



Emerging Global Trends and the Teaching of Literature

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Abstract

Teaching in all sectors is evolving from traditional methods to embrace technology's multi-faceted reach and potential to expand knowledge and make learning more effective and efficient. As technology advances, so too, does the professional world and consequently education grow and transform. The education sector now can work with a plethora of emerging, innovative teaching techniques, thus creating a more dynamic and impactful learning environments, effective and efficient acquisition of knowledge and skills for the achievement of specific goals. Technology-based learning techniques boast tools to help students address academic challenges. Literature can now also embrace technology through electronic literature (interactive fiction, digital storytelling, narrative games, etc.), which uses games, images, videos, sounds, links, navigations and other digital qualities as an essential part of the reading experience. There are specific tools that could be used in Nigeria, such as writing for cell phones or using an Internet in a Box for schools or communities that may have a computer, but lack internet access. This paper examines the emerging technological trends to better inform local teaching in Nigeria and to most effectively use available technological resources.

Keywords: *Teaching, teaching techniques, technology-based learning, literature, electronic literature.*

Résumé

L'enseignement dans tous les secteurs évolue, passant des méthodes traditionnelles à l'intégration des possibilités multiples de la technologie, qui permet d'élargir le savoir et de rendre l'apprentissage plus efficace et efficient. À mesure que la technologie progresse, le monde professionnel, et par conséquent l'éducation, se développent et se transforment. Le secteur de l'éducation peut désormais exploiter une multitude de techniques pédagogiques innovantes et émergentes, créant ainsi des environnements d'apprentissage plus dynamiques et percutants, et facilitant une acquisition efficace et efficiente des connaissances et des compétences pour atteindre des objectifs précis. Les techniques d'apprentissage basées sur la technologie offrent des outils qui aident les étudiants à relever les défis académiques. La littérature peut également intégrer la technologie grâce à la littérature électronique (fiction interactive, narration numérique, jeux narratifs, etc.), qui utilise des jeux, des images, des vidéos, des sons, des liens, des navigations et d'autres caractéristiques numériques comme parties essentielles de l'expérience de lecture. Il existe des outils spécifiques qui pourraient être utilisés au Nigeria, tels que l'écriture pour téléphones portables ou l'utilisation d'un "Internet in a Box" pour les écoles ou les communautés qui



disposent d'un ordinateur, mais pas d'accès à Internet. Cet article examine les tendances technologiques émergentes afin de mieux informer l'enseignement local au Nigeria et d'utiliser au mieux les ressources technologiques disponibles.

Mots-clés : *Enseignement, techniques pédagogiques, apprentissage basé sur la technologie, littérature, littérature électronique.*

1.0. INTRODUCTION

Education is the bedrock of every society. It is the empowering force in the world. Education creates knowledge, builds confidence, and breaks down barriers. It aims at promoting growth and developing an individual's personality. The process or act of imparting knowledge or skills to another is termed teaching.

Teaching is a complex and multifaceted profession that involves facilitating learning, cultivating critical thinking skills, and nurturing intellectual curiosity. It is a dynamic and evolving profession that requires a deep understanding of the principles of effective instruction, a commitment to student engagement, and willingness to impart knowledge to others.

Several education exponents have defined and appropriated the concept of teaching, each according to their own demeanour. For Dewey teaching is the ability to assist learners in organizing, directing, and maximizing the stream of developing life experiences (89). According to Ayeni "teaching can be defined as a systematic process of transmitting knowledge, attitudes, and skills in accordance with professional principles (144). In the views of Smith in Isola (5), teaching is a system of actions involving an agent, an end in view and a situation including two sets of factors those over which the agent has no control (class size, characteristics of pupils, physical facilities, etc.) and those which he can modify (such as techniques and strategies of teaching). Based on Smith's definition of teaching, the underlying factor that enhances the achievement of comprehensive educational objectives is an effective teaching

technique such that would help the learner to develop cognitive thinking and increase the psychomotor skills of learning. In the words of Begum "learners understanding, critical thinking, practical skills and interest are four key factors of good teaching techniques" (1). Teaching techniques refers to the methods and strategies used by teachers to deliver knowledge and facilitate learning. It involves the selection and implementation of various educational means and activities to achieve specific goals.

Teaching techniques can also be defined as an integrated organisation that includes a set of materials, devices, tools, and educational attitudes that the teacher uses to clarify an idea or to change a vague concept to improve the educational process. The choice of teaching techniques can have a significant impact on student learning outcomes. Hightower qtd. in Isa, Mammam, Badar, & Bala (2) opined that those questions about effectiveness of teaching techniques on students learning have consistently raised considerable interest in the thematic fields of educational research. According to Isa, et al (2), student-centred methods or techniques are more effective than more traditional teacher-centred techniques. In teacher-centred methods, such as the "lecture method" common in tertiary institutions where class sizes are very large and students do not have their own computers or other technology, students are passive and learning tends to be superficial.

However, Ndirangu qtd. in Isa, et al (1) argues that different factors influence the choice of teaching techniques such as subject matter and student population, the teacher's learning objectives, availability of teaching and learning resources and

the ability and willingness of the teacher to improvise if conventional teaching aids are not available. We would add availability of technology to Ndirangu's list of factors influencing teaching methods. Ndirangu drew his inference from the fact that different teaching techniques serve different purposes for example: lecture-based techniques may be suitable for delivering content-heavy material, while inquiry-based techniques may be more effective for promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Similarly, hands-on activities and project-based learning can provide students with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in authentic contexts, fostering deeper understanding and retention of information.

2.0. METHODOLOGICAL FRAME WORK

The emergence of new global trends has necessitated new teaching methodologies that incorporate digital tools and interdisciplinary approaches to better understand and engage with this evolving field. Hence, this work will adopt a comparative analysis method which will examine these trends by contrasting traditional and contemporary approaches to the teaching of literature, considering both global influences and local educational contexts.

3.0. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims at:

3.1. Identifying innovative teaching strategies such as project-based learning, interdisciplinary approaches, and students centered method, that reflect emerging educational trends.

3.2. Examining how social media platforms and online literature communities contribute to the way literature is discussed, taught and shared across borders.

3.3. Assessing the role of digital technologies in the teaching of literature, as well as provide guidance on the teaching of electronic literature in an environment with no Internet access through a medium called " Internet in a box", or "Paper exercise".

4.0. TECHNOLOGY-BASED TEACHING TECHNIQUES

In this era of increasing use of computers and the internet in education applications, students and teachers have no choice than to embrace the technology-based teaching technique. Technology has become an integral part of education, offering innovative tools and platforms to enhance teaching and learning experiences. Costly notes "that technology makes learners to be more engaged in the learning process and also provides meaningful learning experience" (2). From interactive whiteboards to virtual reality simulations, educators have a plethora of technological resources at their disposal. However, the effective integration of technology into teaching requires careful planning and implementation.

Top on our list is the **Flipped Classroom Model**. This reverses the traditional approach to teaching by delivering instructional content outside of class time; typically, through online videos or readings and using class time for activities, discussions, and hands-on learning experiences. Carsten et al explain that "flipped classroom approach is being used by most teachers, and students are able to study their notes at home and engage proactively in discussions, activities and exercises occurring in school" (3), this technique empowers active engagement and fosters deeper understanding of subject matter. This model depends on providing students with access to pre-recorded lectures, interactive tutorials, and supplementary materials. While some of this can be replicated if students have paper textbooks, video recordings, interactive literature that depends on elements like sound, navigation, images, etc. cannot be delivered on paper. Thus, students must have access to the technology, either via a cell phone or a computer.

4.1. **Gamification** involves incorporating elements of game design and mechanics into educational activities to enhance motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. Research shows that gamification creates dopamine in one's brain, thus making learning more pleasurable and enjoyable, as well as rewarding. By using points, reward, and leaderboards students become more

engaged with the lesson and more likely to want to participate in the future. With gamification, teachers become coaches who offer detailed introductions to real-world applications of the subject matter. Moreover, students are encouraged to use their imaginations to solve problems or complete tasks.

4.2. Participatory, Interactive, and Experiential (PIE) textual engagement. Games are not the only venue for learning. Technological advances in cell phone apps as well as computers and software have created environments where students can participate in creating and reading works that require interactivity (for example, choosing what actions to take in a story, adding their own input into a comment or into the story itself, getting immediate feedback on answers, interacting with other people as well as artificial intelligence through chats).

4.3. Collaborative learning platforms such as Google classroom, Microsoft Teams, and Moodle enable educators to create virtual learning environments where students can collaborate on projects, share resources and engage in discussions. These platforms facilitate communication, collaboration and knowledge sharing among students promoting a sense of community and collective learning. Colleges in the United States use programs like Canvas or Slack where students can access lectures, turn in assignments, work with other students in groups on assignments, track their grades, etc.

5.0. THE EVOLUTION OF LITERATURE FROM ORAL TRADITION TO THE DIGITAL AGE

Literature, the written or spoken expression of human creativity, has evolved significantly throughout history, transitioning from oral tradition to written text and finally to these technologically advanced formats. This evolution reflects not only changes in technology but also shifts in human communication, culture, cognition, and expectations of engagement with texts.

Before the advent of written language, human societies relied on oral tradition to pass down knowledge, history, and cultural values from one

generation to another. Oral storytelling was not only a means of entertainment but also served as a virtual tool for education and preservation of collective memory. Story telling emerged as the human mind evolved to apply causal reasoning and structure events into a narrative and language, allowing early humans to share information with one another. Storytelling engagement expects storytellers to be a “teacher” and thus “lecture” in a more traditional teacher-centred manner. Audiences are expected to behave as traditional students would: to listen passively, memorize, and recite back.

Oral literature can be described as “verbal art; art that is delivered orally and transmitted orally from person to person, generation to generation, religion to religion; etc., by word of mouth. Forms of oral literature are epic poems, folk tales, folk songs, myths, legends, ballads of people and events, fables. Most of folk tales eventually moved from oral tradition to written form. Most of them begin with expressions like once upon a time” (Vaidya, 7). Many of the earliest works of oral literature were codified exactly as it was recited, and later, the codification process began to involve comparing various versions of related works into one canonical version. Many works still continue to be orally transmitted even after the codification process.

Enock enumerates the characteristics of oral literature as follows: it is flexible that is, it changes due to time, area, and manner of performance. An artist can change the story depending on the audience who watches or listens to the story. Oral literature involves face-to-face contact between the artist, the storyteller, and the audience. He goes on to say that oral literature is stored in the minds of the artists. It is not stored in books, tapes or pamphlets as written literature which is stored in books and pamphlets. Oral literature is owned by the society (6-7).

The invention of writing around 3500BC in Mesopotamia marked the emergence of written literature. Written literature is the form of human expression through writing. Writing allowed humans to record their thoughts, experiences and narratives in a tangible and enduring form. This

transition from oral to written literature led to the development of written epics, novels, essays, poems, stories, religious texts, and philosophical treatises, shaping the cultural and intellectual landscape of ancient civilizations such as Egypt, Greece, and Rome.

The invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in the 15th century revolutionized the production and dissemination of literature. Prior to the printing press, books were painstakingly copied by hand, making them rare and expensive commodities accessible only to the elite. With the advent of movable type printing, books became more affordable and widely available, democratizing access to knowledge and fostering the spread of literacy and ideas across Europe and eventually the world.

Written words, however, still retain the storyteller/artist/author to audience/reader relationships and expectations. These are teacher-centred in that readers are expected to passively follow the author's narrative form from beginning to end as a book proceeds from page 1 to the concluding page. Readers are not expected to comment on, skip pages, or interact with the words—although reader practices and marginalia histories suggest that readers do want to participate more fully with these works and have done so informally for centuries. See for example, Acheson (2019) discussion of marginalia in private copies of early English works as well as the popularity of choose your own adventure books, where readers flip to various pages, depending on their choice of actions within the adventure.

6.0. EMERGENCE OF ELECTRONIC LITERATURE

Electronic literature can now take advantage of computer and cell phone technology to create a student-focused, Participatory, Interactive, and Experiential (PIE) experience. This participatory and interactive method allows readers to engage with the materials in ways not possible within a book. These techniques can now take rhetorical devices well beyond the scope of a written page.

The digital age has revolutionised the way literature is created, consumed, and disseminated (Shah and Khaskheli, 1).

The advent of electronic literature could be traced back to the early experiments with computers and digital technology in the mid-20th century. Early experiments with electronic literature can be found in hypertext fiction, a form of nonlinear storytelling that allows readers to navigate through interconnected nodes of texts, images and hyperlinks. Other forms of electronic literature are interactive fiction, inspired by text-based adventure games which allow readers to make choices and interact with the narrative through branching storylines. Kinetic poetry, such as *Faith* by Robert Kendall or *At Nightfall. A Goldfish* by Melody Mou Peijing, combines text, animation, and sound to create visually stunning and immersive poetic experiences.

As technology continues to evolve, electronic literature has emerged as a dynamic and evolving genre that challenges traditional notions of storytelling and narrative structure. In this digital age, storytelling takes on new dimensions by incorporating multimedia elements to enhance the narrative experience (Bolter, 10; Manovich, 8).

By harnessing the power of digital technology, electronic literature has expanded the possibilities of storytelling allowing for new modes of expression and engagement. Manovich explains that the digital age democratizes access to literature, overcoming geographical barriers and bringing literary treasures to every corner of the world. Furthermore, electronic literature has sparks interdisciplinary collaborations between writers, artists, programmers and designers, leading to innovative and experimental works that push boundaries of artistic expressions.

Electronic literature allows for new forms of expression. Links from one word to another take on new emphasis and meaning as they connect ideas (for example, a link can show causation, opposition, related concepts). Images can be used to show progression within a story, relationships between ideas, etc. Sounds set the mood and can add more

layers of meaning. Animations show ways to move within texts and images. For example, the ending screen of Rob Kendall's Faith has the poem's words crumbling to the bottom of the screen in an unreadable heap, and the word "Faith" tumbling down on top of everything. Games allow students to interact more fully with concepts and create even more connections and ideas.

7.0. THE WATER SELLER (MAI RUWA)

The electronic literature work "Water Seller" (Mai Ruwa) by Faith Bassey and Deena Larsen published in the New River Online Journal. ([https://thenewriver.us./](https://thenewriver.us/)) (2023) is an example of how Nigerian writers could develop works and reach out in student-centred pedagogical approaches to grapple with questions plaguing transitions from traditional to modern worlds. The work is accessed strictly online and through technological means either a cell phone or any other electronic gadget by clicking on the links. Readers on a laptop computer can click on the image to get the story, and readers on a cell phone can click on links that provide nodes for the story (for example, The water she carries, The questions she asks, and The body she cherishes). Within these nodes are portions of the main image as well as links to other nodes within the story. Thus, readers are not constrained to a beginning, middle, and ending reading but can participate in an interactive experience.

The story is about Aiwa, a woman who lives in Nigeria with her son. Aiwa has a propensity for learning about medicine, and education in general, due to her mother getting Aiwa vaccinated in secrecy. When she meets her husband, Mbanu, the son of the king, he does not discourage or dislike her efforts to learn and read, even though their society does not favour or encourage women being educated. Aiwa is disliked by his family because she comes from a poor family, but she is finally able to marry Mbanu because she saves a different son of the king from choking. Aiwa starts spreading her knowledge to the people in the King's circle; he hates how knowledgeable she is and how she is spreading her teachings that go against their cultural

beliefs and traditions. The King eventually poisons his son. Upon his death, it is tradition that Aiwa must drink Mbanu's dead body water or leave the town. She leaves with her son and starts a new life as a water seller. She also begins to learn more and strives to become a doctor, which brings the story full circle.

This work emphasizes how important water is for life sustenance and how water is often taken for granted, as most privileges are. This work was also made to highlight the global discrimination that women receive around the world just on the basis of gender and ideological traditions.

Readers will engage with this work because it details this harrowing and dramatic story that is usually outside the scope and themes of common readings. The story provides a fictional but presumably realistic story of what life is like in Nigeria and the importance of water accessibility. The work helps readers within the culture grapple with changing traditions. Moreover, it provides a picture of life in Nigeria that can help other nations understand a bit more about Nigerian culture.

The writing process showcases new way to engage students as they could write their own works in a similar manner. If students have access to a computer, they can write these types of works in Twine, a free software that explains nodes and links. If not, they can partner with American writers and students and collaborate in similar ventures.

8.0. ACCESS ISSUES AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

A typical Nigerian classroom is restricted to using a chalk board or a white board, and computers are scarce to non-existent within the classroom. This is in stark contrast to many classrooms in the United States, where computers are at every desk and often students bring their own laptops and cell phones. Moreover, internet access may be lacking or unstable in many parts of Africa, in contrast to the nearly ubiquitous presences of strong connections in the United States. Therefore, ingenuity may be required to access these new student-centred,

participatory ways of reading and writing that electronic literature affords.

8.1. Cell phones may provide a way to use these technology-based, student-centred approaches. Electronic literature works available on cell phones could be listed and distributed, along with suggested syllabi and course questions for teachers and students to appreciate and engage in these works.

8.2. Internet in a Box. If a classroom can boast a single computer but no internet, teachers may use an Internet in a Box, a low-cost digital library, consisting of a wireless access point with storage, which users nearby can connect to. These storage devices could be equipped with some of the works of electronic literature (such as the over 3,000 works that have been archived and curated by The NEXT online museum, library, and preservation space.

8.3. Paper exercises. If none of these are available, students can still be encouraged to create their own works using paper. In this exercise, each student writes a paragraph on a given theme (for example, tomorrow, food, a particular festival). Students then read each other's papers and lay the papers out on the ground (held down by rocks). Then students take grasses or threads to show connections from one paper to the next. For example, the word "yellow" in one paper could link to the word "sunrise" in another paper. Students can then read or perform the text by reading one paper (node) and following a link to the next paper. This engages the students in writing and developing connections as well as participatory navigational reading.

9.0. CONCLUSION

Technology-based, student-centred teaching techniques offer endless possibilities for innovation and improvement in education. As educators embrace these best teaching techniques, they can empower students to become lifelong learners equipped with the knowledge, skills and competencies needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

The evolution of literature from oral tradition to written text to electronic formats also reflects the dynamic interplay between technology, culture, and human creativity. While each stage of this evolution has its own unique characteristics and challenges, the essence of literature, its ability to inspire, educate and entertain, remains constant. As we navigate the event changing landscape of digital literature, it is essential to uphold the values of literacy, diversity and free expression that have been the hallmarks of literary traditions throughout history. Embracing electronic literature in our classrooms can inspire our students to create and connect ideas and fully participate in today's modern society.

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Deena Larsen is resident artist at Washington State University, Vancouver, USA. She stands out as a pioneer in electronic literature, celebrated for her groundbreaking contributions to hypertext fiction and poetry. Her acclaimed works, such as *Marble Springs* (1993) and *Disappearing Rain* (2000), illustrate her talent for merging storytelling with interactive, digital formats. Beyond her creative endeavors, Larsen has been a driving force in the field, organizing events like the Cybermountain Colloquium and hosting online forums for the Electronic Literature Organization between 2000 and 2005. Larsen's creations delve into nonlinear narratives and reader participation, highlighting the transformative power of digital media. For instance, *Marble Springs* invites users to navigate a network of poetic stories woven into a hypertextual landscape, while *Disappearing Rain* employs Japanese kanji-inspired visual and linguistic components to craft a deeply layered, immersive experience. Her work bridges artistic innovation with scholarly insight, fostering exploration into the potential of hypermedia as a storytelling medium. For further details about Larsen's contributions, platforms like the Electronic Literature Directory and Alchetron provide comprehensive overviews.

AUTHORS' SHORT BIOS

Faith Samuel Bassey is a dedicated lecturer in the department of French at Akwa Ibom State College of Education, Afaha Nsit, with a B.A and M.A in French Studies. Currently pursuing a Ph.D in graphic literature at the University of Uyo. Mrs Bassey 's research explores the intersection of visual story telling and literary theory, with a particular focus on the use of graphic novels on illness and health discourse, as well as cultural representation. She also has passion for immersive storytelling and electronic literature. Passionate about fostering an engaging learning environment, Faith Bassey encourages students to explore the evolving relationship between text and image. Apart from teaching, she is an active participant in academic conferences and has contributed to various publications in the fields of French studies and visual culture.



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