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A Picture Paints a Thousand Words
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Overview

INTRODUCTION
BACKGROUND
CONTEXT
FRAME
DESIGN
FINDINGS
RECOMMENDATIONS
Storytelling has a rich history – more so in Africa
The Value of Digital media

• The value of using digital media in inculcating information literacy depends on its ability to generate a series of cognitive metaphors and images associated with words to share content.

• Tool to enhance information literacy and metaliteracy for higher education students.
“As a pedagogical tool, digital storytelling can draw on and generate new forms of literacy – information, visual, digital, experiential – and expand our understanding of what literacy means in the 21st century”

- Used and adapted to students at any level
- In the classroom it can facilitate active learning as students learn to plan and craft stories – like a research essay or creative writing assignment for the digital age.
Globally, many LIS design DSLs are used for effective communication.

- Improves literacies
- Increases parity in active participation
- Towards self-directedness and self-determination

A requirement for succeeding in tertiary studies and beyond.
The value of DST

- Engaging qualities that could further lead to motivate students
- Ideally, students should be able to participate in the creation of digital stories
- Many academic LIS sectors have makerspaces or ‘Fablabs’, being digital fabrication spaces, where students can develop these and other digital skills, strengthened by multimodal experiences
- Globally, STEM and Health disciplines share success stories in using DST to meaningfully relay difficult concepts to recipients and patients
- The ability to engage with digital technology for content creation while also understanding the affective impact of telling a story
The strength of DST – looking for potential impact

• The strength of storytelling lies in its ability to create a meaningful series of images associated with words intended to share experiences for further collaboration

• Designing and utilizing microcontent correctly could support micro learning as an ideal educational tool for LIS
DST is more than a tutorial video

• With the developments of technology assisted teaching, we see a renewed awareness and interest in making use of DST

• DST has been applied effectively in areas such as marketing, but is also becoming a valuable and popular tool in in higher education in microlearning

• Typically, digital storytelling consists of short, two to ten minutes videos with a short and focused message of micro content

• DST combines the art of telling stories with a mixture of digital media, including text, pictures, recorded audio narration, music, and video
7 Steps in DST design (Adapted from Lambert, 2010)

1. Owning insights as storyteller
2. Own emotions
3. Finding the moment
4. Visualise your story
5. Hear your story
6. Assemble
7. Share
Social cognitive justice and DST

“We have faced (and are still facing) a crisis of cognition, which has left us repeatedly falling back into the safety of minimalist tinkering with change, instead of pro-actively innovating deep inside the system in support of Africa’s development. We must acknowledge that the repeated failures to achieve Education for all arise from problems within the education structure and because of the system’s inability to re-configure itself for the provision of lifelong learning for all human beings” (Odora-Hoppers 2000,2)
Sharing the results of three cases
The southern African HEI landscape

South African higher education rests on the total of 478 registered higher education institutions (HEIs)

- 26 public universities
- 125 registered private higher education institutions (PHEIs)
- 50 technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges
- 268 registered private colleges, and nine community education and training (CET) colleges
- 916 774 undergraduate students in South Africa in 2022
- Anticipated dropout rate of between 50%-60%
- English as a second or even a third language
DST and the articulation gap

• Many South African students have poor reading skills, but they also have an aversion to reading which is a barrier in education

• A recent study by Khumalo and Reddy (2021) offers valuable new insights to how joint support efforts in South African HEIs can assist in closing the existing articulation gaps between basic and higher education phases and expedite academic success

• They looked at writing centers and the use DST - holds great potential

• DST can address this problem
• New entry level students (phygital generations) prefer microcontent to long and wordy communication (Vu 2019; Van Wyk 2022)
• Preference to all things mobile
• Mind the articulation gap
• Challenge for LIS
• Possibilities to capitalize of DST
Research question

Are there sufficient awareness and application of this tool in South African HEI LIS?

Particularly where academic LIS is tasked to support all literacies, including IL and metaliteracy
How to improve student experience?

- Motivating a case for DST usage in a South African context cannot proceed without giving due cognizance of the cultural sensitivity required.
- Need to understanding cultural intelligence around social cognitive justice in higher education - a far more complex issue than previously realised.
- 3 case studies in SA HEIs
- Survey questionnaire with staff identified by Heads and Directors
- Group interviews
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
LIS & DST KEY RESULTS

01 USAGE
Only half of respondents create their own DSTs.

02 DESIGN
Respondents were not familiar with 7 steps.

03 DISTRIBUTION
Most shared that they share DST during IL sessions, some share via Social Media. Little to no collaboration with faculty teaching AL.

04 CULTURE
All shared that they are sensitized to cognitive justice, and check for possible transgressions.

05 RESOURCES, SUPPORT
Indicated that there are support, but must be improved. Less than have feel they have the required skill sets, but most felt they should develop this skill.

06 SUMMARY
Participants feel that that this is an underutilized resource. They shared that they lack pedagogical knowledge. They are often excluded when HEI develop technology assisted techniques.
Status quo of DST

• Though DSL has been incorporated and use in L&T, uptake in LIS is slow

• Remain with the more traditional orientation and facilitation such as IL facilitation workshops

• Instead of offering one-directional teaching and learning where the lecturer/librarian is in a position of authority, they can become co-constructors of knowledge
Recommendations
A few success stories
Effective use of the 7 steps
7 Steps in DST design (Adapted from Lambert, 2010)

Step 1: Owning insights as storyteller
Step 2: Own emotions
Step 3: Finding the moment
Step 4: Visualise your story
Step 5: Hear your story
Step 6: Assemble
Step 7: Share
The need to invest in DSL

• Gowen (2019) explains that the academic librarian is ideally placed to accommodate and promote DST across disciplines, and stresses that cognitive science studies confirmed that narratives are easier to process and recall than just informational writing.

• “Brains actually engage with narratives differently than they do with non-narrative statements of facts, allowing them to open themselves to persuasion and more effortlessly retain facts when stimulated with a story” (Gowen, 2019. 3)
Conclusion

• The value of DST is untapped

• Must move away from traditional one-directional information literacy facilitation in the form of workshops, guides and a website with limited information

• HEI lacks proactive planning in developing synergy between existing literacy resources and efforts being academic literacy offered as a credit-bearing module on first-year level
Thank you

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References


References and further reading


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