

HARNESSING AI-DRIVEN TOOLS TO ENHANCE CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH LITERATURE IN NIGERIAN CLASSROOMS.

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Abstract

The teaching of literature has long been a cornerstone of language and humanities education. Literature teaching in Nigerian classrooms has traditionally emphasized rote learning and examination-oriented analysis often limiting students' creative engagement and critical interpretation of literary texts. These traditional approaches often struggle to engage students and foster deeper understanding of literature, but with the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI), new opportunities have emerged to transform literature education. This paper explores the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and strategies – such as Adaptive Learning Platforms, AI-assisted storytelling, intelligent tutoring system, text analysis tools and generative writing applications that can support comprehension, creativity and critical thinking in the teaching of literature in Nigerian schools with a view to revolutionizing literary studies. With the growing influence of technology in education AI presents opportunities to personalize learning, enhance collaboration, and promote innovative approaches to analyze and interact with literary text. The study also discusses key challenges and considerations within the Nigerian context; including infrastructural limitation, digital inequality, teacher preparedness, ethical concerns, and cultural relevance. The goal is to propose practical, context-sensitive ways AI can enrich literature pedagogy in Nigeria, aligning with national educational goals or fostering creativity and innovation. By adopting a contextualized and responsible approach to AI integration, the paper argues that AI driven tools can complement traditional teaching methods and contribute to more engaging, inclusive, and culturally responsive literature instruction in Nigeria. The paper concludes by recommending strategic investments, policy support, and teacher training to ensure the effective and sustainable use of AI in Nigerian literature classrooms.

Keywords: Harnessing, AI-driven Tools, Creative Engagement, Literature, Classrooms.

Introduction

The pedagogical landscape of literature in Nigeria is yet to attain its full potential, despite the country's rich literary heritage and growing interest in the subject. This is largely due to hindrances posed by systemic impediments that beset the realm of education. These obstacles are holding back effective learning and appreciation of literature. The challenges stem from a mix of systemic, cultural and resource related issues, to the need for more engaging student centered approaches. They are multifaceted and deeply entrenched, encompassing infrastructural deficiencies, curricular limitations, and socio-economic factors, collectively stunting the growth of literature education. The resultant effect is a discipline struggling to realize its full potential, with the vibrancy and relevance of Nigerian Literature

awaiting fuller expression within the nations classrooms. The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is thus a welcome relief for the enhancement of literary education that is envisaged to produce better teaching and learning outcomes. As Artificial Intelligence is rapidly transforming educational landscape globally, Nigeria's young and growing digital ecosystem stands to benefit significantly from the innovation.

Literature is a subject vital for development, critical thinking, empathy, and cultural awareness. With the emergence of AI driven tools, literature can benefit from AI's capacity to enhance creativity, deepen understanding, personalize learning, facilitate collaborative creativity and introduce interactive elements into text analysis. As Ayeshung (2025) states, "AI offers immersive learning experiences, enabling students to visualize abstract concepts and actively participate in practical exercise. It fosters critical thinking and problem-solving abilities." It is therefore evident that Artificial Intelligence driven tools can help tailor discussions to individual student's comprehension levels.

As Artificial Intelligence reshapes the educational landscapes globally, it can offer untapped potential to transform how literature is taught and experienced in Nigeria. Ukala (2024) submits that, "In Nigerian context, AI emerges amidst a longstanding struggle to expand educational access, improve quality and bridge pervasive resource gaps... these innovations correlate with improved student engagement and performance in multiple contexts." Thus, if education stakeholders deploy AI effectively, it can become the game changer for improved literary instruction in the country. For instance, AI has the capacity to generate prompts for creative writing and enable visual literature circles that transcend classroom boundaries.

Artificial Intelligence also offers the "co-pilot" model to enhance literature teaching in the classroom. Presently, a key theme globally is that AI is an assistant, not a replacement. Roy (2023) avers that: "AI will not replace teachers, but teacher who use AI will replace those who do not." So, the future of education is not just about technology; it's about using technology to creatively inspire and connect with learners. That is why the future of teaching literature in English in Nigerian classrooms is moving towards a hybrid model where traditional textual analysis meets "intelligent literacy." Therefore, in this AI dispensation, the classroom is shifting from a space of rote memorization to one of deep, critical engagement and creative production, it is shifting from the traditional classroom where a single teacher may manage over 50 students, to the application of AI tools where AI serves as teaching assistant, enabling a robust engagement with literary studies beyond memorization to creative inquiry and expression.

However, integrating Artificial Intelligence in literature pedagogy has its barriers. We must raise questions about preserving the humanistic core of literary studies, ensuring cultural relevance, and addressing access disparities in Nigerian schools. This is because AI lacks the "human soul" to grade nuanced literary style. When we speak of the "human soul" in the context of literature, we are referring to the unique intersection of lived experience, emotional resonance, and intentionality. While AI-driven tools are incredibly efficient at identifying patterns, they operate on mathematical probability rather than conscious understanding. This creates a hurdle in the grading of nuanced literary style, primarily due to the following "soulless" limitations:

- **The Absence of Sentience vs. Simulation:** AI does not "feel" the weight of a tragedy or the bite of a satirical comment; it only identifies that certain words frequently appear in those contexts.
- **The Human Edge:** A human grader recognizes the "soul" of a piece when a student uses a specific, perhaps unconventional, metaphor that resonates because of a shared human condition (e.g. grief, longing, or joy), but AI does not.
- **The AI Failure:** AI identifies "correctness" based on its training data. If a student's style is truly original or avant – garde - breaking rules to create a specific emotional effect, the AI may flag it as an error or "low probability" writing, missing the artistic genius entirely.

Again, there is the issue of addressing ethical and equity concerns on the integration of AI in literature instruction. Much as the integration of AI into the literature classroom offers transformative potential for personalized analysis, it introduces deep-seated ethical and equity risks. Chinta (2024) submits that, "The integration of AI systems in educational settings raises concerns about algorithmic bias and inequity, as inherent biases in training data can inadvertently perpetuate prejudice against specific groups, undermining fairness in educational outcomes and access." The primary ethical tension in literature teaching is the "erasure of the human" in both authorship and interpretation. Because Large Language Models (LLMs) are trained predominantly on western, English Language digitalized text, when asked to "summarize the evolution of the novel, for instance, AI often prioritizes the western canon while ignoring oral traditions or Global South Literatures, effectively automating a colonial perspective of literacy history. In view of these considerations, it becomes imperative to examine how AI - driven tools can be purposefully harnessed to enrich students' creative engagement with literary texts in Nigeria classrooms.

The paper explores how artificial intelligence (AI) can be leveraged to make literature teaching more innovative, interactive, and creative in Nigerian educational settings. The paper argues that, when thoughtfully applied, Artificial Intelligence-driven tools can enhance creative engagement with literature, making it more accessible and impactful for Nigerian students. By examining the specific Artificial Intelligence applications and contextual challenges, the study aims to contribute practical strategies for leveraging innovation in literature teaching, aligning with Nigeria's educational push for creativity and technological adaptation in the digital age.

Why Does AI Matter for Literature Engagement?

AI is vital for literature engagement because it has the potential to reshape the way students interact with literature in the following ways:

- (i) By personalizing learning: AI can adapt prompts and activities based on student proficiency, interest and progress; and render supportive scaffolding to them in areas they find difficult to engage with in literature.
- (ii) By enhancing creative interpretation: Students can use AI tools to
 - generate alternative endings to stories.
 - explore character motivation.
 - create multimedia interpretations like digital poems inspired by texts and engage in dialogic interactions with authors.

AI Driven Tools in Education

AI driven tools are technologies that use machine learning, natural language processing, and adaptive algorithms to support teaching and learning. They include: Intelligent Tutoring Systems, generative AI that can analyze or produce texts, chatbots that interact in natural language, tools that summarize or translate content, and platforms that adapt to individual learners' needs. These tools are not meant to replace teachers, but to augment their capabilities and stimulate student engagement, in new creative ways.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Application in Literature Teaching

The need for integration of AI tools into the teaching of literature in the 21st century cannot be over emphasized. David Warlick on "Classroom Technology" posits: "we need technology in every classroom and in every student and teacher's hand, because it is the pen and paper of our time and it is the lens through which we experience." To revolutionize literary studies, the following are some AI application tools and strategies currently used in literature education.

1. **Adaptive learning platforms.** In 2025, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into literature education has moved beyond simple spell-checkers to sophisticated Adaptive Learning Platforms (ALPS). Like:
 - Eduaide. AI: Specifically designed for teachers to generate "graphic organizers" and "leveled readings" from literary texts instantly.
 - Adeptemy and SC Training: These engines allow institutions to build custom curriculum maps where the content reacts to students' demands in real – time.
 - Intelligent Assistants (VTAs): New virtual tutors using Natural Language Processing (NLP) can now "discuss" a text with a student, stimulating a Socratic seminar to push their critical thinking.

These platforms don't just present texts; they analyze how a student interacts with them, personalizing the journey from basic reading comprehension to complex literary analysis. The need for the use of AI powered adaptive platforms like the above mentioned indicates that performance gains range from 15% to 35% with increased task completion efficiency and higher learning satisfaction" when students use AI supported adaptive systems for complex subjects.

2. **Adaptability of AI to literature students.**

AI-powered ALPS handle this through mechanisms; such as Dynamic Content Leveling: The platform adjusts the complexity of reading materials or the guiding questions very easily. For instance, if a student struggles with the vocabulary of a Victorian novel, the AI might provide "leveled readings" – by giving simplified versions or annotated side – bars – before gradually re-introducing the original prose.

3. **Text Analysis and Insight Tools:** These tools help students move beyond surface-level reading by identifying themes, sentiment, and linguistic patterns. Examples are ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini – Students can prompt these models to perform "close readings" of specific pages, asking the AI to identify motifs, metaphors, or historical contexts.
4. **Artificial Intelligence-Assisted Storytelling and Creative Writing:** AI storytelling has moved beyond simple "text generation" to become a sophisticated collaborative partnership. Rather than replacing the author, AI acts as a "co-pilot" that helps navigate the various stages of the creative process, from word building

to stylistic refinement. With tools like sudowrite used for fiction and novel, novel crafter for serious author, Grammarly Authorship used by students and academics and Claude (Anthropic) which is used for nuanced prose.

5. **Interactive Character Immersion:** One of the most engaging application of AI is the “character chat.” Teachers use Large Language Models (LLMs) to stimulate conversations with literary figures. It is applied by students interviewing an AI-powered Chinua Achebe or Wole Soyinka to ask about their motivations, fears, or specific choices made in a chapter. The benefit is that students are thus compelled to formulate precise questions based on their reading and it helps them understand character psychology in a more personal way.
6. **Comparative Analysis and Pattern Recognition:** AI can process thousands of pages in seconds to identify recurring motifs that a human might miss over a single reading. Areas where this can feature include:
 - (i) Thematic Tracking: AI tools can scan a novel to map out the frequency of specific symbols. e.g. light vs darkness in *Heart of Darkness*
 - (ii) Stylometry: Students can use AI to compare the writing styles of two different authors or periods, looking at sentence structure, vocabulary richness, and emotional tone.
7. **Differentiation and Accessibility:** In a diverse classroom, not every student reads at the same level. AI allows teachers to provide differentiated materials without extra prep time. For example, AI helps to:
 - (i) Level Texts - With tools like Diffix or Brisk, AI can summarize a complex Shakespearean passage into a lower reading level or translate it for English Language Learners (ELL) while keeping the core meaning intact.
 - (ii) Audio and Visual Aids: AI can instantly turn a written scene into an audio drama or a descriptive prompt for an image generator, helping visual and auditory learners engage with the text.
8. **Scaffolding the Writing Process:** AI is used to help students move past writer’s block and improve their formal literary criticism. For instance, AI can help in the following ways:
 - (i) Feedback Loops: students can submit a draft of a literary essay to an AI to receive instant feedback on their thesis strength and evidence usage before the teacher ever sees it.
 - (ii) Grammar and Tone: Tools like Grammarly or Quillbot help students refine their academic voice, ensuring their insights aren’t lost behind poor syntax.

Benefits of Artificial Intelligence in Literature Classroom

1. The use of AI adaptive Learning Platforms enables real-time feedback where teachers get data dashboards showing exactly where a class is stuck. Students can also submit a draft to an AI configured with a specific rubric to get instant pointers on where their argument lacks evidence, allowing them to improve the work before it reaches the teacher.
2. AI can act as a personal tutor that meets students at their specific reading level. i.e. deciphering archaic language – students can ask AI to translate Shakespearean sonnets or Victorian prose into contemporary English to help them grasp the literal meaning before tackling the metaphorical.

3. Integrating AI into the literature classroom shifts the focus from role memorization to deep, interactive analysis. Today, tools have evolved to do much more than just summarize. They now act as personalized tutors and sophisticated research assistants.
4. Artificial Intelligence ensures sentiment and Tone analysis of literary process which help students see the emotional arc of a story through data visualization
5. Artificial Intelligence enables inclusive access which makes for the conversion of Text-to-Speech and visual aids which help neuro divergent learners. While these benefits are significant, educators emphasize that AI should be a compliment to human intuition and not a replacement. The goal is AI literacy – teaching students to use their tools critically while maintaining their own unique voice and interpretive skills.

Conclusion

The adoption of AI-driven tools to facilitate creative engagement with literature in Nigerian classrooms can be a transformative opportunity for literature education in the 21st century. This paper has demonstrated that artificial intelligence holds significant potential to shift literature teaching from predominantly teacher-centered, examination-driven practices to more interactive student-centered and creativity oriented approaches. Through personalized learning, multimodal interpretation, and adaptive feedback, AI tools can deepen student's understanding of literary texts while stimulating imagination, critical thinking and expressive skills.

In the Nigerian educational context where challenges such as limited resources, large class sizes, and declining student interest in literature persists, AI-driven tools offer innovative ways to revitalize literary studies. By enabling students to explore alternative narratives, analyze characters and themes more dynamically, and connect texts to their lived experiences and cultural backgrounds, AI enhances both comprehension and relevance.

Furthermore, AI-supported platforms can promote inclusivity by accommodating diverse learning styles, supporting language translation, and providing assistive technologies for learners with different abilities

However, the effective integration of AI into literature instruction is not without challenges. Infrastructural deficiencies, inadequate teacher training, funding constraints, curriculum rigidity, and ethical concerns continue to militate against wide spread adoption in Nigerian classrooms. These barriers highlight the need for deliberate, context-sensitive strategies that prioritize capacity building, policy alignment, equitable access, and cultural relevance. AI should be viewed not as a replacement for teachers but as a complimentary tool that promotes instructional effectiveness and preserves the humanistic essence of literature education.

Ultimately, the successful harnessing of AI-driven tools in Nigerian literature classrooms depend on collaborative efforts among policymakers, educators, technology developers, and educational institutions. With sustained investment in infrastructure, continuous professional development for teachers, curriculum reform, and the localization of AI content to reflect Nigerian literary traditions, AI can become a powerful catalyst for creative engagement and literary appreciation. Embracing

these innovations thoughtfully and responsibly will not only enrich literature teaching but also equip Nigerian learners with the critical, creative, and digital competencies necessary for meaningful participation in a rapidly evolving global society.

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