

18.**Integrating Technology with English Literature, Language and Creativity**

Dr. Suchitra*

*Assistant Professor (English), MDU-CPAS, Gurugram, Haryana (India)

Literature has existed and evolved since the time humans have learned to communicate - from the oral folklores, biblical verses, classical hand written texts, printed texts to the e-books of the current scenario. We have come a long way from learning language and writing literature. The world, too, has undergone huge transformation and today we find ourselves in the middle of a paradigm shift as a global society. The present age is the age of ideas, inundating information, communication and interconnectivity between the remotest corners of the world. The present phase of human development can be said to be so far the most visually enthused phase and the present generation of youth the most visually enthused generation to teach. The current generation has not seen a world without technology. And to cater to the literary needs of this generation, born with and groomed with technology all-round, it is only pertinent that in the field of literature we integrate teaching with technology. Having grown up with smart TVs, smart Phones, video games, computer software, internet connectivity, this generation of youth needs to be taught the way they see and comprehend the world around. We will have to let the visual stirred nature of the current set of students to percolate into our teaching techniques and instructional strategies.

When discussing learning and teaching, it is essential to be aware of the very basics of learning and understanding. Different psychologists have given different perspectives on human understanding, nature and learning. Carl Jung, a contemporary of Sigmund Freud, developed a pioneering personality theory that brought in two attitudes: extroversion and introversion (1933a). He also analysed human behaviour as a mixture of four psychic features: thinking as against feeling and intuition as against sensation (1933b). Many theorists have divided these patterns into different groupings over the time. David Kolb presented the "experiential learning" model which emphasised that we keep learning continually, building particular strengths or personal preferences. He named these four learning styles as Accommodating, Converging, Diverging, and Assimilating. Another educational psychologist Walter Burke Barbe and his colleagues gave the VAK theory; proposing three "modalities" of learning:

Visual, Auditory, and Kinaesthetic (movement and touch). According to the VAK theorists, learners use all three modalities to gain new knowledge preferring one style of learning for one activity, and a blend of others for a diverse activity. So, as educationist we need to present information using all three styles allowing all learners the prospect to get involved whole heartedly in the learning process. No matter what the different theorists say, one thing is sure that we humans have layers of understanding which unfold when we get engrossed into a subject or idea with all our senses; and then we appreciate the idea better. For example, one can't understand Keats without reaching a level of sensory imagination. One will have to imagine and visualise the beauty and expressions of Keats' poems.

As educationist, the sculptors of the future (the youth) of any nation, we chisel the raw talents of students making them better learners and perceptive human beings. This will be possible only when we as teachers utilise the resources available to us in a creative manner and involve students in the learning process unequivocally. Only then will we be able to do full justice to the necessities of teaching and create an ambience of learning. In this age of technology, the proper use of various technologies in the teaching and learning has the potential of helping learners to develop their creativity. Technologies can provide environs under which learning skills can be broadened.

Talking specifically of literature and language, the inter-relationship between technology, creativity, teaching and learning of English literature and language can't be underestimated. Incorporation of visual aids and other technologically advanced features as teaching techniques in literature and language has become increasingly important. Literature is a form of expression where we look into, narrate, convey, enthuse or envisage. And when we want to express, experience, communicate or envision, we use some sort of a tool; in case of literature this tool is a pen. Whether it is a pen, a camera, a paint brush or canvas; each of the methods whether we are writing, reciting, taking a photograph or painting, has its own set of expectations, criteria and checks. Teaching literature in class has its own charm and challenges. In literature classroom, students often face problems in reading and understanding the assigned literary texts. The students may not feel motivated to read literary texts due to lack of language proficiency or inadequate supply of teaching materials or their inability to relate the abstract concepts or they may find the concepts, philosophical or cultural specific as unreal table. Thus there is a need to introduce a way in the students concerns can be taken into consideration. Technology comes as a helping tool in such a situation. Such a situation demands the use of visual aids in teaching literature in order to trigger students' motivation in reading literary texts and make them see for themselves and thereby relate to the concepts narrated in the text.

But the fundamental issue here is how the use of visual aids can be integrated in teaching literary texts. The need is to be innovative. A blended approach of the traditional teaching and with the aid of ICT, multimedia will create wonders in creating a learning environment in the classroom and open up huge vistas adding new dimensions to language and literature, giving wings to creativity and imagination. If a teacher of literature while explaining some rural scene in India wants to explain the scene of “the hour of cow dust” or “goudhuli vela” to a student who has never seen such a scene; how she will wish that she could show them the “goudhuli vela.” This need to find a source of reference will be all the more strong when the hour of cow-dust set in rural India is explained to a student from some foreign culture who is not familiar to the Indian culture. If one has to smell and feel the “goudhuli vela” then one has to be there - smell, feel and breathe the scent of sun baked dust rising to reach the horizon. Here, technology can come in handy. Through Augmented Reality (AR) we can present visual 4D images capturing the scenic beauty of ‘the hour of cow-dust’ to the students. This will make the visualization and annotations better. Though pictures can’t beat the real but they can give a stepping stone to the students who had had not an iota of an idea of “goudhuli vela.” And from this stepping stone they can give wings to their imagination - visualising and feeling the scent and smell of the real “goudhuli vela.”

But what is required is a blending in of creativity while using technology. The role of teacher is extremely important here. The teacher, especially of literature and language, has to play the role of choreographer and facilitators of the learning process. The teacher has to feel the feelings of the students, notice the effort they are making to grasp the nuances of their subject gripping with the connotations and then glancing towards the teacher to seek his intervention without saying anything; for they are too engrossed to utter a word. It’s for the teacher to see and perceive the shades of expressions on their faces and hold their hands and make them tread the deep layers of meanings in the lines that have baffled them or halted their flow of imagination. The visual teaching through multimedia or other channels can be used very aesthetically here to engross the students. It can happen only when the teacher leads students, feeling their presence mental and physical in their collective/ common journey to grasp the inherent ideas of the subject.

Such creative and appropriate use of technology will make students to have full concentration leading to an enhanced comprehension of the story and flow of the texts. Thus, using visual aids like pictures, videos and projectors in teaching literature creates strong engagement between students and the texts. These aids motivate students to read texts with curiosity, giving them the much needed confidence to move further after gaining some familiarity with the connotations of words, culture specific references and context specific

mentions making it easier for them to understand the abstract ideas in the texts. Thus technological aids can be used as tools to enrich and enhance the reading and learning of literature.

Technology and Language: Alike, in the use of multimedia applications for language teaching the insertion of visual aids in teaching enables authentic improvements in language knowledge. For example if a foreign student takes up to read Nirmal Verma's *The Last Wilderness* then he may find certain words and expressions to be very culture specific and find them difficult to understand. Hindi origin words like 'Teepay' used instead of stool, 'Chowkidar' instead of watchman, 'Deodar' instead of Indian Pine, 'Jharoke' instead of window will be difficult for him to understand. The teacher can make the understanding easy with the help of visual images and pictures of these things and can even familiarise the student with the Indian culture a bit through some documentary and videos in order to give a cultural feel of source culture.

The cultural specific words in any text add authenticity to it in respect of its cultural feel, however, such words creates a difficulty for the student who is not familiar to the language and culture of the text. Therein the teacher can seek the help of technology in providing notes, glossaries and links to relate to for understanding the connotations of the words in a specific culture. One of the basic issues discussed time and again in discourses on literary readings is the need of understanding the culture specific connotations of words in any text; words commonly having culture specific connotations are names of food items, dresses, places, religious terms, names of institutions etc. which are particular to the culture and more abstract terms. Besides, a literary text may also have features elucidating social customs, traditions such as 'purdah' etc. It is distinguishing of a fine educator that he should takes into account the lexical and grammatical features of such custom specific words and familiarise his students with them as some of these may not be similar to the mother tongue of the reader. Learners can face difficulty in determining meaning for unfamiliar words in a text, mainly because they could not identify the meaning of the word or have restricted knowledge of the words or are not familiar to the connotations of words.

Connotations of words ensue from contexts and contexts are usually culture specific. For instance, for words anghoocha, saree, pallu, dhabha, lota etc. used in *The Last Wilderness* there are no exact words in English. The understanding of the essence of these terms and their relevance in the text is essential for an accurate understanding of the cultural connotations of the text itself. In another instance when the narrator while analysing the situation on the morning after Mehra Sahib's death, while collecting his mortal remains uses the expression, "The bones that had turned into flowers at the touch of the sun." (Verma trans. Kanjilal. 261). This expression has got specific religious and cultural connotations. A student unfamiliar with the Indian last rites of Hindus will fail to grasp the philosophy behind the scene as some ideas are not even known or practiced in other cultures.

To overcome this problem, a teacher can use visual vocabulary to assist students in comprehending the connotations of the words indigenous to a language and culture. With such aids the reader would be able to construct images in his mind of the underlying phrasing he comes across in the story. Students will be able to expand the expression used in the text for its complexities by examining its relevance and will be able to translate the abstract to the concrete. I would be apt here to make reference to Wright (1990) who was of the belief that students can make more sense out of the visuals and hence the learning experience of a language under consideration would turn out to be more remarkable and useful with the incorporation of visuals,

Conclusion: As teachers, we are constantly in search of the best approach to teach our students and give wings to their imagination by igniting the spark of curiosity and incessant search for knowledge in them. This can be done by identifying the strengths of the students and then finding ways to tap into them. Undoubtedly, fast advancement of technology integration in teaching has brought forth better prototype of teaching pedagogy. As a result, technology has a key role to play in learning and teaching language skills and literature in the times to come. The integration of technology to generate a framework to teach and learn language has a lot of benefits. Multimedia such as audio or voice clips of poems, animation of texts and graphics novels, Augmented Reality (AR) etc. allows one to transport an entity or idea into a certainty that is otherwise only imagined and hence difficult to grasp. The blending in of the traditional teaching with visual or ICT aids help the students to inference, supposition, prototype finding, examples and counter examples; providing the literary curious readers the opportunity to go beyond the physical limits of teaching. It helps them envision the world virtually while sitting in the confines of class rooms; providing them the fluidity of experience through visual and auditory paraphernalia, enriching their literary understanding and providing a four dimensional vision.

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