

Pedagogical Challenges to Literature: Active and Future Learning

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Abstract

This paper reiterates and recommends the need to adopt innovative instructional approaches and latest techniques that are believed, will facilitate the teaching and learning of literature in the contemporary scenario. Over the years, there has been an observable shift from traditional teaching techniques to a more creative ones. The teaching methods of various subjects have significantly improved as a result of research in pedagogy, emphasising new teaching-learning methods which is acquiring more and more popularity and its inevitability is being felt on a world level. Therefore, it becomes impending upon the teachers to develop essential skills to increase the involvement of students and their appreciation for English literature.

Keywords: Literature, pedagogy, innovative teaching methods, didactics, digital generation.

Introduction:

Literature is generally seen as an archive of any society reflecting its history, culture, religion, political framework, economy and several other facets of ideology. It is a sort of mirror which directly or indirectly represents the respective society. The readers understand various cultures and societies as the writer reflects them implicitly or explicitly in his/her works. It portrays a panorama of culture and society by offering a comprehensive accounts of people's life and exposing the issues and inconsistencies within a culture or society. Therefore, literature and society is interconnected in a way in which the readers can experience the different dimensions of life through the portrayal of characters. That is to say, the literature educates the whole person.

There is a plenty of material in literature that can be exploited for the moral education of a being. The learners should be inspired to develop attitudes towards the values in literary texts which relate to the outside world. It offers learners the ability to know even more about society. The significance of literature is felt more and more in the global contexts. It has a wide readership and has become a connecting language. The teachers must develop necessary skills to enable students to articulate themselves in both academic and real life contexts.

On the other hand, the term pedagogy as 'the science of teaching' covers the teaching performance along with ideas, strategies, policies and beliefs that guide and shape it. It is worth knowing that pedagogical material is continuously evolving, demanding effective and reflective teachers, who can constantly evaluate their practice. Many significant developments are emerging in the twenty-first century in relation to new technological advances, computerization, robotics, globaliza-

tion and artificial intelligence as the present age is considered an era of digital information and emerging technology.

This paper reflects on some of these innovative methods for encouraging the English literature teaching as the traditional teaching instructions needs exposure towards higher skills and achievements of students. Nowadays, in the 21st century, young people have got a multitude of possibilities to spend their spare time. However, the influence of the so called information age we live in, becomes quite apparent in the way they spend it. Many things young people enjoy doing, are connected to multimedia products in general. Besides watching youtube, going to the cinema, using digital applications, playing computer games, sharing data digitally, our youth is particularly interested in using the world wide web as a main source of fun and information. Thus, internet seems to be a sufficient and fast accessible source for nearly everything, because of the vast amount of technological innovation and continuously growing entertainment possibilities. On the contrary, books have become less popular although they provide information, which is generally more reliable. It is very important to keep people interested in reading literature

Approaches to Literature

The subject of literature can be taught by using some pre-teaching methods and innovative techniques like computer-aided language laboratories, movies, internet, world wide web etc. Such innovative strategies will promote the interest and appreciation of English literature among students. There are various approaches for teaching literature like transmission theory in which the teacher presents the facts about the text and the students reproduce these facts mechanically. There is no real development as such, when the studies are restricted to mere replication of what the teacher said. In the student-centred theory, it is the students who choose the material and the way to work as per their needs. The criticism against this approach is that there is a little growth in this method and the learning is limited to the experiences of students. Whereas, in the socio-cultural theory the students learn from each other and improve their ways of thinking and knowledge.

Literature can take on several roles in education like cultural understanding, personal growth and language improvement. One gets the opportunity to learn about different life experiences, time periods and gain an understanding of other cultures. It is indirectly an experience of the world by knowing people around the world geographically, culturally and historically. We can learn about the attitudes, values, traditions, social, cultural, political and historical conditions of the people around the globe. For personal growth, literature is a means that involves the reader emotionally as it may focus on issues which are relevant to one's personal circumstances or real life situations. There are various creative techniques and strategies by which English literature can be taught to the students as described below:

1. The use of computer-aided language laboratories can be an enjoyable activity and a fun experience. Students can make use of it by listening to the American or British English which will give them an understanding of the language and its expression.
2. Students can be motivated to discuss the author's brief biographical outline which will make them aware of the literary world of authors.
3. The presentation of the country's historical background is often important. This lets them learn and appreciate the aspects of history that affect the nation and its literature.
4. If the text centres on some particular regions, it is better to encourage learners to have the knowledge of those regions and its geographical details, weather conditions and natural resources etc. It is also possible to have some map reading which can increase their interest in the subject. It will provide the students essential background and can make them feel the text.
5. The presentation of the political aspects can help the students to understand the political trends and their impacts on culture. The students can be asked to gather certain photographs relevant to the country's rituals, practices, food, clothing etc.
6. The mythological connections that appear in the plays are quite significant works. We can collect pictures and mythical references which can be quite interesting to learn about the nation and its literature.
7. The students would get inspired and motivated to study literature, if some talks of popular writers or interviews can be arranged.
8. Several films which are based on novels, if shown to the students can prove to be appealing.
9. It would be a great activity if the innovative abilities of the students could be used to improve their language by arranging competitions like writing a story on a poem or a poem on the novel.
10. The role plays can be organized to enhance the willingness of students to read literature.
11. Students can be offered some mental exercises for their greater involvement such as introducing the text by an anecdote or a picture etc.
12. The students can be told to read aloud some meaningful chunks of a text, which can determine that whether the correct strategies are followed or not by the students.
13. While teaching literature, students should be taught to read between the lines. They can guess what the particular lines mean. This will increase their creative mental capacities.
14. Students can find human values in the stories, novels, dramas and poetry. They can learn universal values from literature. The teachers should encourage them to know the principles of real life and practice them.

15. Students can be taught to find suggestions to protect the ecosystem mentioned in the literature. The depictions of the landscape or the natural scenery enhances the awareness of flora and fauna amongst students.

16. The students will get interested in the literature study if they are given orientation to describe work possibilities for explaining career opportunities in the fields like teaching, translations, journalism, tourism, freelancing, publications, embassies, cultural centres etc.

17. There can be some post-teaching activities also like asking students to envision various ends to the story, novel or a drama. Listening to different options for ending is a fascinating job.

The students should recognise that literature plays a crucial role in bridging the gap by bringing the world together. Once literature students understand this, they will become agents of change. They should be encouraged to express themselves freely to discuss a literary text and supported to appreciate a literary text, since literature encompasses artistic, social and cultural elements that are detected and approached in several ways by different readers. The teacher would assume a role of an enabler for the transmission of knowledge. A good pedagogic approach to teaching literature should aim at eliciting the students response and make them active readers rather than passive accumulators to the text and guiding them to a personal discovery, thus bringing in them the enjoyment and appreciation of literary texts. This would eventually develop the students' language and literary competence.

The universities prescribe various types of literatures like the American, the British, the Commonwealth, which includes manners, mythologies, allusions, customs, social, political and religious references. It is the responsibility of literature teachers to figure out certain new methods to actively engage students as the instructional approaches have significantly improved, opening new opportunities and perspectives. Teachers need to swift their approaches to satisfy specific student requirements and to maintain the enthusiasm of learners. The teachers need to be vigilant as every student has his individuality and motivation is the key factor which can decide their progress.

An essential factor in the literature is evaluation and appraisal which are an inevitable element in the teaching cycle. It is proposed that the evaluation of literary skill of the learners should contain the sections like oral and written. In oral form, learners can express their personal responses to the text and address any question that the teachers raise. In the written form, learners can answer the objective type data or facts, while the subjective type mainly include some summary or an essay based questions. It is acceptable to grade the thought, teachers ought to be mindful when marking literature. It is thought and critical thinking which is considered more important than the content. The teachers ought to anticipate how students will react to the texts at a certain grade. Additionally, teachers can arrange debates or discussions about any potential topics, where students can be stimu-

lated to share their thoughts and insights about literary themes and broader meanings expressed in the works. Role-play is another way which fosters the cycle of intercultural interaction thus offering opportunities for oral communication at the same time. The written text can be orally articulated or even dramatized and with this the class can become dynamic, interesting and lively.

The teaching of literature in our universities has become mainly lecture-based with teacher-centred approach. As a consequence, the student becomes a parrot-like capable of simply repeating, what has been presented in class. Thus, the course of literature does not become an intellectual exercise for the student, who should seek and discover meaning by himself with the means and strategies provided by the teacher. Therefore, the teacher must move from teacher-centred pedagogy to a learner-centred pedagogy that would allow him to assume a role of facilitator and mediator, in order to lead his learners towards an independent ability to appreciate literary texts. Teachers should exploit all audio-visual means to enhance the reading abilities of their students. Recordings, watching plays and films based on books, and even inviting visiting teachers to give talks and speech on recently read works seem to be very efficient platforms for promoting pleasurable reading and fostering the students listening/ speaking abilities.

Conclusion:

In order to reconsider the effective role of literature in classes, it is highly advisable to develop an adequate pedagogy. The teacher should lead the learners towards an individual capacity to read and understand literary texts as well as to enhance their overall skills. They need to identify and employ innovative methods while teaching literature, the traditional teaching method can become an elongated monologues. Therefore, teaching literature with the aid of modern approaches is important as it can raise the curiosity of students. Through these approaches, students can be involved in learning tasks which gives them a chance for interdisciplinary research.

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