAFFA RAHAN BINTI ZAINAL	2024-10-30 09:01:25

Figure 1: Folder structure in UFUTURE organised by classes and topics.



Name	No. of files	Created By	Date Uploaded
1E.pdf	✖	DR. SAFFA RAHAN BINTI ZAINAL ABIDIN	2024-10-30 09:03:54
5A.pdf	✖	DR. SAFFA RAHAN BINTI ZAINAL ABIDIN	2024-10-30 09:04:04
1F.pdf	✖	DR. SAFFA RAHAN BINTI ZAINAL ABIDIN	2024-10-30 09:05:15
1C.pdf	✖	DR. SAFFA RAHAN BINTI ZAINAL ABIDIN	2024-11-10 21:00:42

Figure 2: Weekly student uploads categorised by topics and classes.

3.2 RUBRIC DESIGN AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

To assess the quality of student-created Canva materials and presentations, a structured evaluation rubric was employed. This rubric, adapted from Jamaludin and Sedek (2023), allowed for consistent and transparent grading across all groups. The rubric was organised into three dimensions: Content Comprehensiveness, Presentation Style, and Canva Visual Design. Each dimension was rated using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Fair) to 5 (Excellent), with a total possible score of 30 points.

As shown in Table 1, the rubric outlined specific criteria for each evaluation dimension. Content comprehensiveness focuses on the accuracy and depth of subject explanation, the inclusion of relevant examples, and practical application tips. Presentation Style was evaluated based on clarity, confidence, engagement with the audience, and responsiveness during Q&A. Canva Visual Design emphasised the use of colour schemes, font choices, and layout effectiveness to ensure the content was visually organised and aligned with educational goals.

No	Aspect	Details
1.	Comprehensive Presentation	● Provide an explanation with examples ● Explain in detail how to use the method/ ● Provide tips and know-how on how to understand the method
2.	Presentation style	● Easy to understand ● Confident and eloquent ● Able to answer questions given
3.	CANVA digital notes	● Effective design (effective use of colours, fonts, and layout; clear and organised visual) ● Content

Table 1: Canva digital notes marking rubric

To supplement this assessment, students submitted links to their Canva projects via a designated submission system, as seen in Figure 3. These links enabled lecturers to access and review the digital materials remotely. During in-class sessions, students presented their summary notes to peers, providing a platform to evaluate not only design but also communication and delivery skills, as illustrated in Figure 4.



Figure 3: Canva presentation submission link



Figure 4: Student-led presentations of Canva-based summary notes during lessons.

3.3 SURVEY DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

To gain insight into student experiences and perceived learning outcomes, a structured questionnaire was administered after the completion of peer-teaching sessions. The survey was distributed to all 125 participating students across the four classes. It was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative portion consisted of 10 closed-ended items rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree). These items evaluated various aspects of Canva usage, including perceived engagement, content comprehension, note-sharing efficiency, and overall satisfaction with Canva as a digital learning tool. Some sample survey statements included the following:

- “Using Canva helped me understand the learning content better.”
- “I found Canva more engaging than other digital tools like PowerPoint.”
- “Creating and sharing notes via Canva improved my collaboration with peers.”

The qualitative portion consisted of open-ended questions that encouraged students to share their reflections on their experience, preferred features, and suggestions for improvement. Responses were collected digitally through the UFUTURE platform and exported for analysis.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics to summarise trends, such as average agreement scores and response frequencies. The analysis focused on identifying overall student satisfaction, tool usability, and the comparative advantages of this tool over traditional tools. If applicable, future iterations of the study may also incorporate visual data summaries, such as pie charts or bar graphs, to illustrate item-wise results (to be presented in Figure 5 or beyond in the Results section).

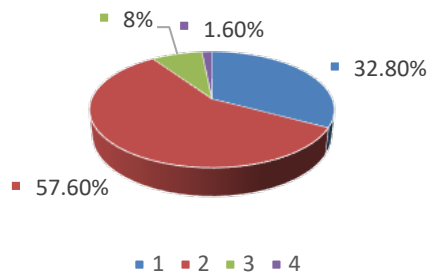
This survey-based component complemented observational and rubric-based evaluations, enhancing methodological triangulation. Together, the findings from the structured survey and evaluative criteria provided a holistic understanding of Canva’s efficacy in multimedia learning environments.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results revealed significant insights into students' familiarity, engagement, and preferences regarding Canva compared to traditional tools such as Microsoft PowerPoint. Responses from 125 students across four classes were analysed to understand the perceived value of Canva in enhancing multimedia learning experiences.

As illustrated in Figure 5, before participating in the classroom activities, 32.8% of students were already very familiar with Canva, having used it extensively, while 57.6% had used it a few times. Only 8% had heard of it but never used it, and 1.6% were entirely unfamiliar with it. This pre-activity familiarity suggests a strong baseline of awareness that is likely to influence the ease of adoption and subsequent learning outcomes.

Familiarity with Canva before this activity?



1. **Very Familiar** -I have used Canva extensively before this activity
2. **Somewhat Familiar** - I have used Canva a few times before this activity
3. **Not very familiar** - I have only heard of Canva, but have not used it before this activity
4. **Not at all familiar** - I have never heard of Canva before this activity

Figure 5: Pie Chart showing students' familiarity with Canva before the activity

In contrast, all 125 students reported a high familiarity with Microsoft PowerPoint, as depicted in Figure 6. This widespread familiarity reflects PowerPoint's long-standing role in academic environments. However, when asked to compare the effectiveness of both tools, a striking difference was observed.

Familiarity with Microsoft PowerPoint before this activity

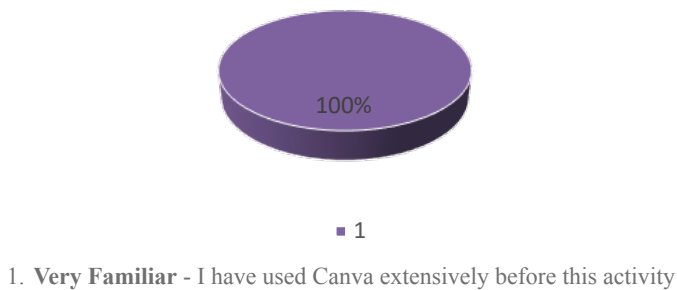


Figure 6: Pie chart showing students' familiarity with Microsoft PowerPoint before the activity

Figure 7 presents student preferences regarding the convenience of Canva versus PowerPoint for note creation and sharing. An overwhelming majority expressed that Canva was easier to use and allowed them to express creativity more effectively. This aligns with Figure 8, where Canva was preferred for ease of preparation and dissemination of digital notes.

Platform that was easier to use for
creating visually appealing and
comprehensive notes

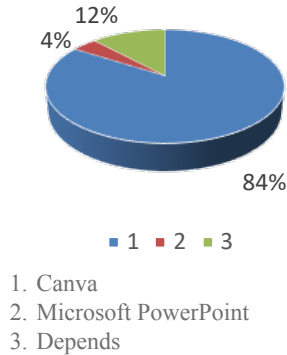


Figure 7: Pie chart comparing the convenience of Canva and PowerPoint the activity

Platform that more comfortable using
for note preparation and sharing

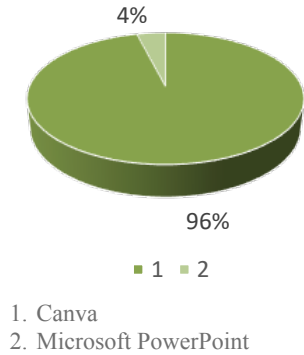


Figure 8: Pie chart depicting perceived ease of preparation and sharing using Canva

Furthermore, students found Canva to be better aligned with their learning styles. As shown in Figure 9, Canva was selected for its user-friendly interface, which facilitates customisation and collaborative note creation.

Platform that better aligned with personal learning style and preferences

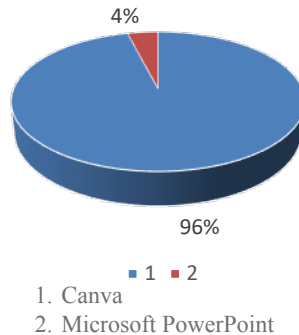


Figure 9: Pie chart showing application alignment with personal learning styles

Canva was also found to be more effective in promoting student engagement and comprehension, as highlighted in Figure 10. Students reported greater interaction during presentations and a better understanding of the topics covered.

Platform that are more effective in promoting engagement and comprehension of the material

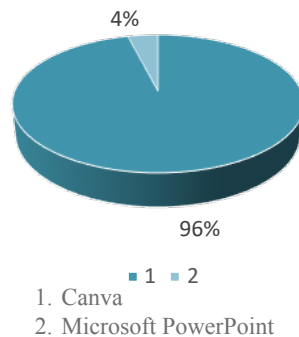


Figure 10: Pie chart illustrating which application was perceived as more effective in promoting engagement and comprehension

Moreover, Figure 11 illustrates Canva’s advantages in offering unique features such as collaborative editing, vibrant design elements, and mobile compatibility—benefits not typically found in traditional tools.

Platform that offer any unique
features or advantages over
traditional note taking methods

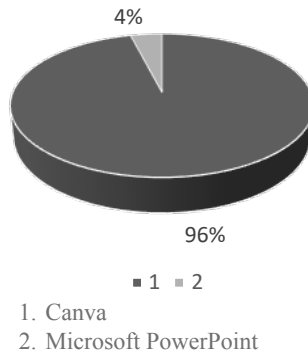


Figure 11: Pie chart comparing unique features and advantages of Canva over PowerPoint.

The open-ended responses further enriched these findings. Students cited improved collaboration, greater interest in multimedia topics, and enjoyment in designing personalised materials as significant advantages of Canva. Many noted that they retained information better and were more motivated to review their peers’ work. The ability to co-create visual content fostered a sense of shared ownership over learning and improved peer-to-peer communication.

In particular, students appreciated the visual and organisational freedom provided by Canva. Unlike rigid tools like PowerPoint, Canva’s design-centric features encouraged the exploration of aesthetics, which helped contextualise academic concepts more intuitively. This aligns with constructivist learning theories, which propose that knowledge is constructed through active engagement and personal relevance. Students expressed feelings of engagement when transforming abstract multimedia concepts into visual representations that enhanced content retention and comprehension.

These results support previous studies (e.g., Murray et al., 2012; Saputra et al., 2022) indicating that visually rich and interactive platforms can significantly enhance digital learning. Canva served as more than a design tool—it functioned as a medium for content synthesis, reflection, and knowledge co-construction.

Furthermore, the feedback highlighted Canva’s potential to democratise classroom participation. Students who were typically less confident in verbal presentations felt empowered to express their ideas visually, contributing equally to group tasks. This aspect of inclusivity is especially critical in multimedia subjects, where diverse skill sets—from design to communication—are essential.

While Canva’s usability was praised, students noted limitations related to internet access and the learning curve for first-time users. Some students initially struggled with balancing layouts or selecting appropriate colour schemes. These technical gaps highlight the importance of providing ongoing support, scaffolded tutorials, and digital literacy training in conjunction with the adoption of Canva.

In summary, Canva’s design flexibility, user engagement, and visual richness contribute to a more engaging and collaborative learning experience. It not only enhances comprehension and note-sharing but also fosters motivation, creativity, and peer collaboration. These outcomes suggest that Canva can serve as a powerful complement—or even a preferred replacement—to traditional presentation tools in interactive multimedia courses.

5. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated the educational efficacy of Canva as a digital tool in enhancing student learning experiences, particularly in multimedia interactive subjects. By analysing student-created visual notes, peer-teaching activities, and survey feedback from 125 participants, the findings highlight Canva’s strong potential to improve engagement, comprehension, and collaborative learning.

Students found Canva to be more effective than traditional tools like Microsoft PowerPoint, particularly in its ability to support visual expression, foster creativity, and accommodate diverse learning preferences. The platform's accessibility and interactivity empowered students to take ownership of their learning and collaborate meaningfully with peers. These benefits were evident through both quantitative metrics and qualitative feedback, which emphasised improved understanding, motivation, and group dynamics.

However, the study also uncovered some limitations, including challenges related to internet access and the initial learning curve for new users. Addressing these barriers through structured digital literacy training and inclusive infrastructural support will be essential to leverage Canva's capabilities fully. Ultimately, this research confirms that Canva is not merely a design tool but a transformative medium for instructional delivery, active learning, and student-centred engagement. Its integration into multimedia courses offers a compelling alternative to conventional methods and suggests promising directions for future curriculum design in digital education. Further research is recommended to explore Canva's application across different disciplines and educational levels, thereby broadening the generalizability of these findings.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to the College of Computing, Informatics, and Mathematics at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Pahang, Kampus Raub, Pahang, Malaysia, for providing the venue for experiments, data analysis, and technical assistance. Their extraordinary contributions have greatly improved the quality of this thesis paper.

7. FUNDING

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

8. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Saffa Raihan Zainal Abidin and Mohd Azim Zainal designed, organised and conducted the experiments. Authors Nurkhuzaimah Fazreen Jaluddin and Nor Zalina Ismail prepared the data, contributed to the analysis of the results, and led the writing of the manuscript.

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

I certify that the article is the Authors' original work. The article has not received prior publication and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. This research/manuscript has not been submitted for publication, nor has it been published in whole or in part elsewhere. We testify to the fact that all Authors have contributed significantly to the work, validity and legitimacy of the data and its interpretation for submission to IJELHE.

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