

Literature in the Digital Era: Revolutionizing Indian Classrooms

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Abstract

In today's Digital World from schools to colleges till our work places, Technology plays a very vital role. Technology has now become inevitable in almost all the fields, it is also evident from the campaign, "Digital India" as it is considered that technology is a mandatory element in an individual's life. Moving on to literature and its teaching which involves the technology much unlike the older times because literature comprises of emotions and feelings which should be conveyed to the learners. Sadly, these components are not optimally presented in the way they should be in a traditional teaching method. Digital and Technical approach in teaching Literature comes as a solution for this problem. This paper focuses on ways in which English Literature can be effectively taught in classrooms with the use of technology, it mainly focuses on different genres of English Literature like poetry and drama making the English teaching more vibrant and lively.

INTRODUCTION

"Revolutionizing Indian classrooms", the phrase itself indicates the fact that technology and digital media plays a vital role in revolutionizing the classrooms. In this XXI century there has been a great transition period between the paper and the digital era. When technology has now become an unavoidable source of education, why don't we bring it directly to the classrooms? We are not trying to overthrow the traditional teaching method, but trying to bring this technology as a 'supplement' to the monotonous teaching. As Dr. Ray Clifford says,

“Technology won’t replace teachers but teachers who understand technology will replace those who lack knowledge in technology”

Technology cannot overthrow traditional teaching method as we need teachers to teach us life values which are the centre point of every education. In this rapidly developing technological world robots are being programmed to replace teachers but human emotions and feelings can only be conveyed only by a human where technology becomes secondary. We all are aware of the fact that technology is not a brief subject that can be discussed but we have some important elements which forms the basis of technology which should be implied in the classrooms. Technology in education not only provides us with sources for learning materials but also videos, audios, apps and games which will be very effective in the classrooms.

Literature which mainly deals with truth, emotions, feelings, dialogues and slangs from various contexts demands the need to be conveyed with the same intention, feelings and emotions in which it has been presented. The paper focuses on two main digital theories connectivism and digital blooms that can be applied in the classrooms, and the paper provides with implementable materials for learning in classrooms and a survey on the effectiveness of technology as a supplement.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Integration of technology with education, not only increases the interest of the students in learning, but also moulds them to thrive in this digitally connected world. According to Kramsh, A’Ness and Lam, “enhancing technology in classrooms changed the very concept of authorship. Students not only write the texts but also changed the rules of how a text should be written”(Erben, Ban, &Castañeda, 2009,p:81). There are some digital theories in English Language Teaching like Connectivism and Digital Blooms by George Siemen and Andrew Churches respectively which helps teachers to frame a better curriculum to ignite the interest in literature among the students and make the learners more enthusiastic.

Connectivism is a XXI century learning theory, created by George Siemens which gave importance to technology. Connectivism can be defined as “the thesis that knowledge is distributed across a network of connections and therefore, learning consists of the ability to construct and transverse those networks” (Lang,2016, P:347) .Connectivism mainly focus on the use of Internet sources like Wikis, Email, Browsers, YouTube, Online discussion Forum

and other Web tools which helps to create a new opportunity for the students to share and learn across World Wide Web. The massive open online course (MOOC) phenomenon is one of the applications of connectivist theory in learning.

Bloom's digital theory was created by Andrew Churches which is an extension of revised version of Bloom's taxonomy. Through this, Andrew tried to create a hierarchy of learning process in the digital environment and also suggested a technology for each level of learning activity. Bloom's Taxonomy was originally developed by Benjamin Bloom in 1956 as a structure, which depicts different level of learning process. The levels of learning process that he identified were: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Later it was revised by Lorin Anderson and David Karathwohl and published taxonomy by reordering the sequence of category and used verb instead of nouns for each level. It was this revised version that Andrew used to formulate the digital bloom's taxonomy. The categories used in revised version as such included in Andrew's taxonomy, but extending them into the digital environment.

Remembering is the process of retrieving knowledge. In Digital Taxonomy, it is the lowest of the taxonomic level and can be used to produce definitions and lists. Students can use basic searches like Google (www.google.com) Bing (www.bing.com) or Yahoo (www.yahoo.com). Understanding is the next taxonomic level which is defines as the construction of meaning and the building of relationship. Learning activity can be done in this level with the help of categorising and tagging of bookmarks and this can be done with the help of apps like Delicious (www.delicious.com) which helps in the students to bookmark relevant information. The next level in the taxonomic level is the applying where students apply their learned knowledge or implement skills, which help them to produce a presentation, document or situation. Editing of wiki pages, such as Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org) is the one way in which students can apply their knowledge. Analysing is the next level where students learn to process data, dividing it into parts and understanding the relationship between parts and overall purpose of the project. In this case digitally, Google forms and Survey Monkey(www.surveymonkey.com) can be used. Evaluation is the next level of Bloom's Digital Taxonomy where students required to made criteria-based judgement through the process of critiquing and checking. In this case, digitally it can do by moderating and responding to comments made on a blog post. Digital environment is so vast so that students can easily participate in several forum posting. Through comments student

must be able to critically decide what is relevant and respond appropriately. There are several free blogging platforms like Wordpress (www.wordpress.com) where the student would write a blog post on a subject of their choosing, encouraging comment and interaction with the ideas presented in the blog post. Creating is the final taxonomic level, which is concerned with taking various elements and creating a new, coherent product. The learning activity which the student could participate in at this level could be the publishing and distribution of an e-book through the Amazon (www.amazon.com) platform.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Media incorporates a robust influence on the social, emotional, and psychological feature development of today's youth, accounting for an outsized portion of their time (Roberts, Foehr, & Rideout, 2005). There are several efforts to integrate completely different varieties of technology, like software package and on-line technologies, to push student learning.

As Sefton-green (2005) concluded from an in depth review of literature during this area: Computers and alternative aspects of knowledge and Communication Technologies (ICT) enable kids and teens a wide form of activities and experiences, that may support learning, which is not present itself in traditional academic settings.

Technology based learning environments have become an equalizing force for the struggling learners as they supply opportunities to demonstrate competency (Brodin, 2010; Smith & Okolo, 2010). Therefore, adequate technological exposure within the information is required for college students, who are facing risk factors like dropping out of school and low graduation rates. The literature reveals benefits of learning with technology for at-risk students such as higher level of achievement and better engagement in the learning environment (Allsop, McHatton & Farmer, 2010; Smith & Okolo, 2010).

During these twenty five years, the majority of the paper-like material has been transferred to digital format. The field of education has witnessed the transition from coursebooks and workbooks to e-coursebooks and e-workbooks. These e-books are more accessible, cheaper, portable, easy to store, contain audio and video and are also environment-friendly. This revolutionary process of digitalization has brought in use newer possibilities and applications, whereas some traditional ideas of education have consequently changed a great deal during this relatively short period (Ricardo Casañ-Pitarch).

Literature-based, digital media, and arts-infused instruction in classroom literacy programs invites creativity, which “can be unpredictable and at times unnerving” (Albers & Harste, 2007, p. 18) for educators, it is this very uncertainty that opens up new possibilities and opportunities for students to interpret information and to express themselves in creative ways (Jewitt & Kress, 2003). A few studies counsel that the utilization of computer-based technologies within the schoolroom is related to positive educational outcomes, as well as higher score through effective learning (Melmed, 1995; Schacer, 1999).

LEARNING MATERIALS

Literature is a form of human expression where emotions, passions, imagination and feelings are its language. To convey these elements in classroom is a difficult task. But with the use of technology, different genres of literature like poem, drama and novel can effectively taught. Following are the different technological materials that can be used in educational fields.

Poetry is the oldest form of literature, usually written down with some sort of meter or rhythm to evoke meanings in addition to, or in place of ostensible meaning. Before writing scripts are invented, poems (even stories) were in the oral form, where people recited poems with tone and rhythm, so that it is widely spread among person to person. Today, because of the invention of various scripts, poetry is written down in some or the other script. Coming to the classrooms, unfortunately, poetries are taught just by reading it and not by reciting it. Therefore the old tradition of teaching poetry by reciting, which gave proper emphasis on the significance of different frequencies of sound through which the mind understands poetry naturally, promptly, smoothly, permanently and, thus, more pleasantly. These true essences of poetry are not fully produced in classrooms. This problem can be tackled with the help of digital technology. Indian people have a notion that technology will replace teachers, but with the help of ICT (Information and communication technology), the traditional teaching method of reciting poetry can be revived. Poetry can be taught in the classroom as a recitation art with the help of ICT in the following ways: Videos related to the poem to be taught, which will help readers to acquire an understanding of symbols, sounds, images of the poem. Instrumental music related to the poem to be taught, which may be played for producing background music to feel the melody of the poem. Standard recitation by native speaker of English language of the poem to be taught may be used for teaching students the correct way

of recitation of the poem. There are many free technological sources such as Poetry Foundation, Poetry Out Loud, Poetry Teachers, The Poetry Archive, which runs with the aim to make a wide assortment of poetry accessible to a large audience. Recorder may be used for recording student's way of reciting the poem which enables them to listen to it later on to improve their ability of reciting the poem.

Drama is the performance of fictional or non-fictional events in a dialogue format. In layman's terms, a drama is usually called a play. As the term suggests, it should be something that is to be played. If dramas are read in classrooms, there won't be any difference between a drama and a prose. Drama is the one given the least time in most classrooms. Students respond best to drama when they are exposed to film or theatre versions and are encouraged to act out scenes passionately in classes. Dramas in classroom helps students to develop verbal and non-verbal communication, enhance students' psychological well-being, develop aesthetic skill and generate empathy and new perspective. Drama can be taught in the classroom itself as a performing art with the help of ICT in the following: Film of the drama can be taught, which may be useful for students to understand the art of performing a drama as well as helps to understand the plot. Audio of instrumental music related to the drama to be taught may be used for playing background music to create different moods of the drama. PPT (Power Point Presentation) of natural scenes related to the drama to be taught may be used for preparing background scenery to present different seasons of the drama.

Prose is a form of language with no metrical structure which is the opposite of verse or poetry. Even everyday speech is considered as prose. There are varieties of prose including novels, short stories, novellas, biographies, autobiography while other types include letters, diaries, journals, and non-fiction. Poems focus on sounds and feelings and prose consist of plots and characters. Sometimes prose is being read for a long period of time in classroom which will create a lack of interest in the students. In order to reduce that, prose can be taught with the help of ICT in the following ways: Documentary of the novel can be played in the class helps students in understanding it in a better way. Videos of various stages related to the short can be used for presenting its different stages to narrate it. A Digital Board having moving-text may be used for reading comfortably the long text of prose in large font size to avoid stress on eyes occurring due to the small font size of the printed text. E-newspapers/e-magazines/e-journals may be downloaded for providing them to students to inculcate in them the habit of reading varieties of prose published in them without carrying heavy printed text books. Blogs of various eminent authors of English language may be used

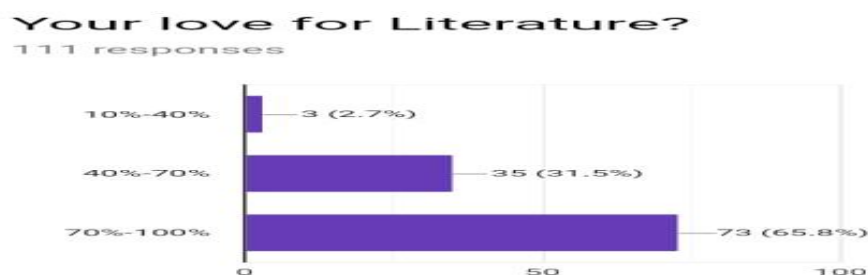
for teaching students the latest articles to make them aware of the contemporary trends in prose writing

According to TED-Ed blog, there are other few technological supplements which spark student's curiosity in learning and explore presentation literacy skills. This include Haikudeck, Evernote, Explain Everything, Oxford Dictionaries, Slack, Schoology, Edmodo, Socrative and Google Forms. Indian classrooms can be more effective with the following technological advancements.

METHOD AND FINDINGS:

A set of questions were asked on a survey as a part of this research to analyse on the effectiveness of technology in a literature classroom. The data for this study was collected by sending out 8 customized research questions and options to answer through the google survey form. The data was collected from 116 students of literature with an experience of technology and digital media in their classrooms to evaluate the use of technology and the real demand of technology as supplement in the classroom. The results from the survey are presented as graphs below

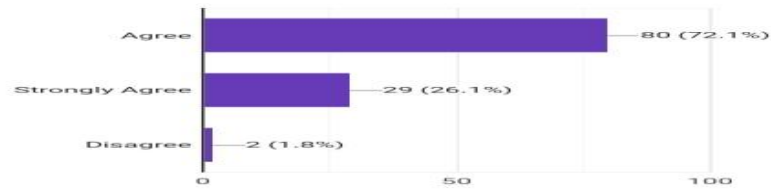
From the data that has been collected for the first research questions it is evident that most of the students love literature and they have passion towards it but few students (2.7%) are not much involved in the subject. Their interest and love towards literature can be boosted up with the help of technology.



A lecture is considered to be effective only if the student is able to recall the information's and the matters that has been discussed in the class, the second research question proves that most of the students agree to the method of using digital and technological support such as audios, videos, films in the classrooms for better learning.

Are you able to recall the lectures presented in classrooms digitally? (audio, video, films)

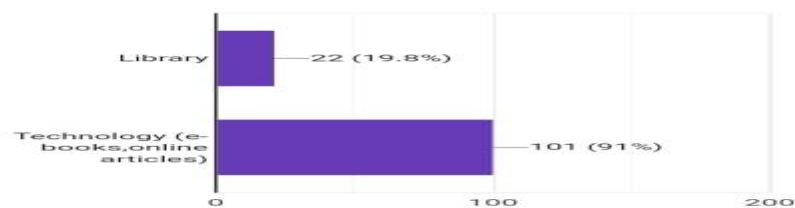
111 responses



Today's youth spend most of their time in their digital world from education to entertainment, so the third research question shows that most of the learners prefer technology for better understanding after their classroom lectures. Going to libraries and collecting materials is more time consuming unlike technology, as it has most of the sources and articles for their learning purpose.

For better understanding after the classroom lectures, what is your next step?

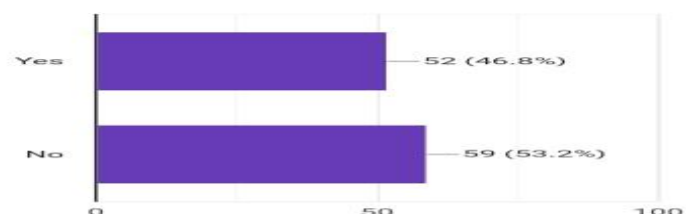
111 responses



The fourth research questions proves the fact that technology cannot overthrow traditional teaching method but only can be a supplement in the classrooms which will stir up the involvement of some students with less interest and prove to be a help and support to the students with its advantages.

Without technologies (smartphone, search engines, e-books, Google classroom) as a supplement, Is literature effective in classroom?

111 responses



Evaluation of one's work is a very important thing in the learning process. The fifth research question proves that Indian students are not aware of various methods in technology which comprises of different apps and websites which has both student and teacher logins where they can present their assignments online and get it evaluated online by the teachers, Through which the evaluation process can be made simpler and time saving.

What do you prefer?

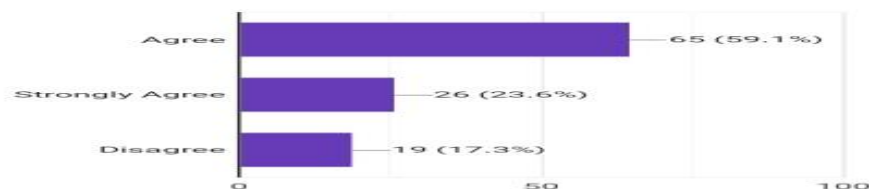
111 responses



As a literature student each and everyone will have a thriving passion to write something or to create something on their own. The sixth research question proves that the students welcome the platform provided by the technology for their creativity.

As a student, will you use the facility of publishing and distribution of e-books through the platforms like Amazon (www.amazon.com)?

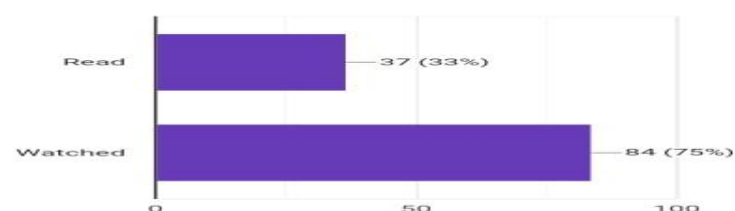
110 responses



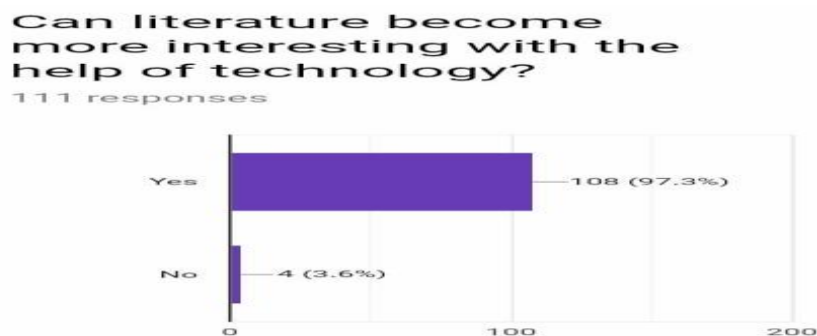
Visualization has a great effect on every individual anything which is seen is always remembered. The seventh research question proves that the students(75%) prefer dramas and novels to be watched for better remembrance and understanding.

Do you prefer ? Dramas/novels in classroom to be

112 responses



The final research question was quite direct and proves that most of the students agree to the idea of technology making literature effective in classrooms.



The results have proved the effectiveness and the usefulness of technology and also the unawareness of several existing technological supports such as websites, apps, games in the Indian classrooms because of the lack of implementing them in the classrooms and introducing them to the students.

CONCLUSION

The present study aimed at investigating the effects of traditional activities when integrated with technology and digital media. For this purpose, the participants' suggestions on the implementation of technology were examined through a survey. The study was focused on students who hold a literature degree. The positive opinions of the participants to use technology and digital media have shown that it can be attractive in the classrooms. The results of the study are important as it sheds some light to the importance of technology in literature by involving students with digital and technological experience and their positive attitude towards it. Unless and until technology is perfected we cannot completely rely on technology. Technology must serve as a support system in making the lectures interesting. Technology can distract students sometimes so it has to be used only as a supplement but cannot be relied upon completely until it is perfected.

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