# The Utility of Media in Education

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### ABSTRACT

Media is available in various forms such as print, audio-visual or online. Mobile, computers and tablets bring all these forms of media together. Books, Newspapers, television and radio etc. have been long described as traditional forms of media. Lev Manovich describes new media as a distribution platform and exhibition channel in the form of Internet, websites, Blu-ray disks and others. Social Media and Blogging platforms are the other forms, which are part of the online platform. There are hosts of educational tools available both offline and online. There are various researches, which indicate the importance of use of media in classroom teaching. A study done by the author in 2013 indicated that teachers were using various new media techniques for delivering lectures and connecting with the students on the Internet though the interaction between students and teachers was limited in using the new media. The study also showed that students were fairly conversant with new media technologies and its use by academicians for pedagogical purposes. In current times where there is plethora of media (offline and online) available, are both teachers and students using them? The current study examined if teachers were using any particular media extensively for pedagogical purposes both inside the classroom and outside of it, though not limited to it and if they observed how students adapt to any form of media in enhancing their studies. It also looked for any uses of new media in the teaching learning process. The author used asynchronous close-ended online interview method and expects the study to be useful to teachers, researchers, and students of the use of new media technologies in academics.

**Keywords:** *New media, pedagogy, teaching, instruction, students, media choices*

## Introduction

There are various kinds of media available in current times. The older or traditional form of media such as books, newspapers, television and radio etc. has long been used. With the advent of new media technologies the computer, tablet and mobile have now become additional choices to access information and entertainment. Internet offers choices raging from e-books, journals, websites, forums, social media, communities, informative and educational apps etc. to the student and teachers for access to knowledge of all kinds. Gadgets in the form of latest computers, laptops, iPods and mobiles are fast making this communication easy and accessible for people in various professions and practices. These varied forms of media have become important choices in education for use both by teachers and students.

There are various ways in which one can connect media with education. Either one can look at the term media education or one can study media socialization where students are proficient users of media or simply look at the term educational media, which implies the use of media in education (Qvortrup, 2007).

Media as used in classrooms is usually understood to be presentations which teachers use as aids for their lectures. But is the media use limited to that? Media can have many meanings. As defined by business directory "*Media* includes every broadcasting and narrowcasting medium such as newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, billboards, direct mail, telephone, fax, and internet." Media can also mean a lot other forms too like painting canvas, cameras, posters, charts, clay structures, drawings etc. Are these being used in classrooms to exemplify or elaborate on what teachers say in their lectures?

A previous study done by the author some years back suggested that teachers were using various new media techniques for delivering lectures and connecting with the students on the Internet via various new media platforms, though the interaction between students and teachers was limited in using this source. The study also further explained that students were quiet familiar with new media technologies and its use by teachers for teaching purposes (Upadhyay, 2013).

In current times where there is so much of media both offline and online available, are both teachers and students using them? The current study would also like to examine if teachers are using any particular media extensively for pedagogical purposes both inside the classroom

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and outside of it, though it is not limited to only one media and if they have observed how students adapt to any form of media in enhancing their studies. It would also look for any uses of new media in the teaching learning process.

## Literature Review

### Didactics

This is the practice where the academician is able to impart the educational purpose he started out with. There could be various ways he could adopt to accomplish this purpose (Qvortrup, 2007). It would be interesting to know what methods do teachers employ to share knowledge.

### Learning

As per definition it is "any relatively permanent change in behaviour that occurs as a result of practice and experience" (Sharma, n.d.). Pedagogical processes can have different learning impacts on the students.

### Pedagogy

Pedagogy is defined as "the art, science, or profession of teaching *especially*: **education".** **Ashton and Newman** (2006) **explain various types of pedagogy, which include teaching of children, andragogy, which is teaching adults, and ergonogy, which is teaching people to work.**

### Andragogy

**The term andragogy has been briefly used since 1830s but Malcolm Knowles theorized it** in the 1900s for its use by English language readers. He based his theory on four crucial norms, which he classifies into "self-concept, experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning and motivation to learn".

He explained the concept of self-concept that as human beings mature the concept of 'self' changes. They become more independent and in control of themselves. With age a human being has many experiences, which becomes an excellent source of learning. As people mature, more ready they are to learn. A mature person learns to apply his knowledge to issues, which needs immediate attention, and thus focus on problems at hand. With maturity the drive to learn anything new is internal. (Infed, n.d.)

Learning is a social activity. This is important to understand when we refer to teaching. Ideas and thoughts are constantly created when people connect, especially in a student-teacher interaction. There is a mutual exchange of information and opinions. With the Internet this connection only stands to grow. This is a space for a new culture where people mix around with each other without any inhibitions. Here the students around the globe too get an opportunity to connect and learn. This medium has opened up space where intellectual discussions can happen between students and between students and teachers and the outside professional world at large. (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005).Sfrad (1998)also explains that learning can be acquired when a teacher is delivering a lecture or learning happens via sharing and participation. Here sharing experiences can be one form of exchange or participating in activities in society.

So how are the teachers sharing this knowledge with students? (Siemens, 2007) states: "… our institutions need to change because of the increasing complexity of society and globali[s]ation. Schools and universities play a dual role: accommodating learner's method and mode of learning and transforming learners and preparing them to function in the world that is unfolding".

An article on Wharton University of Pennsylvania stresses upon the fact that objective to education is learning and not teaching. It quotes authors *Russell L. Ackoff and Daniel Greenberg* of the book Turning Learning Right Side Up: Putting Education Back on Track, *"Why should children — or adults — be asked to do something computers and related equipment can do much better than they can?" in an excerpt from the book "Why doesn't education focus on what humans can do better than the machines and instruments they create?"*(Wharton University of Pennsylvania, 2008)

It is interesting to note here from the above literature that there is strong focus on how teachers impart education and how students should be encouraged to learn through ways that they have still not explored. So it may start from what methods teachers employ to educate in classrooms or outside of it.

### Use of media in the pedagogy process

Media can be used in various forms of student-teacher interaction in a classroom. Or when the teacher uses any form of media outside the classroom to instruct or explain a concept. Even different form of media can be combined together to demonstrate a point in a lecture session.

Various forms of media can be used in the teaching-learning process such as a film clip, song, podcast of any informative session, newspaper articles to exemplify or add on to a case study or group discussion or students creating their own form of presentation with any form of media. There are many advantages of using media in the teaching learning process

"**engages students, aids student retention of knowledge, motivates interest** in the subject matter, and **illustrates the relevance** of many concepts".(Mateer, Ghent, Porter, & Purdom, n.d.).

A study emphasises on the point that the teaching-learning process is incomplete without using any form of media. It is a time consuming effort to create and produce or select media for teaching purposes, but it is worth the effort. (Li-Ling KUO, 1991)

Another study explains that media is absolutely necessary in teaching as it serves as trigger for ideas, makes subjects easier to understand helps comprehend critical ideas. Media serve as markers to remember concepts so as to connect with them. But it is also important to understand media itself. If not understood critically, its nature and use the very usage of it will be incomplete in understanding a topic or subject. After all media in itself is not the means to an end. (Davis, 1991)

There have been many studies, which indicate the usefulness of video clues to learning. It helps develops various types of skills including analytical and research skills, working in a team and organisational skills. (University of Queensland, n.d.)

The current study explores a teacher's reflection on their methods of teaching with a focus on media uses while imparting education in classrooms or outside of it. It also examines if a teacher has observed if their students are using any form of media for educational purposes, to enhance their learning.

*RQ. What is the kind of media do teachers use in classroom or outside of it to impart education to their students?*

*RQ. Have the teachers witnessed if their students use any form of media for educational purposes?*

**Method**

The study is exploratory in nature. It will use asynchronous close ended online interview method to understand a teacher's perspective and reflection of uses of media for teaching.

**Sample**

32 teachers of varied age groups and experiences across India were contacted online and the interview questionnaires were sent to them. 12 teachers responded to the questionnaire. All the teachers contacted are media educators. They teach in private and public institutions in the capacity of full time or visiting faculties.

**Observation and Analysis**

The teachers are from various age groups, the youngest being 24 to the oldest being 69.

| Age | No. |
|---|---|
| 24 | 1 |
| 29 | 2 |
| 30 | 1 |
| 31 | 1 |
| 34 | 1 |
| 36 | 1 |
| 38 | 1 |
| 42 | 1 |
| 44 | 1 |
| 50 | 1 |
| 69 | 1 |
| **Total** | **12** |

**The data below shows us the no. Of years of experience of each teacher**

| No. of years of experience |
|---|
| 2 |
| 6 |
| 7 |
| 7 |
| 8 |
| 8 |
| 13 |
| 13 |
| 15 |
| 16 |
| 35 |
| 3+ |

**Do you use any kind of media in classroom to enhance your teaching? If yes, what kind of media do you use? Could you share your experience? (12 responses)**

It was interesting to note that most teachers used audio-visual modes to educate the students. This is a far cry from the blackboard or white board form of lecture sessions. One faculty specifically mentions the use of blackboard. In fact, YouTube seems to be used more often for demonstration purposes. As Mr. Mahesh Savale, Assistant Professor, rightly explains "I found that if we show them some videos on YouTube about any given topic students are more attentive because it's a medium of this generation."Teachers also use other forms of films for instructions. As Ms. Seema Narendran, Assistant Professor, teaching

media for the last 8 years, explains she uses "Animated films for simplifying complex issues". Five teachers mention the use of projectors and three mention the use of laptops. Two teachers explain the use of desktops in classroom for lecture purposes. Use of mobile phones has been clearly mentioned by few teachers for lecture support. Two teachers also mention the use of television for lecture purpose. Dr. DevVrat Singh, Associate Professorwho has been in media education for the last 16 years, explains, "I use LCD projector and LCD television for projecting PPT and screening documentaries, films and advertisements. Sometimes I make my students listen few radio advertisements also." Radio is not much used as mentioned by only two teachers. Books, podcasts, apps, story board of film and newspaper are some of the other media being used in class though not all mention it.Wi-Fi and Internet is slowly catching onfor use in classrooms as one teacher mentions about it.

**Is there any specific media you use in your classroom as a support in your lectures? Any particular reason for that? (12 responses)**

Three teachers have specified using PowerPoint in their lectures. One faculty mentioned blackboard as he feels that it helps students take notes. Three teachers emphasise the use of audio-video modes in their sessions. As Mr. Pratik Singh, Sr. Copy Writer and Visiting Faculty says "For example, a student may not have read 'The Hero With A Thousand Faces' by Joseph Campbell; but he will easily watch and get the crux of 'The Hero's Journey' by watching a 5-minute animated piece from TED. It will also depend on what kind of students one is dealing with - I prefer 'more talk, lesser media' when dealing with Masters students. The order may be reversed while dealing with an undergraduate class." Pratik also mentioned giving away study material before the start of his lectures. One faculty specifies the use of mics and sound systems to enhance the sound quality in the classroom. Internet is also a choice by a faculty in the classroom, whereas one faculty uses newspaper as he considers it to be a cheaper mode to carry and teach from. Four teachers have not mentioned using any media in particular in their classrooms. There appears to be various kinds of media in the teaching learning process.

**Have you tried using any form of media outside of your classroom as an added support of your lectures? If yes, could you please share some examples?(12 responses)**

To this response it was observed that except two teachers most of the other teachers are using various forms of media and more so new media.Ms. SeemaNarendran explains "Links to blogs, websites, reading material are used for advanced learning. For e.g. when discussing Public Opinion, links to news channel broadcasts of different channels and countries." Two teachers use Whatsapp groups for sending any reading material or for having any discussion. Seven teachers are using different forms of new media technologies, individually if not all, such as emails, newspaper websites, blogs, YouTube, Sound Cloud, Facebook, Google Groups, eBooks and journals. One faculty who used You Tube and Sound Cloud felt that it didn't help him a lot as support of his sessions. One faculty mentioned that he had used webcam to record his sessions and also yahoo messenger many years back to hold a vice voce. One teacher believes that taking students out for a movie is a good experience whereas one says that taking students to studios is a good practice.

**What are the challenges you have faced while using these media in teaching? Would you have done it in any other way if you could? Could you share your thoughts on the same? (12 responses)**

Most of the teachers site infrastructural challenges such as speed of the Internet, accessibility of content for teaching purposes, electricity issues, teachers themselves not adequately trained to handle media. One faculty Mr. PrateekSinghsays, "One of the biggest challenges that I face is that students don't seem to interact with it. In fact, at times, they don't even acknowledge the same. The Groups that are formed are merely used as a source of information gathering and seldom as a platform to share and discuss ideas/events. Similarly, in a class, they may find the media content to be interesting; however, it's difficult to identify whether these media are effective or not. Interestingly enough, very rarely do I find someone making notes. They rely exclusively on the material that is shared with them, which, in most cases, is the ppt (which is usually a 'teaching aid' and not so much as a 'studying aid')." Two teachers clearly mention that they don't face any challenges. In fact one faculty mentions that the modern media is not very useful for teaching purposes.

**Have you observed your students using any form of media in class, which has helped in the teaching-learning process? Could you share some examples?(12 responses)**

Teachers have observed the use of mobile phones and Internet by students in classrooms, which has aided in learning. Social media is also playing an

important role in learning where students connect with teachers in person to know more about something or the platform itself aids in learning. One faculty mentions that students use You Tube for learning new software yet there is one faculty who feels that the students use media but not for learning purposes. In fact one faculty says the mobiles are ready reckoners for both students and for him for a quick look into the meaning of a word or term on the Internet. Two faculties clearly mention that they have not observed students using any form of media in classrooms.

## Conclusion and Discussion

The data from the sample clearly indicates the growing use of new media and audio-visual components for teaching learning purposes. Blackboard and Whiteboards are not much in use. Mobiles phones are turning out to be important mediums for both the student and the teacher. Of course there are challenges to the use of these mediums, infrastructural as well as lack of proper training which are obstacles to learning but the their use appears will only grow. The challenge is going to be to identify the effect of these uses and exact impact of these media on the students' learning.

Important to understand here is that with so much of information on the Internet and its easy accessibility of it through mobile phones the role of the teacher will soon change or is already changing. Teachers are no longer sharing information but are now in a challenging position to facilitate the learning process with already so much of information. What is more can we teachers offer to the students who already have so much of information at their disposal? This is the question now, which we all teachers have to answer and probably shape and evolve our teaching methods accordingly. The study is generalizable to the sample in the study and is a small endeavor to understand the use of media in education.

## Interviewees

- Dr. Sanjay Ranade, Associate Professor, Department of Communication & Journalism, University of Mumbai

- Dr. Kiran Thakur, Adjunct Faculty & Research Coordinator FLAME School of Communication Lavale, Pune.

- Dr. Sunder Rajdeep, Head and Assistant Professor, Department of Communication & Journalism, University of Mumbai.

- Dr. DevVrat Singh, Dean & Head at Central University of Jharkhand.

- Prof. SeemaNarendran, Assistant Professor, K.P.B. Hinduja College

- Prof. SnehaSubhedar, Assistant Professor,Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication (SIMC), Lavale, Pune.

- Mr. RajatBandopadhay, Working Partner, Star Digital Media.

- Prof. Mahesh Savale, Assistant professor at DGMC - DeviprasadGoenka Management College of Media Studies, Mumbai.

- Prof. Saurabh Deshpande, Lecturer & Course Co-ordinator, BMM at ghanshyamdassarafCollege, Mumbai.

- Mr. Prateek Singh, Sr, Copy Writer, Phonetics Mobile Media and Visiting Faculty

- Prof. Deepak Tiwari, Assistant Professor and BMM coordinator at Thakur College Of Science And Commerce

- Prof Kanchan Bajaj, Assistant Professor at VES College, Chembur

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**Appendix**

**Interview Questionnaire**

1. Do you use any kind of media in classroom to enhance your teaching? If yes, what kind of media do you use? Could you share your experience?

2. Is there any specific media you use in your classroom as a support in your lectures? Any particular reason for that?

3. Have you tried using any form of media outside of your classroom as an added support in your lectures? If yes, could you please share some examples?

4. What are the challenges you have faced while using these media in your classroom? Would you have done it in any other way if you could? Could you share some experiences?

5. Have you observed your students using any form of media in class, which has helped in the teaching-learning process? Could you share some examples?

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