Updating and Sharing Through UGC – User Generated Content, a Modern Trendy Alternative Perspective in Teaching of English Language and Literature

Prasanth Arokia Samy

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Abstract

Internet has become a new blackboard for this generation and it is a bitter truth in the 21st century. Keeping that in mind, this research paper tries to explore an alternative perspective in teaching of English language and literature based on the expectations and possibilities in teaching for modern people in a globalized world with UGC-user generated content. UGC most often appears as a supplement to the online platform, such as social media websites. It aims to scrutinize the kinds of language and literature teaching and learning activities taking in social networks such as **Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Wiki, Whatsapp** and so on. It also tries to examine the individual level of development on Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills on English through social media activities. There are numerous conventional theories for decades on teaching English language and literature; even then, we find it difficult to satisfy every learner. Change is inevitable, as such; teaching needs a change or at least modification based on modern trends. Therefore, this paper tries to study about the modification needed in teaching with the availability of user-generated content, especially focuses in teaching ways of English language and literature and explicates the teaching and learning process of English, in and outside the classroom.

Keywords: User generated content, Facebook, YouTube, e-mail, Google, Wikipedia, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Digital technology, Social media, networking websites, web 2.0.

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Education, a Powerful Weapon

Jimmiki kammal, a group dance by Kerala girl students from the school of commerce on Onam celebration goes viral and trending with more than 4k likes among social networks for days. It even got the attention of famous American TV host Jimmy Kimmel. The suicide of Tamil girl named Anitha as she fails to qualify in the NEET exam, got the attention of all youngsters from India and protest is made against the state and central government to provide same syllabus for all students in school education or else ban NEET exam for a prolonged period of time. How is it possible within hours or days that news spreads over the globe? Is this what we mean globalization? Obviously, globalization of modern digital technology is the key behind this. If this technology helps in these things why cannot we make use of this technology in developing education to the next step? Nelson Mandela states that "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". However, in most parts of India, education system is in need of change in the method by which it has been taught and learnt.

Digital Technology and Education

Modern digital technology has almost made a storm of change in every aspect of life today in unimaginable ways, and education is not an exception. As a matter of fact, modern generation students are very much in control and depend on the content found online. Digital students are no longer passive consumers of knowledge, but also producers or creators with a more active approach to learning. The Pew internet & American life project (Lenhart & Madden, 2005) reports that approximately 70% of all students in the United States are not only participate in online activities for education but also create their own online content through blogs, personal webpages and remixing. Teaching and learning, as a part of the open culture of web 2.0, are modern ways to contribute, communicate and collaborate, using a variety of accessible and easy use tools that empower one to develop and share ideas. The most popular and connected Web sites on the internet such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and so are all making use of this user-generated content, which is redefining how we think about creativity and provoke us to consider how new modes of community based sharing and content creation might be a modern way of learning and teaching in colleges and universities. Therefore, it shows that Indian higher

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education is progressing with this modern digital approach in teaching and learning. Most probably not, unfortunately in most parts of India, even when we are in the 21st century making modern digital India, education seems to be the same as it had been for decades.

Conventional and Traditional Approaches Still Retained, Change *Is* Coming!

The higher education system of India, in most of the states is still used to following the conventional and traditional approaches in teaching and learning, especially regarding English language and literature. Most Indian students face a pitiful situation of being still used to traditional approaches to teaching and learning that are based on pre-packaged learning materials, fixed deadlines, assignments and assessments tasks designed and stipulated by teachers. The situation has stayed the same for centuries because of its parallels to the modern times. The teacher lectures from a podium at the front of the room while the students sit in rows and listen. Some of the students have books open in front of them and appear to be following along. A few look bored. Some are talking to their friends. One appears to be sleeping. Classrooms today, do they look different from what has been portrayed? Most of our response will be, genuinely, no. because, though we might find modern students looking at their laptops, tablets, or smartphones instead of books. A cynic and conventional teacher would say that technology has done nothing to change education. However, this paper tries to explore the answers for those cynic and conventional teachers by conveying the changes bought by technology in education. Moreover, to specify, this paper tries to make a study of how user generated content such as social media and websites helps education and becomes an alternative perspective in teaching and learning English language and literature in the modern digital world.

Technology has profoundly changed education and greatly expanded globalized access to education. A few decades ago, books were rare and only an elite few had access to educational opportunities in India. However, those situations and accessibility to needed things in education have been drastically changed at present. A massive amount of information such as books, audio, images, video and so on are available at the fingertips of individuals through the internet, and opportunities for formal learning are available online worldwide through MOOC's, podcasts and

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even the invitation for this paper presentation and more. Access to teaching and learning is unprecedented in its scope now, thanks to modern technology.

User-Generated Content

User-generated content refers to any media that was created by users. This can include images, videos, audio files, text posts, tweets and more. The key factor is that the content was created by users of a service or customers of a brand, rather than by professionals seeking to sell said service or brand, convey or popularize or convey something to the world. User-generated content is a highly impactful and affordable means to learn and teach. UGC is based on the psychological response of users. So when a potential user gets to learn about something through others, their hardwired brain feels the assurance that they are making the right choice. The reason is simple word of mouth referrals are the best kind of referrals, even in this age of digital world. With the advent of and growth in popularity of user-generated content has increased the relevance for teaching and learning environments in higher education, and is already influential and approachable (Williams & Jacobs, 2004). The new affordability of user-generated content is now making learner and teacher-centered education a reality. Even though, these tools enable and encourage informal conversation, dialogue, collaborative content generation, sharing of information, giving learners access to a vast array of ideas and representations of knowledge. As a result, the one way flow of information between teacher and student is now being challenged. Moreover, the conventional method of teaching should be allowed to rest in peace at last.

Social Media Platform

Unarguably, modern students and online Statistics prove that through social media platform teachers can evoke better interest in students in learning the English language and literature, which serves as an alternative perspective in teaching. Opportunities for communication, collaboration and interaction have also been expanded by technology.

Traditionally, classrooms have been isolated and interaction with the class or other students is limited. However, modern technology has globalized forms of communication and

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collaboration which was undreamt of in the past. In the same manner, Teachers are not in need of carrying a chalk piece to every class. Teachers can save their time from taking notes in a separate notepad whereas now they can select and save everything within a few seconds. Teachers can even share more number of examples through images, photos, videos, voices and so on, instead of traditional writing about the topic and its spelling on the board. The excessive ideas and points will help the students to develop their critical thinking and imaginative power. For example, decades before, traditional teachers taught Shakespeare through text more than through actual presentation like acting, apart from which they could not share anything other than facts regarding places and other matters in England or in some other country mentioned by Shakespeare. However, the accessibility of technology and user-generated content enable us to know every detail of a specific item. Students in a classroom can share what they are learning with students in other classrooms in other states who are tracking the same expedition. Students can collaborate on group projects using technology based tools such as wikis and Google docs. The walls of the classrooms are no longer a barrier as technology enables new ways of learning, communicating and working collaboratively.

Changing Role of Teachers and Learners

Technology has also begun to change the role of teachers and learners. In the traditional classroom, such as what we depicted in de Voltolina's illustration, the teacher is the primary source of information, and the learners passively receive it. This model of teacher as the "sage on the stage" has been in education for a long time, and it is still very much in evidence today. However, because of the access to information that technology has enabled, in many classrooms today we see the teacher's role shifting to the "guide on the side" as students take more responsibility for their own learning using technology to gather relevant information. Schools and universities across the country are beginning to redesign learning spaces to enable this new model of education, foster more interaction and small group work, and use technology as an enabler.

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The constant use and upgrade of social media through modern technology enables the educationalist to develop in unimaginable ways such as teaching and learning through Facebook, instagram, twitter, Wikipedia, Google, YouTube and so on as all these websites and social media come under user-generated content. For example, if we take Facebook as a platform to show an alternative perspective in teaching and learning of the English language and literature. Facebook enables a learner as well as a teacher to get through in all four LSRW listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Facebook as a Model for Alternative Teaching and Learning of the English Language and Literature

The ideas are just a starting point for alternative teaching and learning in class room with the use of Facebook. The students follow news feeds relevant to the course material in order to keep current information flowing through the class. The students can post their reviews for peer criticism and for other students to read. If Indian students learn a foreign language like English, they can connect with native speakers through group. A great way for journalism students in writing is to practice their craft, use Facebook status update feed as a breaking news source for sports results, academic competition results and other campus news. User-generated content enables the teacher to facilitate communication skills in an excellent way to ensure that students are more engaged in the learning process. There are a few steps by which a student and teacher can strengthen the communication through technology instead of conventional teaching and learning method. The teacher can create groups for the entire class or for study groups with smaller subsets of students that allow for easy sharing of information and communication, without students even having to friend each other. The teacher can even schedule events of the entire semester through Facebook. Any unexpected absence or change in schedule can be intimated through Facebook. Modern technology gives preference to share multimedia with the ability to post videos, photos etc. with the entire class. Apart from that, the teacher and students can even post study notes after each class period for students to have access for review or in case they were absent. User-generated content provides direct communication between instructors and students through Facebook and so, providing an opportunity for better sharing of information and

better relationship. The main objective of this technology is to make shy students approachable for their teachers after class. When students get to know each other more intimately, they become more involved in the learning experience. This is helpful in both large classes that would not normally promote such intimacy and in smaller settings that regularly depend on that connection. Students through user-generated content can have the ability to add their thoughts to the class any time they occur, for more opportunities for brainstorming each other.

Benefits of User-Generated Content in Teaching and Learning

User-generated content does not mean only Facebook; however, it is one of the social media platform with more number of followers when compared to other social media such as twitter, Instagram and so on. Therefore, it would be suitable if we take examples from the most used platform in teaching and learning the English language and literature. It offers students and teachers an opportunity for active participation on a level playing field as it proves to be a comfortable way for students to participate in class as most of the students are already users of Facebook. The students' active participation will gradually increase, since it just requires informal inherent communication that triggers students to participate in large numbers. It promotes social interchange between participants, thereby increasing the collaboration between students working on activities. UGC – user generated content provides an excellent opportunity for both teacher and student to participate in ambient awareness, a way of getting to know those you follow on social network in more meaningful ways. The main thing is for the instructor to take personal responsibility in teaching through user-generated content. They have to teach students to use content responsibly and other social networking sites, so it helps their future and not the opposite. Conducting Seminars for every student in the classroom with limited time before the syllabus is covered is really a hectic schedule for the teachers. Therefore, seminars and guest lectures can be arranged through user generated content platform, even though the speaker is in foreign universities, and yet we can arrange a time scheduled.

Technology is a powerful tool that can support and transform education in many ways, from making it easier for teachers to create instructional materials to enabling new ways for

people to learn and work together. With the worldwide reach of the internet and the usability of smart devices that can connect to it, a new age of anytime anywhere education is dawning. It will be up to instructional designers and educational technologies to make most of the opportunities provided by technology to change education so that effective and efficient education is available to everyone and everywhere. Therefore, implementing teaching and learning through user-generated content for education is most welcome with the valid environments, and support from all partakers.

Teaching and learning via user-generated content such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and so on does not only help improving team working relationship skills, but also helps, them to achieve better results in learning. Therefore, creating richer environment is the ultimate notion of getting education through user-generated content. It is suggested that lectures should be more active in conducting activities through user-generated content. This in turn will motivate the students to participate more. The design of the study plan also needs to be planned prior and one must ensure that all topics are involved in using user-generated content activities. The educational institution should be aware of the capability of user-generated content access in supporting the process of teaching and learning.

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