Web based Learning: A Methodology to Teach Literature in a Classroom

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Abstract—The internet has succeeded in emerging as a major component in our daily lives, and its presence in education sector is outstanding. Web-based syllabuses have been enjoying an upper hand and have succeeded in getting attention of learners and the instructors. If presentations at international conferences are any indication, the interest in this new instructional medium is indeed commanding. Web-based learning involves the use of appropriate technology with the corresponding pedagogical approaches managed in the context of today's educational setting. Web-based learning encompasses all educational interventions that make use of the internet. There are currently three broad classifications or configurations within WBL: tutorials, online discussion groups, and virtual patients. The distinctions between these configurations are often blurred, and in fact a given WBL intervention might use a combination of two or three, but the implications for teaching warrant a conceptual, albeit at times arbitrary, separation. Therefore the objective of this paper is to understand the concept of Web based learning and its advantages along with its use in literature, culture and folklore studies, and the various methodologies to implement it in a class of Folklore studies.

Keywords—Web based learning, literature, techniques, folklore, culture

I. INTRODUCTION

The learners understand the concept of cultural differences, and get acquainted with the concept of the term review of peers and enhance their own knowledge. Jakes (2006) confirmed digital storytelling helps students explore the meaning of their own experience, give value to it, and communicate the experience on multiple levels to others. Sadik indicated that including storytelling in the social studies curriculum develops students’ understanding of democratic ideals, other cultures and citizenship; improves their communication skills; motivates them to connect the past and the present; and shared experiences.[1]

Web-based learning is a type of learning process which utilises the system of Internet as a mode of delivery method of instruction for accomplishing different types of activities of learning. It is an online learning process where the learning methodology is carried out and conducted without face to face interaction between the instructor and the learners, Or it could also be put in this way where the instructor interacts with the students either by being physically present in the classroom or imparts education through virtual medium depending on the need of the syllabus. Web-based learning can be integrated into a curriculum that turns into a full-blown course or as a supplement to traditional courses. It is a form of education where the resources are imparted between student faculty and student-student interactions which take place on the World Wide Web. There are various online courses which are taken as primary sources of learning and have successfully caught attention of faculties as well as learners. Sometimes when it becomes difficult to be physically present in various conferences and present their paper, then a scholar can present his or her paper through video conferencing or sending the recorded video of the presentation by the presenter. At the same time a scholar can directly watch the proceeding of the conference through various social networking sites. Web-based learning includes every intervention related to education which uses digital mode which is also known as local intranet. Web Based learning is broadly classified and configured into three types namely tutorials, online discussion groups, and virtual patients. This difference between the aforesaid configurations may not be very much clear and it may be that Web based learning could utilise not one or two but multiple combination of Medias and its implications in teaching generate a conceptual and arbitrary outcome.
"Web teaching is nothing but building network. It helps to build strong bonding with one’s students and help them identify and utilize the resources all over the world irrespective of distance. combining different materials – music, motion, text, narration – into one presentation; collecting related information from multiple sources... enable students to make their own connections by offering materials for download and use in their scholarship or by having them construct web documents as part of their coursework. And this process of making meaningful connections is at the core of all learning." [2]

Web based learning is conceptualized as a mode of online learning process or e-learning because all the online course content are included in the database. Discussion forums can be created online through formation of various groups, pages etc on various social networking. Web based courses also has facility of accessing various printed course materials in pdf form and they also provide http link which can direct a learner to the course. After clicking on the link, the learner visits the page in the web and the reader can easily access the course materials and then again the reader may find a hyperlink which can easily be opened thereby leading to various other linked documents. There are two types of learning environment which are VLE, virtual learning environment and MLE, managed learning environment. The VLE is a combination of functions operated by discussion boards, chat rooms, online assessment, tracking of students’ use of the web, and course administration. VLEs are like a general learning environment which provides information to learners. VLEs have the ability to share information to the end, and collaborate on different academic assignments. A managed learning environment is a learning system of the electronic management which support teaching and learning. The learners or MLE could be tutors, students or mentors. Sometimes it is very common to interchange Management Learning Environment with Virtual Learning Environment. However, the basic objective of both of these courses is to benefit the learners.

Web based learning is often called online learning or e-learning because it includes online course content. Discussion forums via email, videoconferencing, and live lectures (video streaming) are all possible through the web. Web based courses may also provide static pages such as printed course materials. [3] The advantages of Web based learning is that it provides ample opportunities to learn and getting assessment to an enormous amount of knowledge and data collection and its information. The role of teachers is vital to make the learners culture through web based learning. They also need to take stock of the learning environment that is provided to the students which should be learner friendly. It should also be seen that the needs of the learners are adequately supplemented and taken care of. There are many advantages of Web based learning but it has to be supplemented with adequate technology requirements. If this is not provided, then the student can easily get distracted and disturbed. It should not be made optional in classrooms, rather there should be appropriate utilization of technology and should never be experimented with students in a very casual form or out of curiosity. Sometimes there is a pressure among the teachers to use this technology in their classroom which might be interesting to a teacher. In such cases, the learning fails because of lack of interest.

The structure of the paper is organized as follows: Section II presents the past work related to this field. Section 3 describes about the methodologies used for this research work. Section 4 describes about teaching folklore through web based learning. Section 5 describes about the conclusion and future work.

II. RELATED WORKS

There have been many definitions about digital storytelling in related literature Porter (2004) defined storytelling as combining authentic stories with image, music, graphs and voice over while Dupain and Maguire (2005) described it as creating a story by integrating multimedia elements such as visuals, audio, video and animation as well as Chung (2007) highlighted it as a harmonious multimedia presentation composed of digital components such as text, visuals, video and audio. However, digital storytelling are overall considered as generating a story about a subject by using multimedia tools and software and sharing this story in multimedia environment (Nguyen, 2011; Robin, 2008). Nearly all digital stories are originated via combining components (text, voice-over, video, music, and visuals) with an authentic story on a particular subject. Digital stories, altogether, are short videos created by integrating image, video, background music and audible or written narration via some basic hardware and software (Microsoft Photo Story, Windows Movie Maker, Wevideo, Web 2.0 etc.) with authentic story (Wang and Zhan, 2010). Nevertheless, digital storytelling is not just a plain power point presentation (Dreon, Kerper, and Landis, 2011). Robin and Pierson (2005) noted that digital storytelling is the activity of producing meaningful stories that reflect individuals’ imagination. Digital stories can have aim of informative, instructive and personal narration (Robin, 2008). Digital stories can rise up in different types ranging from personal narratives or instructional stories to narratives that recount historical events and in many different fields ranging from social science to science Coutinho, (2010). Banaszewski (2005) pointed out that educational technologies have progressively taken place in education and instruction environment, accordingly, digital story have become widespread in classroom setting and in various fields of study as stated by many academicians, researchers and educators. Though the term “digital storytelling” is, generally familiar to educators, many still don’t know what it is or how it works.

Digital storytelling is a process where the narration is usually done through first person. It is usually done by showing visuals like videos, and other multi-media and music played at the background. The main aspects of storytelling are, it should have a basic idea or viewpoint which addresses a question which is important from the point of view of the story teller as well as to the listener. Two other key features are the economical use of words in the written script and appropriate pacing and rhythm in the oral narration [4] Secondly, Creativity of the story teller too is an important aspect of storytelling. Thirdly, the fluctuations in the tone of the speaker, because if the narration is monotonous, it will fail to generate interests among the audience. In case of narrating it through
multimedia, if shocking images or a laughing icon is shown, then listeners would find it interesting. While choosing the topic, the story teller could choose from a wide range of biographical, anecdotal, historical, cultural theme depending upon the audience.

There is no specific discipline of Digital storytelling. It could be chosen from a wide range of topics and could be even incorporated as the basic syllabus of language and literacy courses and its application. Storytelling can be relevant in all streams of education like humanities, culture, management and engineering at all levels like school, college and professional degrees. The benefit of using narrative writing at college level is that it can part of a curriculum development or sometimes it may also be used in order to motivate those students who need moral support. In a situation where the instructors find biggest challenges to provide moral support, narrative story telling will come to their rescue. . Hung, Hwang, and Huang (2012) have shown that digital storytelling projects can improve student motivation and problem-solving abilities. [5] Gunter (2012) opines that digital storytelling could be beneficial in motivational aspects, distinguishing between “extrinsic” and “intrinsic” motivation. Gunter further says that students could be motivated externally by giving them prizes or some marks, whereas intrinsic motivation could be an “authentic artefact” in order to establish a “personal investment” [6] thus it could be said that digital storytelling techniques is reliable and beneficial to impart external as well as intrinsic motivation which is very much beneficial in the long run for the students as well as the teachers. “Newer technologies such as computers and video conferencing are not necessarily better (or worse) for teaching or learning than older technologies . . . they are just different . . . The choice of technology should be driven by the needs of the learners and the context in which we are working, not by its novelty.”[7].

The issue that has been mentioned is connected with the use of technology. These issues could be easily sorted out when the students get used to computer and know how to handle it. In order to use the Digital Story telling methodology and teaching literature is concerned, in the classroom, the instructors must prepare themselves and should be technology competent. It is true when Boase (2007) says, “the challenge the digital storytelling in education poses is how to harness the massive potential of the story form, with its possibilities to inspire, engage, transform, through a process that will endow it with opportunity for reflection, critical thinking, and problem solving.” [15]

III. METHODOLOGIES

The Digital storytelling is one of the innovative approaches of giving instructions, learning, planning and result oriented approach, yielding positive outcome. Iannotti (2005) pacifies, “digital storytelling can be overwhelming if it’s not well thought out”. [8] At the same time, Robin and McNeil (2012) opine for implementation of an instructional design framework by using ADDIE (analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate). Another important aspect of teaching through DST is the instructor does not need to be formal while taking the class. However one needs to understand various critical issues while using this story telling technique. The issues are appropriate technology must be used, there should be support services availability, the students as well as the instructors should be interested in technology-based learning. at the same time the educators must caution the students regarding technical considerations like how to save files, how to get a backup and other sophisticated features. Robin and McNeil (2012), Digital Storytelling Cookbook (Lambert, 2010),guide the students on these technical sophistication of computer and multi media. The software which could be used are Adobe Premiere Elements, MS MovieMaker, Photostory, and WeVideo which are available for free versions. WeVideo does not require to be downloaded because it is cloud based. it is just that the user has to sign up for a free account. MovieMaker and Adobe Premiere have a built-in recording feature, while Moviemaker does not have a built-in recording feature so the students can do so through their phones or any other device after which they can upload it. All the Adobe Reader needs to be brought but it is very essential because it has so many features that it has the ability to generate much advanced quality video. The instructor can experiment with the free options for those classes with more number of students. There are many advanced quality videos that are available which does not have fancy features and are expensive which might not be needed for the purpose of teaching students.

A Digital Storytelling Pilot Technique was implemented by some teachers in their classes at a community college in New York City in 2013 after getting enriched by the workshop that was organized on Digital Story Telling. The technique that is discussed was organised one of the participants of the workshop who intended to make an assessment regarding the technical practicability and pedagogical implications of this process of digital storytelling in an ESL class. [9]

It is a fact that the culture of the post modern era is conceptualized as ‘digital’, ‘cyber culture’, ‘Internet culture’. For any researcher of culture studies or a folklorist, web based technology or the tech culture might appear to be more necessary because digital technology also involves deriving thousands of years old data and reviving the culture and age old tradition and retrieving archaic texts through digital remixing and other methodologies. The modern digital culture plays pivotal role in continuous process of globalization which is again conceptualized as “the process of increasing interconnectedness between societies such that in one part of the world more and more have effects on peoples and societies far away”.[10] This over emphasizing feature of globalization consist of developing the structures of transnational and transcontinental framework along with the rampant outgrowth of technology, economy of the market, consumerism, information and culture ethics and so on. The concept of digital culture that is elaborated deviates from the original concept and it has indeed brought about invention of new communication strategies among different people and people who can easily communicate with their office, institutions, organizations and other professional spheres.

The quantity of e-folklore is vast. Furthermore the number of outlets is enormous, with source addresses changing constantly. Much of this outpouring is highly ephemeral in nature, but on the other hand it is clear that such ephemera are prolific breeders of new ephemerides on an almost exponential
scale. Research in this area is often exasperating as even the best of Internet search engines fail to reveal stories just a month or so old – and even solemn prayers to the Internet patron saint St. Isidore of Seville (Isidorus Hispanensis, 560–636 A.D.) seem to fall on deaf ears! A characteristic of e-folklore in its various manifestations is the use of specific language forms. Probably, partly by virtue of its status as the language of technologists, English has become the basis of many new ‘e-languages’, for example Cyberpunk, Netlish, Weblish, Internet Language, etc. Many natural languages have also absorbed or adapted English words or acronyms to create, specific ‘e-dialects’ or ‘e-jargons’. The multilingual term “blog”, for instance, derived from the English “weblog”, has assumed an international meaning and is used world-wide. Sub-jargons have also emerged for mobile phone and Internet users, often merged with elements of secret languages or special codes for the exclusive use of certain groups such as children and prisoners. An example is “A-leet”, also known as “leetspeak” or just “1337”, a strange slang based upon the transliteration of words into a mixture of figures, letters and graphic symbols.

A. Teaching Folklore Through Web Based Learning:

A visualization of a literature or a cultural classroom would certainly not be a one which imparts teaching through online mode because of the fact that the methodology of taking classes is believed to be conventional which would imply professors would be taking classes chalkboard method. But with the advancement of technology, faculties and instructors have begun using technology in their classrooms as a methodology of teaching. This would be beneficial in making the learner engaged and succeeded in generating interest among the students. There are various research guide, manuals and online websites for the trainers who have developed the methodology of teaching literature, culture and folklore online. These aids provide theoretical usage as well as practical manuals to these faculties which are reader friendly and can easily be read and incorporated in their teaching. This would enable the students to learn literature and culture in a virtual environment.

B. Preservation of Folklore and Culture Through Digital Technology:

The concept of cultural heritage safeguarding is linked to the notion of ethnic and cultural identity, and its modern connotations give rise to interesting issues surrounding the problem of identity and multiplied identities created by global multi-media. On the one hand lie considerations of human rights and acceptance of individual and collective identity. On the other, there are the social, political, and economic issues connected with progressive globalisation and the omnipotent cultural power of electronic devices. The holistic approach to cultural heritage is the subject of UNESCO governance on a global level. The definition of cultural heritage is vast, mainly because the concept contains an expression of human knowledge and creativity, and the ways of life developed by communities and passed on from generation to generation. These include customs, practices, places, artifacts, artistic expressions and values. It originates out of the interactions between people and places over time, and influences contemporary life in all aspects; social, economic and technological. From architecture to transport, technology, museology, ethnic studies, folklore and oral culture, language, education, and audiovisual heritage amongst many others. These resources are obviously non-renewable and unique and as such are of great importance for its sustainability and benefit to future generations. Furthermore the definition of cultural heritage is subject to a constant evolution. What one generation considers ‘cultural heritage’ may be rejected by the next generation, only to be revived by a subsequent generation. In summary, the cultural heritage of any world region consists of all the resources that are inherited from its past in all forms including tangible, intangible and – in the postmodern world – a digital heritage as well. That is why digital heritage10 safeguarding is a matter not only of the past but more so of the future.

The heritage digital movement includes not only digitisation of libraries and archives, but also archiving of digitally created sources such as graphics, design, digital storytelling, etc. Here we should mention the project called DIHE (Digital Intangible Heritage of Europe) that has been Swedish reply to DIHA (Digital Intangible Heritage of Asia).[11] DIHE was founded in 2012 as a joint venture between The Interactive Institute and the Digital Heritage Center in Sweden as “a truly unique initiative, which focuses on aesthetics and creativity by combining artistic development with research in design and technology. In addition, it is a real-life experiment in the organization of cross-discipline research combining art, design, anthropology, computer science, interaction design, ethnography and many other disciplines”. [12] DIHE develops the interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral methodological approach that spans across visitor and museum studies, interaction design, human computer interaction, cultural studies and ethnography. Special attention is put to related fields such as cognitive and affective disciplines, or cognitive semiotics helping to understand the meaning making processes within the framework of communication channels and modalities.

C. Teaching Folklore through Web Based Technology:

The visual practice of web posting differs from the vernacular use of photography, photocopying, and faxing because it is more widely available and can be more thoroughly personalized. In Dundes’s joke, the machine runs by itself; on the Web, people imagine that they personalize the machine in their own image and often approach it like a workshop in which the screen constitutes a virtual canvas or desktop. Users can arrange and symbolize material on the Web as virtual reality to create a persona that was literally screened through postings and sought-out kindred spirits. The wonder of the Web is the graphic material open to view—graphic in a visual sense and also in its uncensored quality, suggesting the freedom of expression of a folk, or informal, commons in which participants regulate action through tradition rather than through arbitrarily imposed rules. Cognitively, a binary has been constructed between analog print as the regulated, institutional world of potential censorship and the digital Web as the open, uncensored folk domain. Theoretically a wide
open field, the Internet’s cultural hangout has proved especially attractive to youth, who, the public imagines, better their elders with the informational capital of new media and often use it as a secret language beyond parental and professorial monitoring (Bronner 1995, 232–46; Sullivan 2005). In an individualistic society placing faith in technological progress, the energy of youth is channelled into innovation that will displace the establishment culture of older stuffed shirts; fashion, fads, and trends of the young dictate the popular culture, media and retail outlets remind consumers. Children embrace the communication potential of the folk Internet and shape it into their own image and culture supposedly because they are preoccupied with social and pubertal concerns rather than business applications. Besides freedom of expression, the Internet putatively liberates artistic communication from materiality, but hardly inmaterial, the folklore of the Internet is consequential stuff that invites human participation. In this way, it is conceivable to envision the difference in method and theory between natural and virtual reality that Kirshenblatt-Gimblett invited folklorists to contemplate by thinking about the betwixt and between characteristic of Internet communication. Additionally virtual traditions deviate from the definition of folklore as artistic communication in small groups, which Dan Ben-Amos inventively suggested as a modern definition of folklore in context; in a digital age they appear as layered (and often non-linear) symbolizations or processes in multivariable, interactive networks (Ben-Amos 1972; Labbo 1996; Laske 1990; Sommerer and Mignonneau 1999). Although naturalistic tradition is often associated with precedent from way back when, the Internet’s flattening, or disregard, of time invokes the view that something being on the Internet is sufficient to show this pre-existent characteristic of tradition. The implication is that this something has its own independent existence that involves an artificial fusion of new and old, text and image, and creativity and tradition. Folklorists and other cultural scholars may be concerned that in this kind of tradition the electronic tools of forwarding and copying and pasting standardize and stabilize texts, taking away the variability that marks cultural identities in natural contexts, but the serial reproductive process of homepages and forums appears to foster commentary and communal alteration, often with an instrumentality that signifies cultural space (Baker and Bronner 2005, 346).

There are various ways by which folklore can be taught to students:

A) Teaching Folklore to students:
Student will explore the common elements of folktales and tall tales while learning how these tales built the spirit of American people. Students will identify the tall tale elements. Students will also write responses to these tales, including a composition in the form of a monologue or a news report. They will perform these compositions for the class.

Learning Objectives

B) Tell Tales:
In this lesson, students are introduced to the genre of American tall tales. Students are exposed to several traditional tall tales, then prompted to write an original tall tale set in contemporary America. The tall tale must address a current event or issue and must feature a "larger-than-life" main character. The students use exaggeration and hyperbole to portray the way in which the main character resolves the issue or problem. Students then dramatize their tall tales for the class.

Learning Objectives

Teaching Methods

Guided Listening
Discussion
Lesson Set up

a) Teacher Background

b) Background knowledge of the students:

- Have some experience with the writing process.
- Know the term “pantomime” and have some experience of miming actions.
- Be familiar with newspapers and the concept of current events.

c) Grouping Process

- Small Group Instruction
- Large Group Instruction

d) Performance:

Teacher should prepare a brief story to tell in Step 1 below. Choose a fairly plain narrative that can be transformed into a tall tale: a vacation trip, for example, running an errand, or something seen on the way to school.

C) Writing Folktales:

Students identify and analyze folktales. They learn the characteristics of folktales and use them to evaluate existing tales and to create original tales of their own. Students apply the writing process to strengthen writing skills and to develop creativity.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Identify, examine, analyze, and evaluate folktales
- Incorporate the elements of traditional folktales in original folktales of their own
- Write for literary purposes and for a variety of audiences: peers, teachers, parents, school-wide community, and beyond
- Pre-write, draft, revise, and proofread as part of the strategic approach to effective writing

Teaching Methods

- Hands-On Learning
- Visual Instruction
- Group or Individual Instruction
- Guided Practice
- Independent Practice

Grouping Process

- Small Group Instruction
- Individualized Instruction

Staging Performance:

Arrange handouts in the order the class will address them. Post content vocabulary words for easy reference. If you choose to reference props during the telling of the folktale, have them placed in the appropriate places.

2) Assessment:

- Arrange strange seating so that deaf/hard of hearing students are close to where instruction will be delivered.
- Blind/Low Vision students will benefit from handouts with large print or braille.
- English Language Learners may benefit from supplemental vocabulary sheets that define literary terms and difficult words.
- An adjusted workload (brief examples of folktales) will help struggling/striving readers.
- Interpersonal and Intrapersonal learners may want to develop the characters in their folktales. Provide a list that outlines all folktale components so that their characters do not overpower the tales.
- Folktales may include animals as characters and highlight setting. Naturalist learners may benefit from stories that use animals to relay events and that vividly relay setting.

IV. LIMITATIONS

A. Technical problems:

Web based learning is no doubt advantageous to the students, yet it is not free from drawbacks. As it is media based, therefore it is evitable that all instructional media failure can occur. For example, while planning to teach the students through power-point presentation and it may so happen that there is a power failure without any power backup. The traditional method of teaching through chalk board might be less lucrative but it is free from these hassles. The students as well the teachers might face problems if they are not net savvy and a small problem could lead to everlasting consequences.

B. Poor instructional design:

There is a variance in the pattern of quality of all the teaching process. But in case of Web based learning, it has to be explicitly planned and executed because once it is uploaded; it is seen as well as evaluated by others. And if an instructor is very much efficient, he/ she can take a class with minimum preparation which is not possible in case of Web based learning. It is also seen that WBL course structure has inferior. For instance, shoomp.com, spark notes etc’ which publishes notes and critical analysis of various text books in literature which cannot be considered as scholarly. These types of courses are less advantageous and are not suitable for the learners and the instructors. WBL also pose challenges of implementing online with unknown users.
C. Ignorance of the users as well as the trainers:

There it is also seen that the users are not much techno savvy and hence they have difficulty in handling technology during the classes. Similarly there are some trainers who are also unaware of the process of using computers and online technology to impart education due to which the education cannot be imparted.

V. CONCLUSION

Technological expansion which is taking place at a very faster rate with increased software capacity has succeeded in motivating the learners and the educators. The rapid expansion of the Internet and increasing software capabilities are influencing the entire teaching process at different starts. The students learn how to learn, organize, build and relate. Their analytical skills develop. The students get to know about different culture along with their own. Their writing skills develop in a very constructive way. During presentation of the story, the student’s oral skills also develop. The Students were advised to use Skype as an option, but it was not possible for some students to get an access to Skype. However, due to the collaborative efforts of the students with a positivity attitude appeared to enrich the projects quality in which they are involved. The students collaborated with their fellow students of different sections but sometimes it was difficult for those students to use computers who stay in the campus premises of a non commuter college. Therefore it is suggested to allow the students more time for such classes which can give peer feedback as well as teachers comments. The students could involve themselves in a group activity where a group of 7 to 8 students can form a story together thereby each student supporting other students in the group. It is definitely true when Iannotti (2005) states, "Having fewer projects to manage would make it more feasible for the instructor to provide substantial feedback to students. As with the implementation of any new tool, digital storytelling requires a high level of commitment and effort throughout the process. [13] " As a whole, there are benefits of the process which involves teaching and learning. The process is very easy because once the student knows how to use the technology it becomes less weird. The learner will understand how much beneficial it is to the them. Most of the digital preservation projects focus mainly on digitizing artifacts, in which the crafts of how to make them and skills of how to use them are neglected. Besides, folklore and religious rituals embed spiritual meanings. Step-by-step procedure of a ritual is not trivial for a people or a religion. A website served as an extension to digital library of folklore artifacts has been constructed to be used as an e-learning platform for folklore education in obligatory and higher education. The system not only constructs a digital library for folklore preservation but provides instructional interactive materials with media richness to support a more effective method for folklore education than non-interactive or traditional classroom learning. [14]