

Unleashing Creativity via Technology: Incorporating TikTok in Teaching Literature to EFL Learners

إطلاق العنان للإبداع عبر التكنولوجيا: دمج التيك توك في تدريس الأدب لمتعلمي اللغة الأجنبية
الإنجليزية

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Abstract:

Social media seems to play an important role in the field of foreign languages teaching and learning. Although some lecturers and scholars assume that social media has negative impacts on learners' abilities, others support the "new" fruitful learning atmosphere in teaching literature via the various internet applications. This paper highlighted the important role of social media mainly TikTok in teaching literature. The realization of this was granted by a qualitative approach that was founded on the theory of Connectivism, and the theory of Generation Gap, and a quantitative approach that was based on an online survey to students specialized in literature. Eventually, the research arrived at a collection of suggestions and revolutionary implications of BookTok style of videos within literature classrooms. The study also established a promotion base for TikTok as a mean to teach universal literature.

Keywords: Literature instruction; EFL education; TikTok; Technology integration; Connectivism.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Scenes in science fiction movies where interaction between teachers, students and technological gadgets, virtual world, and robots has gradually become a reality in classrooms. The dominance of all types of technology and ICTs is destined to serve human needs, relations, opportunities, and innate urges for evolution. Humanity is going Meta because online communication and display platforms have become essential instruments at home, work, and even in classrooms. There is no way to avoid the involvement of ICTs in education for the sake of improving the experience, developing the interaction between teachers and learners, and enhancing creativity. It is worthy to mention that the age of globalization and digitalization requires teachers to involve more technology in their teaching process rather than sticking to the old traditional methods. However, in reality, the maximum usage of technology by many teachers is using projectors, interactive whiteboards, Telegram or Facebook groups for communication. Disregarding ICTs by teachers will deprive them of adding fun to their classrooms, adapting to modern age, getting closer to their learners, and supporting critical thinking, their creativity, autonomy, interaction, and innovation. Indeed, ICTs will open doors to new experiences that can greatly enhance language teaching, a process that was once fraught with various difficulties using traditional methods. To illustrate the idea of using ICTs in class, forbidding mobile phones in a traditional class is imperative for teachers to avoid students' distraction, but the updated class can integrate them as means to encourage learner's autonomy. Based on these presumptions, the advocacy of using ICTs in teaching and learning is based on the Generational Gap Theory and Connectivism Theory. The former is a barrier to innovation while the latter serves as a facilitated pathway to learning in the digital age. The study focuses on one social media platform 'TikTok', and seeks to understand the way it is used in a literature class in order to promote the benefits of ICT-based teaching. This article

encourages teachers to use ICTs by affirming the effectiveness of ICT-based platforms in teaching literature, and outlining the different strategies that can be used to improve the process.

2. Connectivism

2.1 The Theory of Connectivism

Due to its importance in the field of digital education, Connectivism is the cornerstone of this research's pursuit. It is the theory that revitalizes students' active engagement in online learning communities to acquire knowledge (Bell, 2009). Within these virtual learning communities, learners interact, collaborate, and share information and learning experiences utilizing videos, audios, pictures, texting, newsletters, Wikis, Vlogs, and blogs. The means by which they share and interact can be websites or social media platforms that ultimately and collectively turn into an educational medium. The main supporters of this interactive theory are: Stephen Downes, a researcher at the Digital Technologies Center, and George Siemens the director of a Learning Technologies Center (Goldie, 2016, pp. 1064-1069).

2.2 Basics of Connectivism

Being aware of this theory is a starting point for teachers and students; yet, it remains insufficient. In order to fully comprehend the theory, it is necessary to grasp its fundamental concepts and principles. Accordingly, and to settle its framework, Siemens (Siemens, 2008) itemized the main basics of Connectivism as follows:

1. Knowledge and learning are based on a diversity of viewpoints.
2. Linking knowledge sources.
3. The potentials of non-human machines.
4. Learning more, is mandatory.
5. Establishing connections to precede learning.

6. The capacity to bind different domains, theories, and concepts.

7. The impotence of updating knowledge

8. Autonomy, innovation and decision-making.

Undoubtedly, teachers are called to know and to add these principles to their necessities, and duties; teachers of all ranks, categories, subjects and ages.

3. Generational Gap

Unquestionably, being a Connectivist in this era is a must. If "Connectivist" can be used as an adjective to describe a person who shares and seeks knowledge through the internet, then both instructors and learners should be Connectivists. It is undeniable that ICTs affected society and changed how knowledge is exchanged, how communication is conducted, and how learning occurs. Yet, through daily observations, it can be seen that youngsters use new technologies more than the older generations of people, who may find it challenging to adapt to all ICTs (Garcia & Qin, 2007).

In his essay 'Problem of Generation,' Mannheim discusses the importance of understanding generational differences. He establishes that generations are separate units influenced by history and location; that is, people from the same unit share a similar identity due to the similar factors they witness. He states that when people with a shared future live in the same community, distinct groups of different generations can emerge (Mannheim, 1952).

3.1 Generation of Zoomers (Gen Z)

To remain limited to today's generation of collegians, the focus of this study is put on Gen Z that makes up the majority of current university students who were born between 1996 and 2009. Related to Mannheim's categorization, Twenge discusses the Gen Z concept which stands for Generation of Zoomers to name a unit of people (Twenge, 2013, pp. 11-16). Gen Z is characterized by a dependency on technology, an adventurous spirit, and preference for digital communication; novelties and creative productivity. Gen Z is

characterized with an unconventional mindset that keeps evolving and disrupting industries. Gen Z is an unparalleled group of innovation and entrepreneurship (Witt & Baird, 2021). For older generations of teachers, however, ICT can be intimidating, hard to use, or distracting.

4. ICT based teaching of literature

Knowing that monotonous teaching is an issue to be fixed with ICTs can reduce the intimidation. Having arrived at this point, some suggested applications through which ICT based literature instructions are delivered can be listed as follows:

- Playing recitation and narration videos at class instead of repeated drilling.
- Playing background music that suits the mood of the literary work being dealt with.
- Recording students' readings and listening to them afterward.
- Watching videos of artists performing some of the literary works, such as a plays, dialogues or reading poems.
- Using microphones at class for more accentuated immersive clearer voices.
- Working with digital interactive boards.
- Providing students with e-materials to help them learn more at home.
- Encourage them to write their thoughts and analysis on personal blogs, accounts or social media pages.
- Creating online groups to take discussions and analysis everywhere.
- Displaying short films, clips and documentaries
- Supplying classrooms with Wi-Fi.
- Recommending a film as homework.
- Designing ICT- based lectures.
- PowerPoint presentations of key points and summaries.
- Displaying graphs and pictures that help students mind map literary concepts.
- Creating accounts on different platforms to diversify students' online engagement.

- Teachers' self-audio or video recordings.
- Organizing live meetings with students via different platforms such as Google+, Hangout or Zoom.
- Sharing regular online quizzes and sheets on Hubspot for example.
- Getting used to dealing with different important software and applications such as Learning Management System (LMS) that creates, modifies courses and tracks students' access to them.
- Posting lessons on different platforms including Moodle.org
- Having students record themselves in role-playing activities for classroom shows.

Although these means and ideas may seem as dreadful tasks for them, teachers have the duty to implement them in their classrooms, and students are ready for that. Their essential objective is to be Connectivists by overcoming generational gap issues. Teachers are required to adapt to Connectivism regardless of their attitudes toward technology, or how weak their technical skills are. Dr. Ray Clifford stated that technology is actually menacing for the teachers who are incapable of using it, not for those who can manipulate it (Sahni, 2016).

4.1 Social media and teaching literature

By gazing deeper into the layers of applying social media to teaching, it is indicated that these tools are influencing teacher- learner relationship, changing its nature, and balancing between the centrality of teachers and learners. Furthermore, social media is altering people's relationship with knowledge. Assimilating to the impact of social media will open up new horizons in teaching in the age of globalization and interconnection. The connection between learners and their instructor keeps them updated about their teachers' online academic activities and can increase collaboration, teamwork, and feedback quality. Social media is an additive way of exchanging knowledge, opinions, and experiences. For example, students and their teachers can extend commentaries and discussions about a

novel through a Facebook group and arrive at different conclusions and analyses through continuous interaction. Equivalently, Social media is a mean of sustainable continuous education. Students and their teachers find themselves digging into other sources of information, and other details about literature to enrich debates, and to accumulate new knowledge.

5. The use of TikTok in teaching literature

Launched in 2016 in China, TikTok has grown into the most popular social media platform. In the first quarter of 2022, it had over 1.39 billion monthly active users, according to the Demandsage website. Its intelligent machine learning, Hashtag strategy, aesthetics, and interactive characteristics allow its content to reach a huge number of subscribers across the globe. TikTok videos are visually appealing, may contain captions and music, and can be modified with different effects and backgrounds.

5.1 TikTok and learning

Unlike other videos on other social media platforms, TikTok's format of short, bite-sized videos with a time limit of up to 60 seconds encourages concise and focused content creation and the delivery of literary content in a concise manner. TikTok's user-generated content fosters creative display of literature, such as dramatizations, visual representations, and multimedia presentations, which can engage learners. Additionally, TikTok's algorithm-driven recommendation system promotes personalized learning experiences, as users can receive content short, precise and tailored to their interests and learning styles.

TikTok has witnessed the emergence of language-learning videos, which have garnered significant popularity as a genre of knowledge-sharing platform in 2019, underscoring the growing importance of social media as a pedagogical tool for academic-oriented language education (Yang, 2020, pp. 162-83).

5.2 Literature and BookTok community

Finding more videos about literature can be done by looking under #BookTok which has gained 4.4 billion views till now. It is a mine of readers, reviewers, book influencers, literary discussions and debates, book recommendations and promotions, literature fandom, and commentaries about literary works. Readers can share their reading experiences and what they learned or disliked about fiction and nonfiction works, while reliable intellectuals discuss themes, ask questions, and make trivia about literature as if they are giving courses, but in a compelling manner. ManyTikTokers such as @abbys_library3, @baker.reads, @baskinsuns, @books.with.lee, @chels_ebooksre, dedicate their accounts to literature by sharing their appreciation and criticism with their millions of followers. (Handscombe, 2022).

BookTok community serves literature in many ways. It is a medium of advertising books as long as reviewers' videos help writers promote their books, and recommendation videos have an impact on sales rates. Furthermore, writers like Fiona Lucas, the author of the successful novel "The Last Goodbye" connect to their fans through TikTok videos, a privilege for writers and readers that was not popular before. Additionally, Gen Z pays a considerable attention to anything that is "Trendy" "Mainstream" "Viral" "Top Chart" and "Hot Topic." Thus, BookTok is making literary works gather under these virtual phenomena and consequently leading to a spike in sales and readability among young people. Millions of likes and follows for BookTok videos that introduce old and new books to the world helped books that were published before the launching of TikTok to gain popularity (Ordoñez & Figueroa, 2021).

5.3 BookTok and teaching literature

TikTok is increasingly being utilized as a tool to promote literature teaching and learning; ergo, it can be applied to the Connectivism of Gen Z students by teachers who overcome the Generational Gap. Generally, educators are expected to search for ways to engage and motivate students as social media technologies are becoming their viable

supplement (Mustakim, Mustapha, & Lebar, 2022). The literature classroom can then be viewed as a meeting place for both the teachers who are conscious of updating their methods and incorporating ICT in their classes and the students who grew up with technology at hand. BookTok links knowledge, innovation, creativity, Connectivism, teaching, and learning, and overcoming generational gap. Having come this far, the present paper suggests different activities for teachers to apply in their TikTok supported lessons of literature:

- Using BookTok videos to encourage students to read.
- Recommending several book reviews for students to watch at home, then ask them to build their own opinions on these mainstream reviews for a classroom discussion.
- Books recommendations from BookTok in the reading club of the faculty.
- Displaying various writers' BookTok videos in class for open discussions about contemporary writers and the writing industry.
- Reading and analyzing classic literary works and then comparing students' feedback with mainstream interpretations from the BookTok community.
- Displaying BookTok videos of negative and positive critics of the same work for students to compare and judge, this may provoke debates in class.
- The most recommended activities are related to students' productivity and creativity, in the way that teachers ask them to simulate BookTok videos. In other words, learners record themselves discussing themes, plots, writers, literary theories, and movements in TikTok-like videos to share in class. These activities can be organized as special sessions of knowledge exchange, interaction, and enjoyment. The process resembles a role play of content creation but for the sake of literature and learning.

This activity gives the learner a strong position and a good opportunity to express themselves creatively, aesthetically and technologically.

- Asking students to produce TikTok-like videos to recommend their favorite books in a convincing argumentative, aesthetic way. This activity can be followed by a voting session for the most convincing and pleasing video.

5.4 The advantages of BookTok literature classroom

BookTok sessions and assignments will be a chance for students to effectively and properly conduct their analysis of different literary works, and to learn how to flexibly express their thoughts in a comfortable intellectual setting. Moreover, integrating this social media platform into literature classes will boost students' appreciation of their teachers, who can balance old scholars' wisdom and knowledge with youngsters' technological proficiency. It will also make literature classrooms richer, beneficial, revamp, interactive and, desirable. Approving BookTok activities will also encourage students' autonomy and productivity by taking literature beyond essays writing because they are the Gen Z.

6. Diagnosing a Gen Z group of literature students

The second part of the research employs a questionnaire-based approach to investigate students' perceptions on the implementation of BookTok-style videos in their literature learning process and classroom. The aim of the questionnaire is to explore students' awareness of this concept and their level of support for it to prepare for the engagement in the previously mentioned activities that blend TikTok and literature. Based on the hypothesis that the majority of students from Generation Z, who are familiar with TikTok's engaging content, would show interest in using BookTok videos for literature classrooms, the questionnaire seeks to gather data to support or refute the hypothesis, and to motivate teachers if answers are positive.

6.1 Participants and the collection of data

The sample consists of 35 Master 01 students of Comparative Literature at the University of Hassiba Ben Bouali, Chlef- Algeria, aged between 21to 26. The data for this study were collected through an online questionnaire consisting of eight multiple choices questions to diagnose their readiness to BookTok activities.

6.2 Findings

Fig.1. Have you ever considered using TikTok as a platform to learn about literature, such as through book reviews, literary analyses, or other related content?

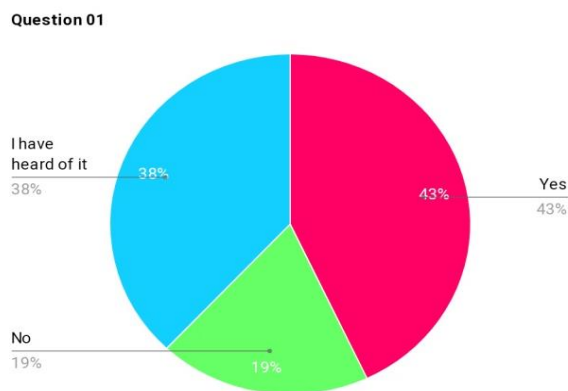


Fig. 2. How interested would you be in watching TikTok videos related to literature or BookTok-style assignments created by your teachers for academic purposes?

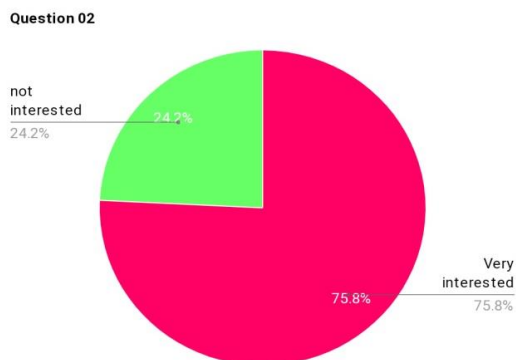


Fig. 3. In your opinion, what potential advantages or benefits could arise from using TikTok as a tool for learning about literature?

Question 03

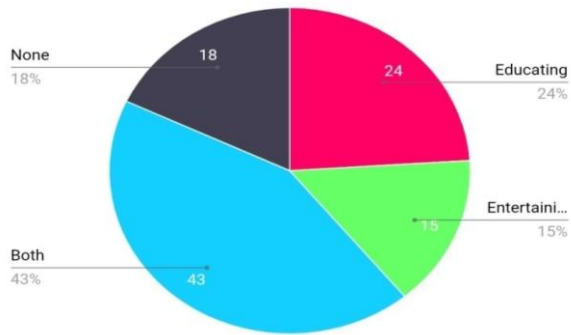


Fig. 4. How do you perceive the idea of teachers using TikTok to create BookTok-style assignments or simulations for literature-related tasks?

Question 04

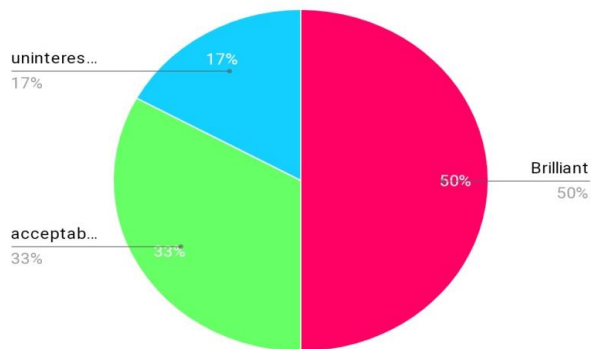


Fig. 5. Do you find it engaging or enjoyable as a concept?

Question 05

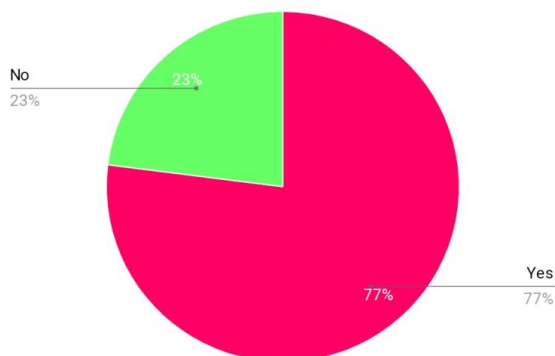


Fig. 6. Based on your understanding of the idea, what are the main benefits of incorporating BookTok in literature classroom?



Fig. 7. Does it have disadvantages?

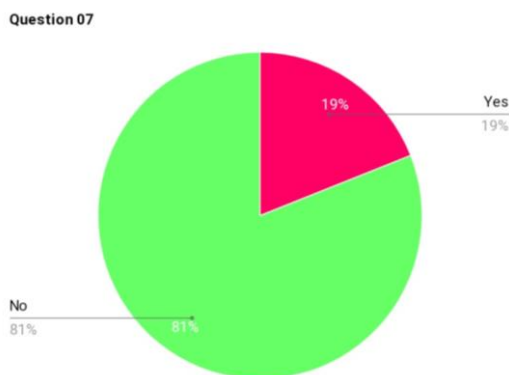
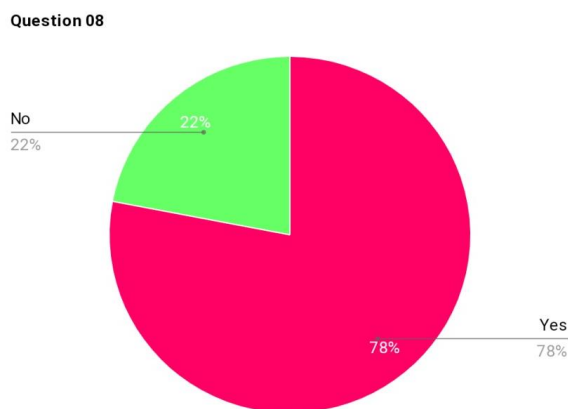


Fig. 8. Would you like to participate in BookTok-style assignments or simulations on TikTok, if offered by your teachers?



6.3 Discussion of results

For any teacher hesitating, the analysis of the questionnaire's outcomes revealed that the highest percentages were recorded for positive responses about BookTok and literature; with percentages such as 78% and 81% the sample expressed their support. Even though some students showed hesitation or lacked awareness about this approach, the majority of students indicated their readiness to embrace BookTok-style videos as a tool for learning about literature and producing content related to it in the classroom. The questionnaire included focused questions that assessed students' opinions, attitudes, and readiness to adopt this approach, considering their specialization in literature at the Masters level at the University of Hassiba Ben Bouali, Chlef, Algeria, and their membership in the Generation Z cohort, which is known for valuing creativity and Connectivism in contemporary education. The results of the questionnaire provide support for the hypothesis and indicate that literature students from this sample are open to the incorporation of BookTok-style videos in their classroom activities and assignments.

7. Recommendations

Based on the revelations of both the primary and secondary data applied in the research, it is recommended for teachers to consider the introduction of BookTok-style videos in their literature classes, where students can discuss the content of the videos and use them as a basis for assignments. Instead of traditional written assignments of analyzing a novel's themes or characters, students can create BookTok-style videos that can be played and commented on during special class sessions.

Furthermore, it is recommended for teachers to be open to exploring various social media platforms for potential sources of inspiration for new and creative teaching methods, even if their reputation is not traditionally associated with education. As technology, innovation, creativity, and inspiration are intertwined in today's world, being open to new

approaches can be beneficial. It is also important for students to be tolerant and collaborative when teachers introduce new methods and styles of teaching that involve technology, as some students may find it challenging to understand, to prepare, to create, and to adapt with new methods, and even to tolerate teacher's trials to overcome technical weaknesses. However, it is remarkable that students at Hassiba Ben Bouali University in Chlef, Algeria are generally open and flexible, which may facilitate the application of these innovative teaching activities. In addition, it is recommended for teachers themselves to create BookTok-style videos discussing specific points in literature to motivate and inspire students. This activity can also be applied in book clubs at universities. It is important to prepare students beforehand for this activity so they take the implementation of TikTok in class seriously. Teachers should also explore the wide range of types, sound and light effects, and themes of BookTok-style videos, as there are diverse options available, such as self-filming, page annotation, and reviews, among others. Lastly, researchers can conduct field studies to contribute to the literature on the implementation of social media platforms in teaching, specifically exploring the outcomes of incorporating BookTok-style videos in literature classes and assignments via an experimental research.

8. CONCLUSION

To put it simply, teachers are obliged to understand new concepts and methods of teaching and to be open and flexible in updating their teaching styles. Not only that, but the old generation of teachers must understand and tolerate the generational differences. At the moment, Gen Z is referred to the current generation of students. They are seen as the ultimate generation of internet; therefore, embracing Connectivism and defeating any Generational Gap issue, whether it is an age gap or a gap of skills, is not optional but mandatory for contemporary teachers. The common use of projectors, PowerPoint presentations and videos are not enough to be in tune with students, even in contemporary

literature classrooms. Literature is not about drilling and passive lecturing anymore, but it has become more advanced and creative. Consequently, social media can be a tool for literature teachers because of its utility in connecting teachers and students, and in sharing and exchanging knowledge and reading experiences. Considering that it greatly influences the current generation, the focus of this paper was the use of the social platform of TikTok as an innovative way to teach literature. Its social power can be applied in favor of teachers and literature. This platform has a whole sub-community dedicated to readers and writers, so taking profit from this useful side of TikTok is possible and recommended. This research offered teachers a collection of guidelines and activities to improve their ICT employment in class and to expand their follow-up activities to reach their students' homes. Moreover, suggesting BookTok videos as references, the present study aimed to contribute in the enrichment of students' passion for literature and in the development of their critical thinking abilities, creative productivity, and communicative skills about both fiction and nonfiction. Students will eventually think, create, train and entertain; facts that the sample approved via the questionnaire in the study. Indeed, a session featuring BookTok videos will be educating, memorable and impressive. This research paper with all the suggested activities can be considered as a call, an initial point, and as a source of inspiration for all teachers of literature.

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10. Appendices

The questionnaire that was used in the study:

Have you ever considered using TikTok as a platform to learn about literature, such as through book reviews, literary analysis, or other related content?

- I have heard of it
- No
- Yes

How interested would you be in watching TikTok videos related to literature or BookTok- style assignment created by your teachers for academic purposes?

- Not interested
- Very interested

In your opinion, what potential advantages or benefits could arise from using TikTok as a tool for learning about literature?

- Educating
- Entertaining
- Both
- None

How do you perceive the idea of teachers using TikTok to create BookTok- style assignments or simulations for literature- related tasks?

- Uninteresting
- Acceptable
- Brilliant

Do you find it engaging or enjoyable as a concept?

- Yes
- No

Based on your understanding of the of the ide, what are the main benefits of incorporating BookTok in literature classrooms?

- Merging literature with technology
- Boosting our artistic creativity

Does it have disadvantages?

- Yes
- No

Would you like to participate in BookTok-style assignments or simulations on TikTok, if offered by your teachers.

- Yes
- No