



INITIATING NEW TECHNIQUES TO MOTIVATE STUDENTS TO READ LITERATURE

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Abstract

Reading is a very good habit one cultivates in his life. We human beings are social animals and we love to have information about society and the world as much as possible. There are ample ways to gain information from different sources like transferring data from one man to another orally, getting information from the electronic media - TV, mobile, internet, skype, whatsapp, twitter, Google, audio-books, virtual library, etc. But I think the most important and reliable source of collecting information is from newspapers, books, journals, magazines and all other print sources. Library is the heaven of information related to all topics, subjects and branches. Though there are ample ways to gather information, reading from all kinds of texts is the most authentic and legal way to have it. It is just because textual information can be tested on the different theories and one can prove the data correct or wrong. Being teachers of literature it is important for us to make our students aware of this fact about reading. This will help us cultivate the habit of reading among students. But making students read anything that to even literary books is a herculean task today. In present research paper I'm talking about the same problem and focusing more on giving the solutions to make our students read the literature by offering different ways of attracting and stimulating students towards reading the literature.

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Unwillingness to read literature, I think, is the biggest problem in the modern era probably more in this New Normal Era after Covid-19 pandemic. Students are not ready to read literature unless it is prescribed in their syllabus. Students are becoming exam and marks oriented only. As their fake belief that, only scoring good marks may shape their entire life, is leading them to frustration due very negligible things. As we are the teachers of literature it is duty to make our students understand the importance of reading literature beyond the syllabus and scoring marks. Then the teacher may consider this be a herculean task to prompt and persuade his students to read literature. But see there are many ways to motivate students to read literature today. Let's discuss and initiate few of these ways –

1. Teaching should be lively and Delightful:

As per my belief teaching literature is an art and being the teachers of 'Humanities' one needs to learn this art. When we teach literature, we must take students in the trance. They must start comparing characters in literature with the people they see around them or people of their acquaintance. They should feel the emotions of different characters in the piece of literature they are listening. At the same time teacher can make the teaching of the literature delightful by quoting examples from the society and from local day to day livelihood of the students. Teacher can also give certain similar examples in their colloquial language so that class of literature may become delightful. As Francis Bacon has rightly mentioned in beginning of his essay *Of Studies* that,

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateers and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business. (Bacon, *Of Studies*)



This way once you make your class teaching lively and delightful; students will not only be attracted towards literature but also love to listen and read literature.

2. Dramatisation of the Events and Reciting:

A teacher of literature may use different techniques of teaching in the class. One of the very effective methods is dramatisation of the events in fictional works & reciting poems in the proper tuning. It is very effective to attract students towards literature if you dramatise any event in the class with proper voice, pitch, tone and action. Similarly if you use proper voice to recite poetry in the class students will be happy to listen you. Importantly they may retain whatever they listen in the class for a long time or life time as well (Can you remember your school and college teachers? Yes, can't you? It's just because their particular speaking habit, behaviour or teaching). I regularly experience that in my college, at the time when I'm teaching to the BAFY or BASY English Compulsory class, many of my senior students stand by the window just to listen to my lecture and few of them even request me to let them in for my English Compulsory class only. This is a pleasing feedback and receipt to me that they are attracted towards literature (reading or listening).

3. Fiction and Reality

As teachers you may make your students understand that the literature is the mirror of society. Though literature is based on fiction still it reflects much or less reality in the society. This social reality is observed, understood, contemplated over and recreated in authors own words. Take for example R.K.Narayan's characters like Swami, Astrologer, from his famous, *Malgudi Days*, are the perfect example of representation of the common man in the society. In this way also students may understand importance of reading literature; as it gives glimpses to the social behaviour.

4. Insight to Human Hearts / Behaviour

Teacher must tell his students that writers portray various good or bad characters in any piece of literature through their insight to the human behaviour. As Bacon has mentioned in his essay *Of Studies* that,

Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.
(Bacon, *Of Studies*)

Teacher may make his students understand that reading literature may give them insight to human hearts / behaviour which will help them in broader understanding of society. This may stimulate them to read literature.

5. Literature is the Way of Life

We should make our students understand that reading literature will teach them how to live life. The true understanding of the human hearts and the way of life is thoroughly understood with the help of literature only. Life is not as easy as it looks like. The real life and fiction/literature though is so different still there is great resemblance in the life experiences of the characters and our own. This way teacher may convince his students to read literature for the betterment of their lives.

6. Quizzes and Prizes

Even after so much of convincing; if students are not turning towards reading literature then this is the best way teacher can use in his class. A teacher may offer cash prizes and medals for the 'Best Reader Awards'. Teacher may ask students to read a particular piece of literature and paraphrase it in writing or discuss it in front the class. Accordingly teacher may select the best reader among the class and give



them the cash price for medals under the heading ‘Best Reader Award’. In This way students will be encouraged to read literature and automatically they will be fascinated towards different characters, authors and poets.

7. Reading between the Lines

Poetry is great literary genre existed from so many years. Poetry is, I have experienced in college, the first love of the students compared with the other garner of literature. Teacher should motivate students to read the poems and understand their hidden meaning between the two lines. It is the art of teacher to teach poetry in the class. It is the hallmark of a great teacher who can teach poetry so effectively that students may go in trance. Students must relate themselves with the theme of the poem and understand the different levels of meaning the poet is willing to convey to his readers. If you turn introvert and try to remember the teachers taught us poetry in our schools or colleges; we can easily remember few of the teachers and poems they have taught to us. It is just because the way they had taught to us with great enthusiasm and sensitivity that has left an imprint on our hearts and minds; so that we can still remember few lines of the poetry they have taught to us in the class. This way all students will be automatically attracted towards reading poetry as well.

8. Use of Audio Books

Just to enhance the number of readers who read literature, we as the teachers of literature must think a little bit differently than using the traditional methods to make and attract the students / young generation to read the books on literature. During the last two-three years of Covid-19 pandemic we have witnessed that students have very aptly used the online sources of education. During this period, while conducting online classes, I personally have told my students, ‘to listen with comprehension’ rather than, ‘to read with comprehension’. Audio books, in this direction, may become very popular among the young generation in today’s New Normal era. Students have come to know how to use the internet and different online as well as other electronic educational tools to study and read the school curriculum while studying and preparing for the examinations. With the use of headphones one can listen to all kinds of audio books whenever and wherever he/she finds a little bit of leisure time for study or just to pass the time. The expert, who has proper understanding of the theme of the book, has good pitch of voice and reads the book clearly with good intonation pattern while recording the audio book may definitely create interest among the listeners and automatically attract the ears to listen to that audio book. Thus the use of audio books may help in attracting the young generation to listen to the literature with proper understanding and comprehension. Once students fall in love with listening to the good audio-books slowly and steadily they may turn towards reading the good literary texts and start reading as well.

9. Use of Visualization Technique

As the use of audio-visual aids helps in enhancing the overall effect of teaching and learning process; similarly use of visualisation technique is very fruitful in attracting the young generation to read the literature. Visualisation technique is very unique and helpful in creating a creative picture in front of the eyes of students while reading or listening to a literary book. As Bacon has mentioned in his *Of Studies* that,

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. (Bacon, *Of Studies*)



In this visualisation technique we can suggest our students, to visualise that they are one of the characters in the literary piece they are reading, probably the protagonist of the story, along with the other characters there, setting of the story, landscapes, natural scenery, every minute aspect mentioned by the author in the book and experience all the emotional, courageous, clever, sad, joyous moments in the life of that character. In short, we can teach our students to live the life of the protagonist while reading / listening to any literary book. This may, as per my personal experience, enhance the effect of the comprehension of the theme of the literary piece students have read and they may retain the theme of the book in their mind throughout their lives as they have lived with the characters in that book...!

Hence there are many ways to motivate students to read literature. We must understand that students are like mud on the wheel of potter and as potter shapes mud to create extraordinary creations. Similarly we, the teachers of literature, should shape the career and lives of students by motivating them to read literature.

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