

Enhancing Pedagogical Value of Literature through Digital Approaches in the Post Covid-19 Era

Victor Olu--Agbeniga

*Department of English, Federal College of Education (Sp), Oyo
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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the transformational necessity in the learning and content delivery system of literary education in the post-pandemic Nigerian classrooms. The pandemic effects compelled the drive towards digital teaching and electronic classrooms such as Google class, Class 123, Class dojo, Edmodo, Microsoft office mobile, and others in some parts of the academic community. This is considered a less conventional approach in a country whose academic delivery procedure is largely centred on the traditional, physical classroom contact and conventional, hardcopy sources of literary information. The paper therefore argues for a holistic pedagogical culture that integrates digital process in the teaching of literature courses as a multimodality, transmediality and heterogeneous literary experience. The aim is to ensure a dynamic and enriched classroom culture with practical flexibility in literature class experience.

Keywords: Literature, pandemic, pedagogy, transmediality, digital.

I. INTRODUCTION

The current global health crisis of COVID-19 held the entire world hostage and brought it to a complete standstill. The virus which thrives on physical contacts to worsen its scourge has paralysed the world cultural systems at all levels and accounts for the unprecedented academic frustration we currently experience in the country. By the foregoing, school education operations have been put on hold since 5 months as a measure to curtail further spread by contacts. However, in some academic quarters, a bold and relatively novel step is taken, digital alternative is experimented to ensure the entire academic year is not paralysed. To

achieve this, a shift to online classes is set via internet facilities, teachings are delivered and examinations are conducted. For those who experimented this successfully, a whole new paradigm has been shifted in the pedagogical delivery process. The approach has practically opened a new vista of school educational operations and indeed effected a brilliant turnaround in the acceptance of new practice of academic content delivery system. Hence the need for this discourse to advance further, the rewards and efficacy of digital based operations of formal education to further demystify the appreciation challenges encountered, especially in the course of literature education classes through a digital based multimodal approach system.

Relevance of Digital Based Teaching to Literary Education.

The world is already in the era of digital-educational revolution. Approaches to classroom operations are changing to the emerging technologies and digital solutions hence the necessity for the Nigerian academic system to get along in the new digital revolution in order for relevance in the global best practice of the business of teaching and learning. Basically one does not argue for total jettisoning of the existing traditional class based- hard copy model but rather negotiates the integration of the new digital culture to facilitate ease of practice and learning through tech-based operations. This is because a modern classroom ideally houses modern learners and the children of this age are regarded as the "citizens" or digital natives who are often better familiar with technology. It is therefore important to facilitate learning by integrating digital based approach to facilitate flexibility in the educational process.

Education society has been observed to lag behind in the embrace of technological innovations. Wade (2017) paraphrased, laments the backwardness of education in taking full advantage of new technologies. He observes the academe has always been a little behind when it comes to practically everything remotely related to innovation...he also notes a lot of teachers still refuse to embrace technology and make it a part of the education process. Over the years, scholars have emphasised the benefits of computer based learning as approach of school education. Indeed with the multiple learning friendly operations available on computer, learning in literature of especially English language is simplified. In research recently carried out, it was observed that the traditional mode of reading of a book was transformed as learners viewed a multimedia presentation which contained animation, narration and lines from the original texts adding that the CD--ROM helped not only in describing the events in the story, but also with the setting of the story. The sampled teachers choice of CD--ROM was due to the believe that the use of the CD could enhance the process of learning comprehension of the text. Among several ways in which internet is or computer is helpful to learning, a few has been identified as beneficial to the process of learning. They as follows;

1. Video teaching

Videos offer a great fun in the process of learning, it makes class lively regardless of the subject of study. There are software that can be used to project drama, poetry and or novel from the hand held phones, or tablets directly to the classroom screen. Which enable learners to gladly learn at their varied pace. For instance studies in literature can be easily delivered by the aid of clicking on a prerecorded play to analyse the concept of plot and the art of dialoguing. Climax, suspense and others could also be discussed using a video model to analyse in the classroom.

2. Use of YouTube channel.

Numerous educational channels abound on YouTube by simply subscribing to a video blogs in your subject area you are helping learners to learn with ease and confidence. This might even obviate a lot of trouble when the note of lesson is being prepared. The videos are usually short, visual and funny.

3. Invite Remote Speakers.

Bringing in remote speakers as a pedagogic approach is a profitable method of teaching which is appropriate for all classes or ages of learners. It is indeed a solution to

incomprehension and learning difficulty. I had been invited through Skype by colleagues in other institutions to enrich their lectures with my own experience and I sat under lectures in this lockdown period during online conferences. This could be sustained and replicated in our classes even after the pandemic is over. For older learners subject matter experts can be invited to breathe fresh air and inject new taste to the class. All work together to deliver easy comprehension. There are several apps for this ranging from WhatsApp, Face Time, Fiber, and Twitter.

3. Create Collaboration Groups.

By this all of the messaging apps mentioned earlier allow group creations according to capacities. Teacher can advise learners to create groups where learners can meet after the teacher contact to discuss further. Discussion groups are usually helpful to learners across levels as it helps them learn at a more relaxed pace. It also prepares them for class work. The use of internet in this regard tea he's laernersthe art of collaboration to work towards a common goal.

4. Share Public Files and Documents.

Google allows creating shared access to text documents, spreadsheets, and even entire folders. One can share all of new assignment t-shirt in class which later becomes a study board. For instance a course on Oral literature which had all groups working on varied moralities such as Ijala, Esa, Ewi, Ofo pipe, Ekun iyawo and others can have the groups harnessed to display each and thereby help each group have access to all others. There dozens of ways to use Google Docs to increase productivity.

5. Make Teachings More Visual.

The internet helps teaching of literary concepts more visual than just graphic. This is made over the years, scholars have emphasised the benefits of computer based learning as approach of school education. Indeed with the multiple learning friendly operations available on computer, learning in literature of especially English language is simplified. In research recently carried out, it was observed that the traditional mode of reading of a book was transformed as learners viewed a multimedia presentation which contained animation, narration and lines from the original texts adding that the CD--ROM helped not only in describing the events in the story, but also with the setting of the story. The sampled teachers choice of CD--ROM was due to the believe that the use of the CD could enhance the process of learning comprehension of the text possible by use of pictures and photos enhance teaching effects. For

instance when teaching a concept like European Authors or Introduction to Drama where references would be made to periods, people, practices and places, as well as cultures, situations, customers and others one can make use of online pictures of maps, faces and dresses when teaching certain periods, places, cultures and others. There can also be short animation videos, slides, quotations, text fragments or old visuals of historic relics to buttress that up. This approach significantly aids sense of connection which certainly drives home messages and information in a digital classroom.

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Understanding Multimodality Approach.

Multimodality refers to multiple modes of presentation, expression or communication. According to Bearne and Wolstencroft (2007) It involves the complex interweaving of words, images, gestures, and movement and sound including speech. In essence, multimodality is centred on mode, the way, means or manner information is passed across successfully especially in learning process. Succinctly, It is considered new ways of reading, New ways of writing and new ways of teaching through new modes. Kress (2010:79) defines mode as a socially and culturally shaped resource for making meaning such as image, writing, layout, speech or moving images. For Jewit (2008:246) meanings are made (as well as distributed, interpreted and remade) through many representational and communicational resources, of which language is but one. In fact sometimes we realize varied modes are present in some monomodal texts. A text is said to be monomodal in situations where we have literary works in only graphics without any additional illustration.

Let's paraphrase Fleckenstein (1996:917) in this clarification, who opines that even in verbal mode, attributes of visual images are used with the

verbal text evoking images. Therefore, even when a text is said to be monomodal in design or composition, such yet through its graphic expressions, evokes or describes images which drive or complement comprehension of the intended message. This is because human perception of the world is inherently multimodal and " every artistic text in relation to varied signs systems, possesses a correlational link between picture and word, narrative and performance" borrowing from Lotman's (1992 : 36) position on semiotics. Thus the perception of an imaginative work of art is indevestible from the mental construction of images wether visual, tactile, audible or olfactory. Given this, it could be concluded also that any act of human communication should be considered multimodal, since it cannot isolate any other modes of representation apart from verbal text.

It must be clarified before proceeding, that multimodality approach does not stereotypically denote digital involvement in traditional learning as it can as well affect paper based mode. A text can be made up on a combination of words, images and design layout using multimedia approaches to deliver messages. However the emphasis of the paper is on integration of digital mode in the presentation and assimilation of learning in the 21st century literature classroom. This is because literature teaching and learning in Nigeria needs to modulate in the direction of the new age. The future of reading and writing are closely twined with the the digital technologies and as teachers, it is of one's opinion that the responsibility of creating multimodal approach in literacy via internet information, other digital devices, and software presentations is reposed on us. This is why digital based multimodality matters in the modern Nigerian classroom.

Effect of Multimodal Learning on Literary Studies.

The emergence of internet and computer have significantly changed the conceptions about teaching and learning. Sankey (2006) observes that there are marked differences in both computer skills and cognitive skills among learners that these technologies are bringing about and that new tools have been introduced by the ICT to influence our thinking process and patterns which have impacted positively on our learning process and environment.

Multimodal learning in this argument, emphasises the vital impact information and communication technology known as (ICT) has on teaching and learning of literature which provides pedagogy with sufficient ease, enrichment and

enhancement. It involves the use of multimodal and ICT to develop flexible teaching resources that appeal to varied sensory modes and a variety of learning preferences as advanced by (Sankey and Birch, 2005). Dynamism in learning is a fundamental benefit that multimodal approach offers academics, for instance, the internet is deluged with wealth of information and resources with a range of multimedia learning elements such as simulations, interactive diagrams, videos, audios, image and several diagrams, power point, crosswords hyperlinked references or examples, all of which are available to enrich the process of learning the concept of literature, in such variety of modes and multiple representations. The emergence of internet and computer have significantly changed the conceptions of teaching and learning, Sankey (2006) observes that there are marked differences in both computer skills and cognitive skills among learners that these technologies are bringing about and that new tools have been introduced by the ICT to influence our thinking process and pattern which have impacted positively on our learning process and environment.

Inherent Benefits of Multimodal Learning Effect on Literary Studies.

Research has shown that learning in multiple ways reinforce knowledge comprehension, Morrison, Sweeney & Heffernan (2013) opine that presenting materials in varieties of modes has been used to encourage students to develop a more versatile approach to learning and learners overcome differences in performance that may result from different learning styles. Learners who have access to multiple representations enhance their comprehension, learning, memory, communication and inference (Scaife & Rogers 1996). Since literature as an imaginative concept is customarily abstractive and word based, could be better delivered from a prepared video. Video presentation according to Mayer, is much more effective than narration and text alone saying video and text rely on the same channel to process information.

From scholarly views, multimodal Learning creates an exciting and more encompassing learning environment for learners. They are not compelled to learn in a way that tunes them off the class but in that which increases their engagement with the course content. Another striking benefit is learning at own pace and through varied styles which is the foundation for effective learning. Learning style or modalities according to Sankey (2006) is characteristic cognitive, affective,

and psychological behaviours that serve as relatively stable indications of how learners perceive, interact with and respond to learning environment. Learners are more comfortable learning in an environment which reflect their predominant learning style. By this definition, multimodal approach proffers opportunity to learn in visual, auditory, written and comfortable form which encourages them to love to learn. Moving from the book based to computer oriented learning activity offers greater novel ways to learn with fun and interest and encourages students to learn in a most versatile mode. Kozma (1991) contends that learners benefit more when instructional methods provide, perform, or model cognitive operations that are important to the task and the situation.

Reviewing the Principles of Multimodality.

a. The combination approach can only be effective when the information provided is complementary and adapted to the very presentation. Hence the need for basic awareness of the underlining principles that define effective delivery of this new digital based approach for the overall success of the task. Thus for maximum effect of the impact of the multimodal approach on learning process, the following principles according to Gilakjani, Ismail and Amadu (2011), must be borne in mind as all bear great contributions to ease of learning.

A. Words and Pictures are Better than Words Alone.

As earlier argued by Mayer (2005) learning is more effective when it is conveyed with relevant pictures. The creative parlance that a single picture is more than a thousand words is a buttress. Words include simple and spoken text while picture refers to animation and video. The combination use of both aids Neuro active processor to interpret and assimilate a given information. Indeed picture concretizes information and easily aids retention hence Mayer's insistence that narration and video is more effective in learning procedures than narration and text.

B. Multi-media Learning is more Effective When Learner's Attention is Focused, not Split.

Split attention occurs when learner is forced to attend to information that is far apart on the computer screen compelling the learner to start struggling to locate items at varied distances away. This exercise is easily prone to attention shift as learner's interest slips away by other irrelevance. (Mayer & Sims, 1994) frowns at this insisting that brain becomes more laboured integrating disparate

sources of information. In avoidance, related content must be presented together in time visually to avoid a distraction of this kind.

C. The Presentation of Multimedia Content Should Exclude Extraneous and Redundant Content.

Multi-media is most effective when it includes only content that is relevant and aligned with instructional objectives as indicated by Mayer earlier. Kalyuga, Chandler and Sweller (1999) made a discovery that extraneous and redundant serve as another distraction source. It also makes learning boring and cumbersome. Redundant information should be eliminated to help learners concentrate on the multimedia presentation.

D. Multi-media Learning is More Effective When it is Interactive and under the Control of the Learner.

Ability to learn at a controlled pace stimulates the rate of comprehension in learners according to research findings. Learners assimilate at varied levels of learning progression hence the use of multimedia presentation which affords the Learner to slow down the pace of presentations by pausing and starting as desired by the learners. Mayer (2003) buttresses that the pacing is also possible by breaking down the content into segments where shorter segments that enable users to select segment at desirable pace is more effective than longer ones which have less effective control.

E. Multi-media Learning is More Effective When Learner Knowledge Structures are Activated Prior to Exposure to Multimedia Content.

Kalyuga (2005) submits that activation of the Learner Knowledge Structure (LKS) can be accomplished by allowing students to preview the content through demonstration, discussion, directed recall and written descriptions. This approach aids reactivation a structure from long term memory which facilitates understanding and mastery.

F. Multi-media Instruction that Includes Animation can Improve Learning.

When Learner can manipulate various phases of animation it becomes effective, especially if such is narrated which explores auditory and visual channels according to Mayer and Chandler (2001). When presenting concepts that learners may find difficult to master on envision. However Kalyuga (2005) insists that these preview activities should be carefully directed at activating previous knowledge.

G. Multi-media Learning is most Effective when the Learner is Engaged with Presentation.

When presentations are done with familiar voice and accent it encourage learning far more than ones

done with less familiar resources to learners. Mayer, Sobko & Mautone (2003) observes that multimedia that have a more personalised tone tends to be more engaging than the ones that have formal tone. In other words, presentations that employs the use of personal pronouns such as "You and I" are more engaging than the less familiar ones.

H. Multi-media Learning is most Effective when the Learner can Apply their Newly Acquired Knowledge and Receive Feedback.

Gee (2005) paraphrased, notes that feedbacks are essential tools that help keep learners in the knowledge of their performance progress and help them stay engaged. For Mayer (2005), it exposes learner's knowledge status and provides with opportunities to apply the learnt. This reinforces and strengthens the newly acquired knowledge as they are opportune to integrate what is learnt with their day to day life.

II. CONCLUSION

The paper has identified varied digital approaches with which literature can be effectively taught in the classroom without recourse to or in combination with the traditional physical class contact. Indeed, ease of mastery and enthusiastic response in a learning environment, is unequivocally established as a consequence of an enjoyable lesson session via a well handled teaching that is aided by multimedia apparatus that focus on the individual needs of the learners.

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