USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

TEACHER	Prajapati Mehulkumaar Mohanbhai
SCHOOL	Dolatpura (Da) Primary School Ta: Vijapur, District: Mehsana, State: Gujarat
PHONE NUMBER	9428–2243–24
E-MAIL	mehul029.jc19@gmail.com
YOUTUBE	Digital Education with Mehul

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Mehul Prajapati started his teaching at Dolatpura (Da) Primary School of Vijapur taluka of Mehsana district, Gujarat in December 2001. The school had been established only three months earlier. All the families in the village were engaged in agricultural labour and belonged to socio-economically marginalized castes. For three years the school functioned under a tree; in September 2004, two classrooms were built. The village got a paved road only in 2016. Over time, the school developed into a Class 1-8 school. In 2016 Mr. Prajapati became a teacher of Social Studies, teaching Class 5-8.

Mr. Prajapati has concentrated on leveraging technology to make education more engaging, and thus addressing irregular attendance of students. The challenge was even greater since the socio-economic background of the children meant that the children had no exposure to technology or digital gadgets.

Mr. Prajapati started by gathering information about the online teaching resources he could use to support teaching in Classes 5-8. Apart from the Internet he also explored other options to source these resources. He finally came up with material that included videos, photographs and printed material. He began to use these as supplementary material while teaching.

Students watching with the help of 3D glasses

He then used an open-access software to prepare quizzes for the lessons in social studies. These followed the multiple-choice question format. These quizzes proved useful in continuous and comprehensive assessment.

These initial efforts proved rewarding. For example, students found the information about 85 revolutionaries who took part in India's freedom struggle very motivating; the information was provided during the school's prayer meetings and on certain important days. Slowly, each topic had its own Power Point presentation, animations and videos. An e-library for social studies was thus created.

The quizzes were extended to a "question bar" — questions related to social studies were recorded along with the answer options in the voice record of the mobile and were used to rehearse before examinations. Students found this very interesting.

To provide the students a 3D experience, 50 3D glasses were sourced a cost of Rs. 1500. The students are shown 3D films on a big screen. They were also taught to use various Android apps in the tablet to access AR (Augmented reality) and VR (virtual reality) in digital education. In addition to this, 3D painting done by the students themselves was brought to life with the help of the QUIVER app and they were also taught how to use it.

The use of technology for continuous and holistic assessment of students includes the following:

1. Plickers tools;
2. Online-test (testmoz.com website use);
3. ZIP grade (omr scaning android apps);
4. QR-code (quick response code);
5. India-map (digital Android apps & Windows apps);
6. Google link and similar tools;

Method of scanning students' answers

Classroom equipped with ICT resources created through public participation

7. With the help of "Voting machine" mobile apps, students were able to conduct paperless elections and choose a children's parliament. They also learnt how to use an EVM machine.

Mr. Prajapati used his own laptop in the school to undertake the activities. His work was recognized by the government and Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad. In February 2014 he was invited to a state conference of innovative teachers organized by IIM Ahmedabad, which put him in touch with many other teachers who were interested in technology. This enabled Mr. Prajapati to create multimedia classrooms in his school with public support. He began with Rs. 5,000 from his pocket and the school management committee raised another Rs. 25,000. He also donated money for a battery backup. By July 2014 the classroom was ready for use. His experiments bore fruit and students not only became more regular but also showed a marked improvement in their performance.

Mr. Prajapati is a regular participant in the various fairs and exhibitions organized by the government and other institutions. He participated in a large smart class initiative started by the state government. The aim of the initiative was to provide the necessary infrastructure to support technology in rural areas. In a village where most parents did not even possess a mobile phone, students could now benefit from the innovative use of technology. With connectivity provided by the government, the students could now make use of the internet.

While technology, Mr. Prajapati could assess children's learning outcomes through quizzes and other forms of online assessments. He could identify the weak areas in students and also in the lesson plans. Students became more engaged in the lessons and also began to go the extra mile to build on their knowledge. For instance, on being taught about historical figures, they would visit the library to find out more information about them. With most students now owning a mobile phone, they use it to record videos on subject of interest and upload them on the YouTube channel that Mr. Prajapati runs.

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QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. What should be done to arouse the interest of children in extracurricular reading?
2. What are the things to keep in mind while teaching children to use technology?
3. What will you do to keep children from getting bored of social sciences and keep them interested?

QUESTIONS FOR TRAINEES

1. What to look out for in the classroom when using ICT?
2. What should be done to ensure that children do not make mistakes in reading maps?
3. What activities would you do to make the civic subject more interesting in the social sciences?