

Ushering Internet of Web in Classrooms: Text, Hypertext, Digital Humanities, and Literature

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Abstract

In the view of increasing use of digital media, WhatsApp can be used as one of the most productive and viable pedagogical tool for creating participative and rich learning environment in the classroom as against computer labs and CALL. Through a series of experiments carried over hundred samples, its findings and observations highlights the use of social media, especially WhatsApp, that can be used as a tool to strengthen pedagogy in general and teaching of Language and Literature in Particular.

Keywords: Internet of Web, Digital Humanities, Social Media, Pedagogy, MALL, CALL.

1. Introduction

With the coming in of technology in a big way there has been a paradigm shift in teaching methodology. Now, the classroom is to be made self-reliant and self-sufficient with the help of technologies. A student doesn't have to go to the computer/ internet lab/café or kiosk for surfing, browsing and exploring the areas of their academic and research interest with the aid of the technologies. There are different categories of classrooms depending upon the financial situation of the institution. They can be classified as:

- i) Institutions which have smart classes, where the entire internet of web is present in the classroom to facilitate the teacher's job of crafting and creating learning environment in the classroom.
- ii) Institutions which may not have the smart classes but have LCD projectors or OHP's etc. as aids.
- iii) Institutions where classrooms are neither smart classes nor have ICT enabled gadgets. The only accessible and easily available tool is smartphones with social networking like WhatsApp, Telegram, Messenger, etc. installed.

The chapter will discuss Digital Humanities as applied in the institutes of the third category, where classrooms have neither smart classes nor ICT-enabled gadgets. The only accessible and easily available tool there is smartphone with social networking like WhatsApp, Messenger, etc. installed. The research framework in the chapter is based on the experiments carried over in the classrooms to strengthen one's pedagogy in general and teaching of Language and Literature, in particular.

2. The Opening moves

The paper has been titled "Ushering Internet of Web in Classrooms: Text, Hypertext, Digital Humanities, and Literature" for four major reasons.

First of all, the term Digital Humanities has been normally used to depict the utilization of Computer and its allied systems in the arts and humanities for about a decade since the publication of "Companion to Digital Humanities." (Schreibman, Siemens, & Unsworth, 2008) and the term "Digital Humanities" was immediately taken by the scholastic network as an emerging research and the name arrays from activities involved in computing, software designing to arts and humanities. Thus, it was thought to be a useful tool to observe a shift in the ongoing pedagogies of language and literature. It was observed that the weightage of learners and researchers was shifted from text to hypertext, as hypertext is "a database format in which information related to that on a display can be accessed directly from the display" (Grove, 2002) and it has a greater potential for aiding any tutoring or research as compared to text. It creates a new innovation technique of pedagogies and thus, opens a wide area of research.

The influence of "guiding star of the new parenting movement" (Collier, 2009, pp. 1-34) Marc Prensky can be felt throughout the research as his address tools and K-12 system is a similar innovation and a revolution in the field of pedagogy and curriculum, and thus his terms "Digital Natives" and "Digital Immigrants" have been used in this research.

The scenario of ICT and CALL in Indian Context is not very practicable, which has been discussed in section 2.3. This being the reality, it becomes imperative to devise a methodology which can work and work effectively with a teacher in an average Indian classroom within the available resources.

As the research, proceeds the history and techniques of teaching must be kept in mind. Initially, teacher was the center of knowledge, and the attitude of teacher is absolute and he solely governed the system of learning. Then, there was a gradual shift and learner was given equal dignity and importance in the learning process. But now, the excess of information on the board and the teacher is losing his or her relevance. Technology has now created a challenge for the teachers to maintain their role of teaching and their relevance as the agent of knowledge and creator of learning environment in the classroom.

2.1 Digital Humanities

Digital Humanities is an area of study that intersects between the discipline of humanities and network of computations. (Drucker, 2013) The term emphasizes shift from the ancient middle and gothic period, when the world was Theo-centric to a period where man is now the “measure of all things.” The humanities are the field of the study of literature, theatre, philosophy, arts, music, architecture and expression of any other human culture.

Each act of moving humanistic material into computerized groups and, or remediation of literary art/texts into codes with assets and obligations that ascends from making that particular Humanistic “information” perceptible in the digital environment can

be termed as Digital Humanities. The activities involved in DH are “Assessment instrument”; “Class structure, assignments, goals, outcomes Topics and Syllabus”; and ‘Digital Humanities’ projects of numerous varieties such as “Brain Picking”, “Walt Whitman Archive”, “Roman Forum Project”, “Women Writers Project”, “Encyclopedia of Chicago”, so forth and so on.

Thus, any involvement of computation or its allied system in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences can be traced as a part of Digital Humanities. Hence a new paradigm of researches is opened in terms of pedagogy and applied experiments.

2.2 ICT classrooms and the situation in Indian Context

India’s 5.9% GDP is accounted by The Indian Information Technology and industry (“IT and ICT: Government of India, All India Council for Technical Education”) and is in itself one of the biggest job creators of the country. But the other side of the coin, which can be claimed as even a darker side portrayed by **Education Quality Foundation of India, New Delhi** commissioned by NITI Ayog in its final report for the Research Study on the use of ICT in Secondary Schools states:

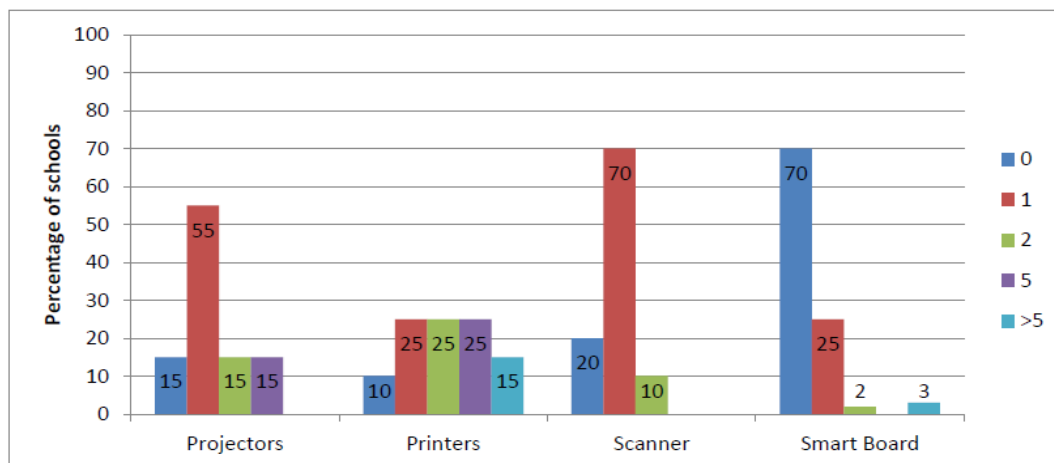
- i. 60% of the teachers stated that ICT infrastructure to teach other subjects through ICT is deficient.
- ii. The report stated, “All the states putting together, 90% schools were having computers and 68% were having multimedia presentation. Around 40% were having internet connection, and audio-visual documentaries. Audio-language lab was found only in 4% of the schools.”
- iii. Computer Student ratio of the schools are:

Table 2.3.1: Teacher- Student Ratio (Source: EQFI Report, study commissioned by NITI Ayog)

Sl.No.	Student-computer ratio	Types of school
1.	35:1 - 60:1	Rural
2.	25:1 - 50:1	Urban
3.	35:1 - 150:1	Government & Government Aided
5.	14:1 - 24:1	Kendriya Vidyalaya

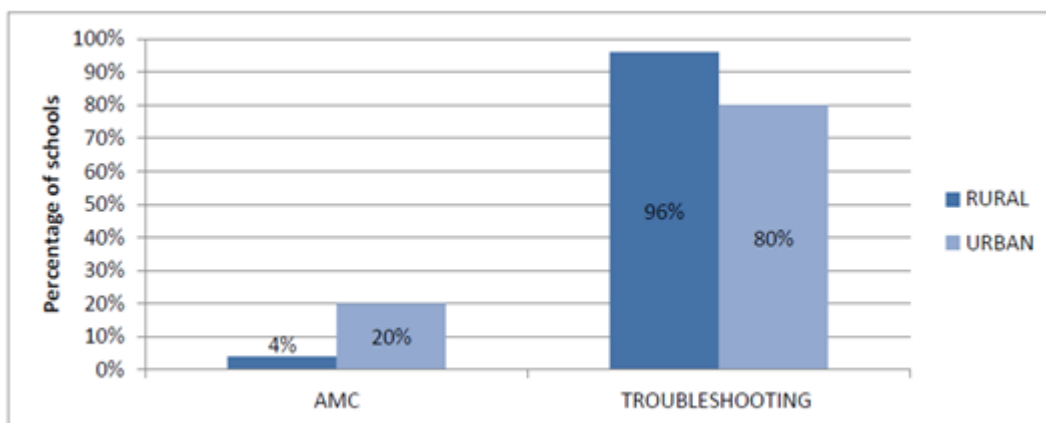
iv. The availability of ICT peripherals is:

Table 2.3.2: availability of ICT peripherals in Schools (Source ibid)



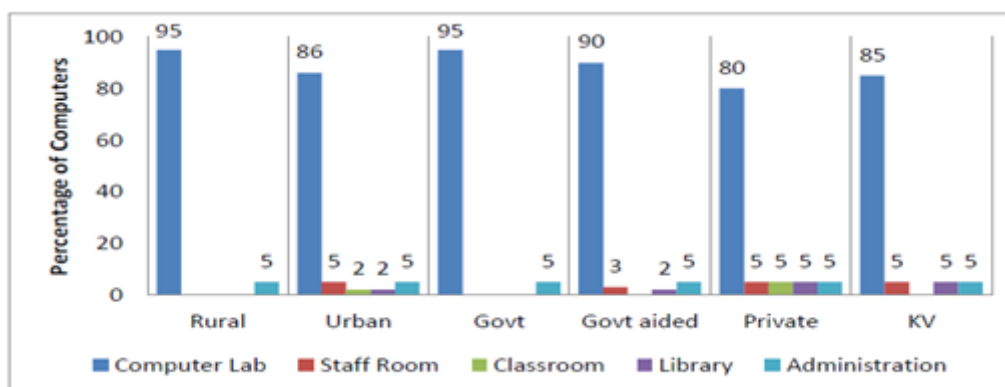
v. The ICT maintenance and technical support in schools were as:

Table 2.3.3: ICT maintains in Schools (Source ibid)



vi. It can be observed that majority of computers found in schools/ institutions are in computer labs, which cannot be used as ICT classrooms.

Table 2.3.4: Place of Installation of computers in Schools (Source ibid)



Thus, from the report of the committee it becomes evident the classroom scenario is far from being techno savvy. On the basis of the availability of LCD, OHP or mere computers the classroom teaching cannot be called techno friendly and ICT enabled teaching. For want of the supportive infrastructure and teachers trained in the use of the ICT technology., the classroom environment cannot be made productive and participative.

3. The pedagogical framework

For the present paper the researcher did not proceed with any pre-defined pedagogy. The WhatsApp pedagogy was evolved through the experiments.

3.1 Experiments

The experiment was carried out in three phases with a sample size of 100 students comprising 50% of them from rural background, 40% from urban areas and 10% from metropolitans cities (Delhi and Guwahati). In the first phase the teacher interacted with the students in a conventional setup, ie the teacher talking and the students listening. In the second phase the students interacted in the conventional setup but their written responses and feedback was received through WhatsApp. In the third phase was shifted from the actual to the virtual, ie the students were sending their responses on Whatsapp from wherever they were but during the negotiated time.

Phase 1

The responses of the learners were taken either verbally or on paper.

Phase 2

In this phase the instructions were given by the teacher orally but the responses were sought through WhatsApp. WhatsApp was used as a pedagogic tool to elicit learner's responses and reactions. A WhatsApp group was created for the specific class hour and students were instructed to keep typing their responses to the questions given by the teacher and send all their responses in a consolidated form at the end of the class. However the learners were allowed to add seek clarification of the teacher instruction through verbal mode.

Phase 3

In this phase neither the teacher nor the students are located at the same place. The instructions were commuted to them through WhatsApp and the responses were collected through WhatsApp.

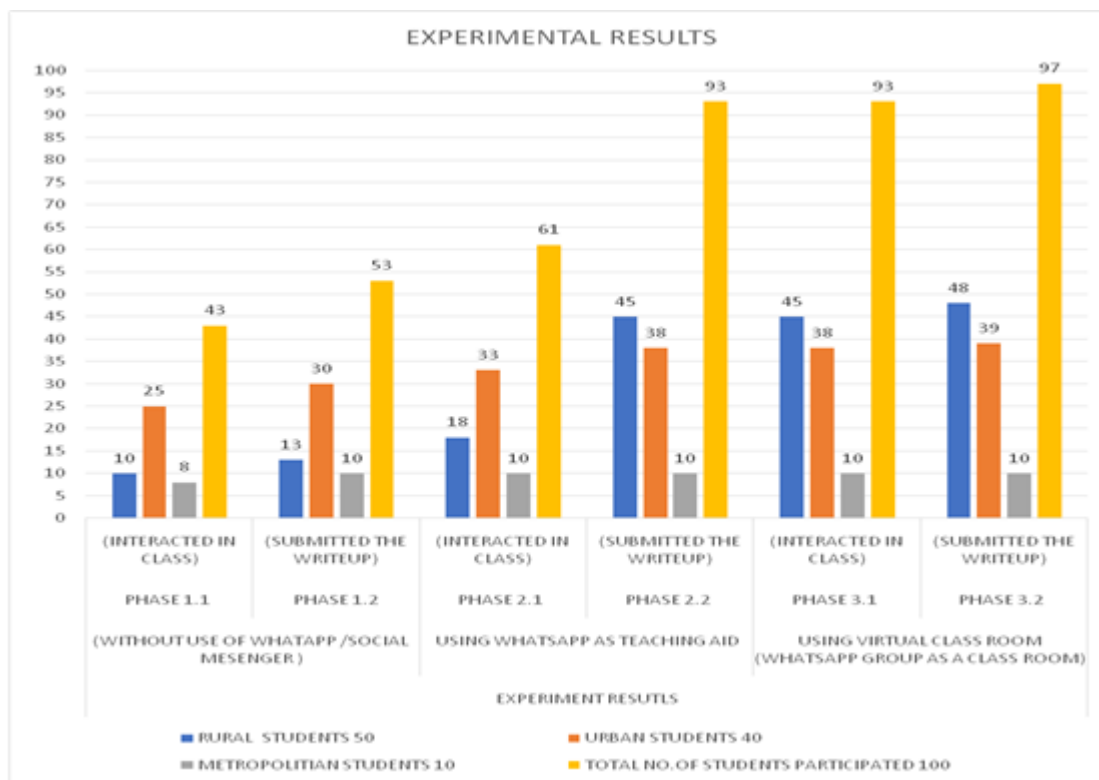
3.2 Findings

Through the experiment it was found that out of out of hundred students forty-three had interaction and fifty-three had submitted write ups in first phase. While the data grows up to fifty-three for interaction and sixty-one for submission of write-ups in second phase and in the third phase ninety-three students interacted in the class and ninety-seven students submitted the write-ups. The detailed analysis of the experiments can be observed from the experimental results in table 3.2.1 and table 3.2.2.

Table 3.2.1: Experimental results- Data

EXPERIMENT RESULTS							
	Total Number of Students	(WITHOUT USE OF WHATAPP /SOCIAL MESENGER)		USING WHATSAPP AS TEACHING AID		USING VIRTUAL CLASS ROOM (WHATSAPP GROUP AS A CLASS ROOM)	
		PHASE	PHASE	PHASE	PHASE 2.2	PHASE	PHASE 3.2
		(INTERAC TED IN CLASS)	(SUBMIT TED THE WRITEUP	(INTERAC TED IN CLASS)	(SUBMITTE D THE WRITEUP)	(INTERAC TED IN CLASS)	(SUBMITT ED THE WRITEUP)
RURAL STUDENTS	50	10	13	18	45	45	48
URBAN STUDENTS	40	25	30	33	38	38	39
METROPOLIT IAN	10	8	10	10	10	10	10
TOTAL NO.OF STUDENTS	100	43	53	61	93	93	97

Table 3.2.2: Experimental Results- Bar Graph



3.3 Outcomes

Through the above discussions, experiments and observations we can observe that:

- The “Digital Natives” in Indian context feel shy and reluctant to use paper and pen. They avoid using traditional grammatical framework to convey their message but they feel quite comfortable in texting, and this fondness of theirs can be exploited as a tool of learning and create an educational environment.
- Even for the learners of traditional culture, it has been observed that the learners are reluctant to air their queries and many a time hesitate to answer back or give a feedback to the TR in the class. The learner’s felicity of texting (in an interactive creative procedure and not in class lectures) allows them easy and free interactions with the teacher.
- The non- presence of the teacher can turn out to be a boon for the sender (learner), as this liberates them from the pressure of what Freud calls “Super-Ego” (Maze & Henry, 2009) and provides them an unlicensed liberty of expression and free-interaction. Examples of such can be seen in analysis of Meta-Physical Conceits or during explanation of any taboos of the society or region. During this phase reluctance can be felt and teaching gets limited to a monologue by the teacher, but if the non- presence of the teacher can induce equal and active participation of the learners, it should be welcomed..

- The scope of colorations in terms of research in the fields of humanities and social Sciences can significantly be increased as possibility of connecting to samples by the researcher can be maximized through these setups. Even, the feedback and collection of data can be within minutes of finishing research. The time, manpower, money can easily be saved through these research orientations. One of the lively examples is Google Surveys, but these instant social messengers can give relatively cheaper and quick collection of data.
- Most significant outcome of this method is the archiving of data; no extra effort needs to be done for converting the texts to hypertexts or creating archives as these experiments within their own limitations can archived or exported with a click of mouse in seconds.

4. Conclusion

It is evident from the analysis of the data presented in section 3.3 that WhatsApp mode i.e phase 2 and phase 3 turned out to be more potent and viable pedagogic tool for eliciting the maximum participation of the learners in the learning exercise. Besides, whatsApp mode of creating a viable learning environment in both the face to face and virtual classrooms make the teachers job learner friendly. Technology like the google, youtube and the like social media platforms which have made the traditional teaching and the teachers role almost marginal and to a large extent irrelevant, can with the discrete and guided

use of WhatsApp will rehabilitate the importance of the teachers role.

5. Further Scope of Research

As Perfection is not the goal rather is a journey so is the scenario of the research and innovations, the chapter and the research out of obligations and restrictions was restricted within the limitations of WhatsApp. Further innovations in the field of computations can innovate a learning process too. A separate tablet with comparative lower budget (similar to Akash) designed for these types of learning and dedicated to this framework has a good potential for a new innovation in rural sector.

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