

***Technology and the Teaching of Literature in Language Studies.***  
**A practical methodology for the enhancement  
of traditional teaching methods**

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There is a general perception in higher education that technology has little to contribute to the study of literature. For this reason this paper intends to redress the balance by giving practitioners the opportunity to share their experiences in using technology to teach literature. This paper will entirely concentrate on a central question that is structured as: ***How can technology contribute to the teaching of literature in language studies***

It will give then a specific focus on a two-sided objective; it will first explore some of the reasons for the lack of research into the use of technology in teaching literature within modern languages, and will then explore three basic questions:

- How can technology make a valuable contribution to the teaching of literature studies?
- How does technology affect the relationships between subject matter and teaching methodology?
- Are there implications for the traditional boundaries between subject areas?

In order to supply the research with reliability, I see it necessary to explore the term in its multi-dimensional concept which in this question it (technology) does not mean only materials, tools and technical devices through which a course is covered: like: videos, computers, Internet..., but it could also stand for the scientific study of any applied science as linguistics, didactics..., and even the humanities such as civilization and literature.

There can be no doubt that technology *can* make a contribution to the teaching of literature, given sufficient time and resources, but what is less clear is the problem-solving of the most appropriate ways in which this can happen.

Of course, this literature may be conveyed through a specific language that is by its form known by both the teacher and learner

I may give, here, a very brief overview on Technology as a material-oriented (tool and material...video- computer...).

Naturally, it can play a vital role in the acquisition process and can clearly influence the student's learning experience.

Among the technologies that contributed too much in the development of the humanities is the computer. Computer-assisted Language Learning is a highly successful practical methodology for the improvement of traditional teaching methods. Foreign languages Teachers have all the time fought in order to make the teaching of literature as a support of a skill only, with very limited prominence upon critical thinking and understanding of issues relating to literature.

In addition to this, there is no existing – even- little exchange of ideas between the fields of language studies as: linguistics, didactics, phonology, civilization, literature...

A successful use of technology in teaching must imply some assessment of the teaching strategy; therefore, in order to do this, we need to try to take an objective view of the real relationship between the subject-based content of a taught course, and the methodology which is employed to teach it.

And it can be done through the following parallels:

- **The library parallel:** Technology can open up access to rare resources such as manuscripts, rare printed works, books which are out-of-print, works of art, and other media.
- **The seminar parallel:** Tools such as email discussion lists and conferencing systems are already being successfully used for teaching literature (see for example McBride and Dickstein, 1996).
- **The lecture parallel:** Technology allows the tutor to use their expert knowledge to provide a path for the student through digital resources which they believe are the most interesting, important or relevant.
- **The course book parallel:** Technology allows the easy inclusion of other media within a single framework and the development of a guided

'path' through the materials (for example adding film links to works, of art, multimedia learning materials).

- **The student-led seminar parallel:** Digital presentation of information by the student; students are now able to present their own materials in many media, by using digital tools, thus lessening (decreasing) the emphasis upon oral presentation which is disadvantageous for the less confident students (Litvack and Dunlop, 1999).

The advantage of these parallels is to create an atmosphere of sharing insight in order to facilitate the understanding of the literary devices: setting, characters, themes, plot... in a down-to-earth (realistic) form.

In fact, at another level, a number of contextual problems may account for the ineffectiveness of teaching and learning literatures in the Algerian Higher Educational system, (Be it British, American or African).

The problems include the literary text itself; the teacher may choose any text without referring to its nature. He may provide some kinds of answers to these four questions:

Why do learners read?  
What do they read?  
Who are the writers writing to/for?  
How do they read?

Therefore we should try and ensure that they are reading for a purpose, on a specific topic and with a certain reader in mind, and that we have an awareness of the way we read, i.e. understand, analyze, and yet interpret.

From the aforementioned questions the very relevant ones are **who** and **how**; the former (who) defines the would-be readership: young, adult, female, male, native or foreigner while the latter (how) may afford the methodology of the how- to-do to didacticians and practitioners

Consequently, and in order to remedy for a successful methodological enhancement, some classifications of pedagogical objectives are put into questions. These objectives are simply stages of a well-oriented technology classified accordingly:

De Ketele (Swiss)  
 Rowntree (English)  
 Hameline (Belgian)  
 Birzea (Romanian)  
 Drumheller (German)

All the classifications, with their discrepancies, mapped out the pedagogical research into three main phases:

**phase1:** Aim. The aim is political. (For example the teaching of any literature can widen the student's cultural knowledge).

**phase2:** Goal. It is decided at the level of university, faculty or department. The classification of research studies and methodology of professional self-development in an educational sphere (African literatures).

**phase3:** Is the out-come of all objectives, and from the already-said classifications, Burns found a ground of agreement, by establishing a clear distinction between different articulations of objectives:

Linear articulation of objectives	VS	arborescent articulation of objectives:		
(1)		(1)	(2)	(1) (2) (3)
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
(2)		(3)	(2)	(3)
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<input type="checkbox"/>				
(3)		(4)	(4)	(4)
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(4)		type I	type II	type III

The linear objectives are used entirely in the classroom sphere.  
 The arborescent objectives are used both in classroom and real life.

Objectives are the subject-matters of the classroom. The teachers schedule the objectives according to the student's need. It's a matter of a course planning.

1 – Final objective: step (4) either in the linear or the arborescent objectives stands for the final objective.

- A- Learning to write critical essays in modern African literatures through individual and collaborative approaches/researches.
- B- Methodology of research through linear or the arborescent articulation of objectives in learning to write critical essays in modern African literatures.
- C- Testing the hypotheses of a data-oriented research in a course of African literatures.

2 – Intermediate objective: how action research can help students either individually or in groups reflect in / on the learning process of modern African literatures.

3 – Short Range objective: assessing personal techniques in conducting a research. No reference permitted. Mistake free.

4 – Isolated objective: teaching how old the president of Nigeria was when Chinua Achebe wrote his Arrow of God.  
- Names of countries, flags...

5 – Content objective: Exploring collaborative project-based language learning (through action research) in a multi-cultural setting.

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