

TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, PARTICULARLY TO PRIVATE AND DISTANCE LEARNERS

PROJECT PROPOSAL

AIM: to help hopelessly 'weak' students to learn English and get them at least pass marks in English literature and appreciate literary works

2. BACKGROUND

At the university level [i.e. degree I semester onwards] it is a habit to prescribe 'classics' of English literature for study [by sadistic profs]. More sadistic are those who make the syllabus for KSOU and IGNOU. Exam questions also require quite a lot of U AND A [understanding and analysis]. That this expectation is only a farce and a hypocritical notion is clear from the fact that the grammar and usage [i.e. language component] for the same semester is very low. It is so low that a student who does not come to that level would find himself way below even a cursory reading of the classical text. This chasm created by the course coordinators is widened by the students' attitude [viz. get the probable questions and expected answers from their teachers or guide books].

While 'regular' [college-attending] students and those who go to 'tuition classes' get some help, others like 'private' candidates and those who do fulltime work and want to study, are at a loss.

3. NEED FOR THE PROJECT

Many of the **pdls [private and distance learners]** may be doing so. just for the degrees / certificates or some non-academic goals. But there may be some students with true interest and great motivation but might not have had the good fortune of proper guidance and help at the proper time. Can we help **such earnest pdls** to catch up, score respectably in an honest way and sustain their newfound enthusiasm in academics [specifically in literature]?

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Get THE 'CLASSIC WORK [=TEXT] INTO THE HANDS OF PDLS This is because many open universities do not provide the original. They give only comments and notes. Students do not feel the need as they know that the 'reading material' supplied by the OUs and guide books will be sufficient for exam purposes. Even if someone looks for the texts, they are too hard to get. [E, g *doll's house*, *murder at the cathedral* as on dec, 2011]

4.2 GET THE TEXT EDITED This means rewriting the text for our purpose. If it is Chaucer or Milton, use current spellings, replace *thou, thy* etc. If the text did not contain any punctuations, provide them [e.g. Auden or O'neil]

4.3 SEARCH FOR ABRIDGED VERSIONS Many texts are too big, both in size and in syntax. To help pdls who are usually 'weak' in English, books rewritten for children will be a first step to appreciate what the text is about. A story like *gullivers travels* or *wuthering heights* could first be read in a shorter version and then go to the original. [**this job is suitable for high school librarians**]

4.4 LOOK FOR TRANSLATIONS Even 4.3 above viz. abridged editions, maybe too tough for some students. So, look for any good translations in Kannada. This step assumes that reading for the sake of understanding is better than reading for the sake of passing exams. , even if it [viz. the reading habit] is in one's own mothertongue. [This **piece of work can be done by scholars of Kannada**]

4.5 MAKE A LIST Of texts prescribed and translations available. Provide both to pdls; [this job is suitable as a project **for students of library science**]

4.6 TALKING BOOKS Some childrens' editions may be available also in audio format. This will help to read faster and hence encourage reading habit. [This job is suitable **for IT and computer students**]

4.7 MULTIMEDIA APPROACH If some texts are available in drama or cinema format [either in English or in any local language] let the students be shown those even before READING any abridged or the original text. E.g. ***the guide* by R.K.Narayan . Many dramas of Shakespeare, novels by Jane Austen** [Caution: if there are any deviations from the text they should be pointed out.] This will help to get the story, content and characters. Facilitators should be handy for any discussins [this job is suitable **for IT, lib sc. Kannada and eng dep. Scholars**]

5] . BENEFITS of the project

5.1 At present, guide books are the only available help for pdls students, '*blocks*' provided by OUs are much above the grasp or appreciation of ordinary students. Guidebooks are seen as tools for passing exams and never can serve as motivators. This notion is not true. Some of them can be saved and reread.

5.2 In addition to 5[1] above, steps given here will, hopefully, create interest in literature.

5.3 Literature should be seen as a source of intellectual satisfaction. Our ideas given here may help. Some students may pick up a book for reading, even if it is in his own language.

5.4 If teachers find this methodology helpful they may adopt and improve upon it.

6. FALL-OUTS

6.1 Many extensions of the idea given here could be imagined. Many famous poems [*WORDSWORTH, MILTON, SHAKESPEARE* ...] may be readily available in translation. These can be used in PUC or in high school levels also. 6.2 talking book could help [visually] **handicapped persons**.

7. CONCLUSION and recommendation

Idea can be started as a pilot project. One set of one semester students could be taken as target group. If research scholars from many depts form a small team this job can be done in a short time

After thought; With tablets and android systems, modern computer science persons may come up with much better ideas.



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