

UTILIZATION OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING OF LITERATURE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA SCHOOLS: APPROACHES, CONSTRAINTS AND THE WAY FORWARD

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ABSTRACT

In this era of ICT-driven technology-based teaching and learning, it has become imperative for teachers of English language and literary studies to develop more digitized learner-centered instructional approaches. Realizing the potential role of modern technologies in enhancing learning and teaching, this paper examines the digital or technological equipment, tools and resources in English language and literature teaching and learning activities. Secondly, the paper explores the approaches and development of strategies for digital teaching and learning by providing specific guidelines of how digital technologies can be applied in English language and literature teaching and learning in schools. Thirdly, the paper identifies the constraints that impede the successful application of digital technologies in teaching and learning of English language and literature in schools in Nigeria. The paper concludes that training and support for teachers to use digital tools and resources will not only equip them to use digital technology but also empower them to use different learner-centered approaches in literature and English language classrooms. It was recommended among others that; the federal government and stakeholders in education should invest in digital technologies infrastructure at all levels of education for effective acquisition of digital literacy and skills; and that Technology experts should provide extra assistance for teachers who use digital tools in teaching literature and English language courses

Keywords: English language, literature, digital technologies, teaching and learning

Introduction

In this age of digital technology, the access to digital equipment, tools and resources as well as a reasonable level of digital literacy or competence of educators seems to be the critical factor that underpins the effective digitization of the teaching and learning process. This indicative assertion lends support to the UNESCO world education report (2000) that “new technologies challenge traditional conceptions of both teaching and learning”. In responding to the emerging challenges posed by the digital era, the traditional view of the teaching and learning process must change by understanding how

digital technology can create new learning environment. To achieve this, teachers must develop the required digital proficiencies and be able to identify suitable applications for teaching and assessment and integrate them into specific lessons and curriculum; and be able to adapt their pedagogical approaches or strategies for classroom teaching, guided learning (homework) and formative assessment.

Presently, schools in Nigeria are grappling with adaptation problems arising from changes brought to the educational system by the advent of digital technologies. Within the context of English language and literary studies, the role of digital technology has been recognized. The most obvious and profound advantage of using technological medium for language instructions is the ease and timeliness of access. It is widely accepted that advances in information and new developments in learning science provide opportunities to create well-designed learner-centered, interactive, affordable, efficient, flexible e-learning environments (Khan, 2005 quoted in Eisa, 2012). The use of digital libraries as well as dictionaries and thesauri has facilitated quicker learning and has substantially improved learners' vocabularies. Exploring the use of digital technologies in the teaching and learning of English language and literature is necessary as doing such can help not only to unravel new perspectives of organizing language teaching and learning but also provide learners with skills in interactivity and collaboration, critical thinking and leadership for functioning effectively in this modern, dynamic, information-rich and ever changing global age (Salmah, 2016).

Models Used in Literature and Languages Teaching before the Digital Era

According to Carter and Long (1991) quoted in Mustakim, Mustapha and Lebar (2017), there are three models in the teaching of literature:

The Cultural Model which views literature as a teacher-centered and source of facts where teacher transmits knowledge and information to students.

The Language Model which allows teacher to employ strategies used in language teaching to deconstruct literary texts in order to serve specific linguistic goals

The Personal Growth Model where the focus is on a particular use of language in a text and in a specific cultural context.

These aforementioned scholars and researchers point out that these models have been incorporated in various approaches in the teaching of literature. There are six approaches in the teaching of literature: the Language-Based Approach, Paraphrastic Approach, Information-Based Approach, Personal-Response Approach, Moral-Philosophical Based Approach and Stylistic Approach (ibid). These approaches, as Manoliu (2012) states, must be considered in connection with the type of literature being studied in the class i.e. Poetry, Prose or Drama. Sometimes the same approach might be used with two or maybe all the three literary genres, but it is also true that some approaches are appropriate only to one genre (Manoliu, 2012).

Approaches and their Requisite Activities in Literature Teaching Before the Digital Era

Mustakim, Mustapha and Lebar (2017) identify the requisite activities associated with different approaches to the teaching of literature. They include the following:

Information-Based Approach requires the language teacher to provide students with background information about a text, explain the contents of the text to the class to expand their understanding of the subject matter and ask comprehension questions to check students' knowledge based on the text they have read.

Language-Based Approach requires the teacher to generate language activities or practices in literature lesson either through cloze, jigsaw puzzle, debate or performance activities such as drama, role play, poetry recital and group work.

Paraphrastic Approach requires the teacher to re-tell story or explain the text to students using simple terms to help them understand the literature component of the text studied.

Personal-Response Approach requires the teacher to elicit students' response or feelings towards the issues in a text via brainstorming sessions, small group discussion and journal writing.

Moral-Philosophical Approach requires the teacher to raise students awareness of values learnt from the text.

Stylistic Approach requires the teacher to guide the students to interpret a text by identifying the language (hidden/ surface meaning) and linguistic features (vocabulary, tenses) in a text.

Approaches used in English Language Teaching before the Digital Era

With regards to methods used in English language teaching before the digital era, Azimova (2019) reveals that the audio-lingual method and grammar translation method were the previous two methods used for the teaching of English as a second/foreign languages in the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, a communicative approach which is a worldwide approach has prevailed in English language teaching over the past 50 years, and it is still used currently worldwide. The communicative approach is the product of some linguists and educators who had grown dissatisfied with the previous two methods. Azimova (2019) states that one of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language and combines these into a more fully communicative view. While using the Communicative Language (CLT) approach in teaching language, the teacher is required to deploy language activities that integrate all language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing (e.g. dramas, role-plays, games and interviews) that help students engage in realistic and meaningful communication in the target language.

Need for Digital Equipment, Tools and Resources in Literature and Language Teaching

Issues and concerns relevant to the approaches used in literature and English language learning and teaching have been explored by some scholars, experts and researchers. In the aspect of teachers' approaches in teaching literature and English Language, Mustakim, Mustapha and Lebar (2017) and Manoliu (2012) argue that teachers do not conduct any interesting and creative activities in their lessons. They reveal that teachers expect their students to be the passive listeners during the teaching so that they (learners) could make full use of understanding of the literary texts before activities starts. Again, these researchers assert that teachers focus more on students' understanding of the literary text than developing creative and interesting activities in the lesson.

Kaba (2017) affirms these aforementioned assertions by pointing out the mindset of students in the current generation (digital generation or digital era), who are always in the habit of asking teachers to undertake new roles. The students also request teachers to introduce new materials in a new format, using more communicative and direct strategy so that the materials can be accessible and exchanged mutually. Given that most of the students were born in the digital era, they can accomplish many things at the same time, such as: studying, sending messages, chatting with others, playing digital games and music; everything at the same time and in a very astonishing way. This trend implies that literature and language teaching and learning approaches and activities must not be boring but highly motivating and full of fun (Manoliu, 2012).

Technology has, therefore, become an integral part of students' life, which is why they (students) seek to find it in the teaching processes as well. As Kaba (2017) posits, teaching of literature and English language in the digital era requires the adoption of technological approach using various digital equipment, tools and resources.

Digital Equipment, Tools and Resources in Language and Literature

For the purpose of concept clarification, digital learning is defined as any process in which the teacher or learner uses digital equipment such as a computer (or a smart/android phone, tablet, MP3 player or a console) to access digital tools such as learning platforms and virtual learning environments (VLES), and/or digital learning resources (such as lessons, tests, learning aids and games) to improve their knowledge and skills (Scottish Government, 2015). For teachers, this can be to improve their pedagogical approaches and their assessment of learning (Scottish Government, 2015). According to Warschauer (2000), digital learning is any type of learning that uses technology. Digital technologies are electronic tools, systems, devices and resources that generate, store or process data (ibid). Digital era on the other hand means the period characterized by the existence of digital technology (ibid).

In this digital age characterized by information explosion and globalization, Ahmadi (2018) posits that English language and literary studies educators must strive to develop the skills of identifying digital equipment, tools and resources, understanding their uses

and discovering when and how the different digital equipment, tools and resources can be effectively used to deliver learning content and manage and track learner progress, as well as learner-to-learner and learner-to-instructor interaction or communication. Below is the table showing the most common digital learning equipment, tools and resources used in English language and literature learning and teaching.

Digital Learning Equipment	Digital Learning Tools	Digital Learning Resources
Computers (desktop, tablet, I-pads)	Video conferencing tools(zoom, Skype)	Quizzes
Smartphone, MP3 (storyboard)	Website (internet)	Simulations
Consoles	Virtual learning environment	Graphics
Digital television	Learning platforms (interactive whiteboard, multimedia, hypermedia)	Audio
Video streaming	Web-based learning tools (instant messenger, e-mails)	Video
Audio cassette	Podcasts and audio files	Diagrams
Storage devices (flash drives)	Collaborative learning environment, blogs	Maps
Overhead projector	Social media (Facebook, twitter)	Images
Microphone	Socrative	picture/photo
Digital camera	Audible spark video	Models
Buzzer and lights	Google classroom	Animations
USB or WIFI access		Flowchart
Presentation clicker		Maps
e-readers Recording hardware (vizualizer)		Texts (e -book, e -notes) Games

From literature, these digital technologies have provided new opportunities to address new learning needs in pedagogical practices not only in language and literary studies but also in education in general. In this part of the article, the author provides brief explanation of the uses of some of the common digital equipment, tools and resources in a technology enhanced language learning environment or classroom. The list of digital technology equipment, tools and resources provided in this article is far from being exhaustive.

From literature evidence, using a range of digital equipment, tools and resources will only enhance the English language and literature teaching and learning when the language educator effectively uses or implements the digital teaching and learning approaches and strategies appropriate for English language and literary studies. (Scottish Government, 2015).

Digital Tools and Resources for Teaching and Learning Literature

Among the key events that characterize the development of digital technologies in language and literature is the development of multimedia featuring Hypertext and E-books. Multimedia is the term used to describe text, including graphics, animation, video, sound and hypertext links. Multimedia has enormous potential in the classroom, especially at elementary level, with a number of advantages for experiencing literary texts, as it calls on all the language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) as well as viewing skills. The study of literature through multimedia represents a new technique, which is more attractive compared to traditional books where verbal comprehension is predominant. It creates interactive activities and provides students with the opportunities to study authors and textbooks using a variety of media and sources of information. It offers students the opportunity to access biographies, images, audio and video recordings, information about authors, web links, and the full texts of poems, plays and fiction. It involves collaborative work and turns out to be a powerful catalyst for cooperative learning. It enables students and their lecturers to share sources of information. It allows teachers to create ideas in a new format, using visual language, in addition to spoken and written language. Students learn more effectively and more efficiently when teaching methods match their learning styles. They apply a wide range of strategies to experience, comprehend, interpret and evaluate texts. They are most highly motivated by a variety of integrated teaching materials, methods and contexts.

Multimedia-enhanced tools for literature teaching and learning

Discussed below are some of the multimedia- enhanced tools for the teaching and learning of literature.

The hypertext

Hypertext is a set of linked documents between them through the key words-links. In essence, it is a word(s) that contain a link to a website. Literature instructors use hypertext to enhance their teaching in a broad variety of ways that include putting course materials on the www; creating online tutorials; using annotated hypertext in addition to or in lieu of print texts; having students write hypertext; examining the medium of hypertext as a literary and cultural theme; and studying hypertext fiction in the context of traditional literature classes (Katz, 1996). In a hyper-textual program, besides the material and exercises created by the lecturer, there can also be materials that require students' engagement, such as electronic discussions, various assignments, book reviews or hypertext creation with study material or translations drafted by students themselves. Hypertext can be used in poetry to access verse with links to references, definitions, interactive pictures, reader responses and tracking of readers. It is possible that inside a hypertext you read all documents that relate to the selected keywords. Choosing different keywords results in the opening of different documents. Inside of a hypertext, it is possible to access practically an infinite number of reading nodes.

E-books (electronic books)

The electronic book is an electronic version of a traditional printed book that can be read using a personal computer or an E-book reader. This type of book apart from the images may contain sounds, chips, video or mobile graphics.

Pedagogically, Woodlief (1997) cited in Kaba (2017) explains that e-books is used to help create more dynamic communities of readers and literary translators. It is a digital tool or resource used to help develop such class lesson that allows each student to feel involved in intensive reading/thinking/writing activities. Kaba (2017) points out a number of developed applications to help students and teachers not only access a number of texts in different formats free of charge but also obtain information on how to understand the textbooks. Thus it helps in developing their desire for reading and literature. The applications for different literary genres as mentioned by Kaba include:

Spark Notes: Through this application, students can read book reviews, character reviews and general analysis of literary works. If a copy of a current book is not available, the application helps students in the best sense of a reading or finding information to include in their literary theses.

Literary Analysis Guide: An application to assist in the preparation of literary analysis theses or any other related activity. It is equipped with three mechanisms that contain information about poetry, prose and rhetoric. Using these mechanisms, students can access summaries and examples of more general literary terms that help them further in performing their literary assignment.

Literary Review: Educators in literature who are increasingly looking for the latest developments in the world of literature can use this application. Although full access requires subscription in the literary review, the cost is personal, nominative and gives access to the latest publications in many genres and critical literary discussions. The application also provides the ability to search previous publications to find teaching-related articles.

Kindle: An app that gives users the ability to download e-books from amazon directly to a smart phone or tablet. To read e-books the app is also equipped with a vocabulary and offers the ability to read and transfer to PDF format.

Audible: It is quite valuable, especially for those students who have difficulty concentrating. Through the application, the user can hear hundreds of thousands of audio books, enabling labeling of different parts while reading. This application gives students the opportunity to earn different badges as well as motivates them to read/listen.

Approaches for Implementing Digital Teaching and Learning in English Language and Literature

An approach is a way of teaching and learning. An approach gives rise to methods, the way of teaching something, which uses activities or techniques to help learners learn. In English language and literature teaching and learning, teachers draw from a variety of

approaches in what has been labeled an “eclectic approach” perhaps according to the different needs of their learners. If teaching is about using various activities to help learners gain the skills and understanding they need for a particular reason (e.g. qualification/performance of a job), then, learning is about gaining and using new knowledge to demonstrate a change (e.g. a change in behaviour and attitudes, demonstration of understanding or performance of a skill (Eady and Lockyer, 2013). For digital technologies to aid English language and literature teaching and learning, educators in language and literary studies have to adapt to a variety of technology-based teaching and learning approaches. Warschauer (2000) describes two different theoretical and methodological approaches to utilizing technology in English language and literature teaching and learning.

First, is the cognitive approach while the second is the social approach. In addition, Azimova (2019) identifies two approaches to technology-based teaching including communicative approach, together with its associated task-based teaching. Pareja-Lora, Calle-Martinez and Rodriguez-Arancon (2016) reveal some other approaches such as social learning, ubiquitous learning, blended learning, e-learning, autonomous or lifelong learning and some informal (learner-centered) approaches such as discussions, practical activities, group work and role play. For the digital teaching and learning of the literature component in the English language studies, Mustakim, Mustapha and Lebar (2017); Carter and Long (1991) put forward a number of approaches that include: language based approach, paraphrastic approach, information-based approach, personal response approach, moral-philosophical approach and stylistic approach.

In implementing digital teaching and learning, the teacher of English language and literature uses digital equipment, tools and resources wherever possible in combination with a mixture of approaches and a variety of activities to enable learning take place. Below are some of the teaching and learning approaches, activities and some of the equipment, tools and resources for their implementation:

Communicative approach in association with interactive task based teaching. This is the best known current approach to language teaching (Azimova, 2019). According to him, the teacher and students activities that facilitate learning may take the following modes:

Teacher's Activities:

1. Use relevant technology such as multimedia that integrates audio, visual, text and animation effects to facilitate interactive real-time communicative learning in the target language.
2. Use multimedia course-ware to enable student access information quickly in their study of English cultural backgrounds.
3. Organize students to work in groups to enable their interactive discussions and collaborative engagements in task-based/ problem-solving learning/activities e.g. drama scripting, video production.

4. Demonstrate how a topic/information in the target language should be discussed in a social context and give activities such as role-play which help the learners to learn the language in social context.
5. Set language activities in literature lesson and offer opportunities for interactive discussions in real-time as well as virtual classrooms.
6. Set students to use a digital game or simulation program that offers opportunities for students to communicate interactively in the target language while collaborating to find solutions to complex issues or problems that will arise in the real-time or in the future.

Students' activities:

1. Engage in interactive conversation or discussions in the target language together, have debates and search for understanding and solve a problem.
2. Create a product by combining knowledge, ideas and strength via different modes such as video conferencing tools/platforms, multimedia, hypermedia, interactive whiteboards, Skype, zoom, Google hang out, collaborative learning environment/classroom (i.e. virtual worlds).
3. Create and disseminate new ideas and informative and innovative texts like literature, stories and news journal.
4. Collaboratively create innovative and informative projects and games (using stop-motion or slow-motion animations) that address significant issues and heighten engagements and impacts.

Examples of digital –based communicative tools and resources for literature and English learning/teaching include e-mails, e-tutoring, multimedia, hypertext, e-books, virtual classes or virtual learning environments, cooperative/collaborative learning environment and so on.

Cognitive approach: According to Warschauer (2000), this approach to literature and Language teaching offers learners the opportunity to increase their exposure to language meaningfully and make their own language by applying thinking and problem-solving strategies.

Teacher's activities:

1. Guide students to look at the language of the text or mark any linguistic feature that is significant to their reading perhaps to elicit language awareness.
2. Get students to discuss interactively and cooperatively with their classmates the language used by the author in the process of understanding and interpreting the meaning of a text exercise in comprehension, vocabulary and grammar.
3. Generate language practice/activities (debates, cloze, jigsaw puzzle) or performance activities (drama, role-play, poetry recital).
4. Help students explore and discover how ideas are connected.
5. Ask students to justify and explain their thinking.

6. Helping students to find new solutions to problems.
7. Get students to visualize image that could represent the meaning of a word on the internet.

Student activities:

1. Work in groups to engage in discussing different meanings of a work/text.
2. Search new words in an online dictionary and visualize the image which could represent the meaning of a word on the internet.
3. Use author weblogs or websites to discover the hidden layers of meaning in a text or work of art.
4. Figure out the meaning of some words from online games.
5. Test their knowledge of new words and usages by doing online vocabulary quizzes, engaging in language activities, debates, drama, role-play and poetry recital to practice real life skills.

Examples of digital-based cognitive tools for literature and English language teaching and learning include: concept mapping, semantic nets, hypermedia blog, idea processors, prolog and computer-supported cooperative work applications.

E-learning approach

Teacher Activities:

1. Provide opportunities for online interaction between students and their peers to prepare them for class ahead of time e.g. assigning a debate topic and asking students to begin to discuss it via e-mail.
2. Use relevant digital technologies like. E-mail to support students engagements e.g. submission of summaries of their understanding or appreciation of a literary work intended to be taught.
3. Assign students to write composition/essays in English via the e-mail.
4. Organizes ideas from student summaries on a handout to be used later for both brainstorming and class discussion.
5. Provide or deliver course content, information materials and resources to students via websites/e-mail accounts like G-mail, Yahoo e.t.c.
6. Provide E-tuition (tutorials) online and create a discussion topic.

Students' activities

1. Channel their own learning process relying on the teachers and classmates.
2. Use short digital videos in the classroom to programme an online course via the internet.
3. Participate in online tutorials and communicate with instructors through e-mail assignments and examinations.
4. Students work together and share materials and correspond with the native speakers of the target language.
5. Send e-mails to one another e.g. the contents/essays about a literary work like the interpretations of a novel, poem, play and genres prior to class discussions.

6. Form debate teams in class and using prior knowledge obtained from e-mail discussions to elicit satisfactory understanding of both sides of the issues being debated on and thereby making better and relevant decisions.

7. Improve their writing skills, vocabulary as well as their skills in the practice of analyzing a literary work.

Examples of digital -based e-learning or online tools and resources for literature and English learning/teaching include e-mails, e-tutoring, multimedia, hypertext, e-books, virtual classes or virtual learning environments, cooperative/collaborative learning environment and so on.

Constraints to Utilizing Digital Technology in Literatue and English Language Learning and Teaching in the Digital Era

The constraints impairing language teachers from using digital equipment, tools and resources in their instructional delivery have been traced to have stemmed from two barriers namely:

a) “Intrinsic” barriers, which concern teachers' confidence, beliefs and attitudes toward using digital learning tools; and

(b) “extrinsic” factors, including limitations in terms of training, institutional support, time, and access to digital equipment, tools and resources (Bingimlas, 2009 cited in Celik and Aytin, 2014).

Intrinsic barriers to technology use: Studies by Celik and Aytin (2014) and Scottish Goernment (2015) point out that language teachers may not feel confident with technology themselves or have received little or no training in how to use technology. This shortcoming may significantly impair teachers' capacity to provide an instructional environment that allows language learners to take advantage of these valuable educational resources.

Extrinsic barriers to technology use: Beyond language teachers' low digital competence, Enwereuzoh (2012) enumerates some extrinsic impediments to implementing digital teaching and learning in literature and English language. They include:

High cost of digital devices and rapid changes in technology

Lack of financial capacity of schools at different levels which most often forestalls their efforts at procuring digital tools and their associated accessories.

Low digital literacy of students due to lack of specialists to help students develop the necessary digital competence.

Lack of technical and administrative support

Lack of technical assistance in supervising students while they use technology

Lack of template required for successful integration of technology into the curriculum or classroom lessons.

Inadequate electricity power supply undermines the judicious use of digital devices

Recommendations

- All educators of literary studies and English language should be provided with adequate digital training and support in order to improve their competence and capacity in the use of digital tools and resources
- The federal government and stakeholders in education should invest in digital technologies infrastructure in all levels of education for effective acquisition of digital literacy and skills
- The government through the federal ministry of education and education planners should work out and implement a technology template that integrates digital teaching approaches in the curriculum of different fields of study. This will serve to overcome the problem of lack of initial teacher training that leads to teachers feeling unprepared in how to use digital tools in their teaching practices
- Technology experts should provide extra assistance for teachers who use digital tools in teaching literary and English language courses
- Government should improve the supply of electricity power to all educational institutions across the nation

Conclusion

This paper enumerated some common digital learning and teaching equipment, tools and resources and their uses. The paper majorly focused attention on the different approaches for implementing digital learning and teaching in literature and English language so as to underscore the problem of lack of integration of digital technologies in learning and teaching processes or pedagogical practices. This situation of non-incorporation of digital learning perspectives into the language curriculum, courses and lessons constitutes a problem because the pedagogical benefits of using digital learning and teaching approaches and tools continue to elude the Nigerian education in terms of the expected attainment (output, outcomes and impact) for different beneficiaries (learner, parents, teachers and the school). The paper maintains that training and support for teachers to use digital tools and resources will not only equip them to use digital technology but also use different learner-centered approaches in literature and English language learning and teaching in this digital era.

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