

TEACHING OF ENGLISH LITERATURE WITH ICT: AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH

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Abstract

In today's modern era, almost each and every country is harnessing the utilities of ICT for improving the standards of life of its citizens. India is no exception to this phenomenon. Indian government is promoting 'Digital India' programme with full enthusiasm in different fields including education. Day-by-day, the use of ICT is increasing in the field of education especially in teaching of different subjects. ICT may be a powerful and flexible tool for teaching of English literature also. English literature, like literature of many other languages, has a vast variety of elements of music, emotions, actions and dialogues. Sadly, these elements are generally ignored by teachers during teaching of English literature as these elements are not optimally presented in the way they should be, either because of the dearth of expertise in teachers or because of the lack of resources. This issue can be addressed and resolved well by integrating ICT optimally in the teaching of English literature. So, the present paper focuses on the incorporation of these elements into the flat and dreary teaching of English literature, covering different genres of English literature mainly poetry, prose and drama, by judiciously utilizing the innovative approach of ICT to make the teaching process of English literature more interesting, more energetic and more lively and that too with less efforts on the parts of teachers to teach the literature of a foreign language in the countries like India.

Keywords: *Teaching of English Literature / ICT / Poetry / Drama / Prose*

Introduction

“Technology will not replace teachers but teachers who understand technology will replace those who do not.”

- Dr. Ray Clifford

ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is crucial to supplement the traditional mode of education. Here, the word ‘supplement’ is important because technology cannot replace teachers as such but can surely supplement or add to their traditional mode of teaching. In the present age of technology and information boom, sometimes, the traditional mode of teaching different subjects including English literature seems monotonous. In many schools, colleges and universities of India, English literature is taught in the traditional mode where teachers keep on speaking for about an hour or so and students keep on hearing and jotting down the notes. Soon, both, teachers and students get tired of this monotonous routine of teaching and learning English literature in the same way every day. So, ICT may be a very significant tool for providing variety to teaching of English literature by eliminating the element of boredom from it and infusing in it freshness every day and every moment. It may revolutionize the way the subject- English literature is considered to be taught. The role of teacher is undoubtedly of immense importance in the teaching of English literature but ICT may also make it lively by making students interested as well as engaged in what is being taught. So, let’s understand this innovative approach of teaching English literature with ICT in the following paragraphs:

ICT

Information and Communication Technologies is a popularly known by its acronyms ICT which is a combination of three powerful words- Information, Communication and Technology. In the following details, it has been described what these words mean with reference to ICT:

Information

The word ‘Information’ has been derived from the Latin word ‘Informare’ which means ‘the formation of mind or teaching’.

“Information is any fact provided and or learned about something or someone.”

- Oxford Dictionaries

Communication

The word 'Communication' has been derived from the Latin word 'Communicare' which means 'to share'.

“Communication is the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium or the successful conveying or sharing of ideas and feelings or a letter or message containing information or news, or means of sending or receiving information, such as telephone lines or computers.”

- Oxford Dictionaries

Technology

The word 'Technology' has been derived from the Greek word 'Tekhnologia' which means 'systematic treatment'.

“Technology is the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes, especially in industry or machinery and devices developed from scientific knowledge.”

- Oxford Dictionaries

Thus, ICT is an umbrella term which includes diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, create, disseminate, store, and manage information. It includes a gamut of technologies viz. applications and devices that are used for facilitating communication such as cellular phones, radio, video, television, computers, and satellite systems among others. It is often spoken of in a particular context, such as ICT in education, ICT in Health care, or ICT in libraries.

English Literature

English literature is hundreds of years old and continues to be one of the most popular courses of study in schools, colleges and universities not only in England but also in the whole world. It is the study of literature written in the English language. In it, the writers do not necessarily have to be from England but can be from all over the world. It not only represents writers from different parts of the world and time periods but also covers every major genre and style of writing. There are five genres of English literature commonly taught in the classroom- poetry, drama, prose, non-fiction and media.

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Poetry

Poetry is usually written down as a text which has some sort of meter or rhythm as it focuses on the way the syllables, words and phrases sound when put together. It is often considered the oldest form of literature. Before writing was invented, oral stories were commonly put into some sort of poetic form to make them easier to remember and recite. In Vedic period also, Vedic education was imparted through the medium of recitation of 'Shalokas'. Today, because of the invention of various scripts, poetry is written down in some or the other script. But unfortunately, it is taught just by reading it and not by reciting it. So, now-a-days, teaching of poetry in a pleasant way has become a hard nut to crack for the 21st century teachers because of forgetting the old but gold tradition of teaching poetry by recitation which puts proper emphasis on the significance of different frequencies of sound through which the mind understands poetry naturally, promptly, smoothly, permanently and, thus, more pleasantly. The tradition of reciting poetry can be revived by using ICT. Poetry can be taught in the classroom as a recitation art with the help of ICT in the following ways:

- VCD (Video Compact Disk) related to the poem to be taught may be played for creating the diorama to capture the images and the sounds of the poem.

- CD (Compact Disk) of instrumental music related to the poem to be taught may be played for producing background music to feel the melody of the poem.
- CD of 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.
- Tape Recorder may be used for recording students' way of reciting the poem to be taught to enable them to listen to it later on to improve their ability of reciting the poem.

Drama

Any text meant to be performed rather than read can be considered drama (unless it's a poem meant to be performed). In layman's terms, a drama is usually called a play. Drama is the one given the least time in most classrooms. Often when drama is taught sitting on a chair, it is only read the same way one reads a novel. Since drama is meant to be acted out in front of an audience, it's hard to fully appreciate it by looking only at pages of text. Students respond best to drama when they are exposed to film or theatre versions and are encouraged to act out scenes passionately in classes. Drama can be taught in the classroom itself as a performing art with the help of ICT in the following ways:

- Film of the drama to be taught may be used for showing to students to teach them the art of performing a drama.
- 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.
- Mike and Speaker may be used for creating echo in the sound to increase the intensity of the dialogues of the drama spoken by teachers during teaching.

Prose

Prose can be defined as any kind of written text that is not poetry (which means that drama is technically a type of prose). The most typical varieties of prose are novels and short stories, novellas, biographies, autobiography while other types include letters, diaries, journals, and non-fiction. Prose is written in complete sentences and organized in paragraphs. Instead of focusing on sound, which is what poetry does, prose tends to

focus on plot and characters. Prose is the type of literature read most often in English classrooms. Prose can be taught in the classroom as a reading art with the help of ICT in the following ways:

- Documentary of the novel to be taught may be used for showing it to students to make them understand it in a better way.
- Videos of various stages related to the short story to be taught may 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.

Some Practical Examples of Teaching of English Literature with ICT in Real Classroom Setting

To find out the effectiveness of teaching of English literature with ICT, the researcher incorporated some of the tools of ICT during teaching of English literature in a real classroom setting and found that the tools of ICT used were very helpful in teaching English literature effectively.

- The researcher taught a drama with the help of the following Audio-Video:

SKIT

Skit of Gopal and the Hilsa Fish.mp4

Skit of Gopal and the Hilsa Fish.mp4

(Source- <https://youtu.be/j7Bm46prrYI>)

- The researcher taught a story with the help of the following Power Point Presentation:



(Source- <http://www.slideshare.net/kalpivision/new-rabbit-tortoise-story-14566518>)

- The researcher taught a poem with the help of the following Video:



(Source- <https://youtu.be/thtmw-KAr3E>)

Conclusion

No doubt, teaching is an art but it can be definitely effectively improved with the help of science i.e. ICT. A lot of efforts have been put to harness the utilities of ICT in the field of education in general but very few in the teaching of English literature particularly. English literature can be taught with a great ease and joy with the help of ICT to suit students' needs and interests. Therefore, more research is required to support pedagogical use of ICT for improving teaching of English literature. So, let's promote teaching of English literature with ICT for understanding it more effectively, more interestingly and, ultimately, more successfully.

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