

## Using Digital Resources of Oxford University Press in Classrooms

*Sonali Bhattacharya*

*Oxford University Press* had embarked on its digital journey way back in 2006 with the primary objective of giving the academic fraternity supplementary support in the classroom by way of teaching aids. Over the years the organization has invested research, time, effort and considerable manpower and financial resources in developing digital material in the form of CDs, websites and e-books to go with its many academic products being used by schools across the country and abroad. The interactive digital resources provide level-specific interactive content for areas of **English, Mathematics, Science, Social Sciences** and **Computer Science**.

In education today, even though the teacher, the classroom, the textbook, the blackboard and the occasional reference book still remain the mainstay of the teacher-learner interaction, the ubiquitous presence of digital resources is beginning to extend the possibilities of providing additional support in classroom practices. The digital input of course, needs to connect integrally and not in an extraneous way, with the curricular content, if it is to have credibility and be of use. The need to enhance teaching-learning experience and thus connect with a digital interface, can only stem from the needs of a teacher. The role of a teacher thus can never be understated. He/She decides from among the plethora of digital content, what best suits his/her learners at what point of time.

OUP begins with the premise that the learning process is a co-production between the learner and the learning environment. Digital support has come about as a result of the following reasons:

- The need to integrate primary source material into the course.
- Improve students' learning by using multiple strategies.
- Motivate students by providing a larger context for a topic.
- Allow teachers to do new things in the classroom.
- Obtain resources not available at the institution.
- Make it convenient and save time for teachers and students. Teacher has more instructional time because problems or class notes are already ready for class and don't need to be written during class time.

- Access to materials or teaching methods and their reusability, e.g. lesson plans, class notes that have been compiled and saved during the class.
- Pressure from an increasingly technological arena in academia. Not every school can afford a smart class but Oxford University Press offers the next best thing, where its material can be used as stand alone material or be incorporated into smart class environments.

Presently OUP has an array of digital aids (CDs, Websites, E-books) whose material come under the following categories:

- **CDs have supplementary material by way of**
  - Explanation of curricular content with the help of multimedia.
  - Worksheets in addition to those in books and Teacher Resource Packs and those on the website. These include teaching and testing type tasks.
  - Activities, Resource Galleries, Projects, Games, Quizzes to develop higher order thinking skills.
  - Unit tests, Term Tests and Question Banks.
  - Interactive Assessments: formative and summative type questions and evaluation and review techniques.
  - Exercises and practice material with immediate feedback and remedial action.
  - Modeling sessions e.g. creating scientific models, model pronunciation etc.
- **Websites for majority of the courses contain**
  - Digitally aided explanations (e.g. graphics, audio, video, animations)
  - Additional worksheets and exercises on all content and topics
  - Lesson plans for all lessons
  - Project ideas
  - Pedagogical support for teachers
  - Provision for communication with/by users
  - Hyperlinks to www links
  - Linked to Search engines such as Google

- **E-books** provide opportunities to explore alternative ways of stimulating learners by displaying and working with learning material in the class at a single point of time:
  - Digital page-turner with interactive interface that makes maneuvering non-linear and flexible.
  - Whiteboard-like interactivities with tools to zoom, highlight, write notes, hide and show etc. that facilitate collaborative involvement.
  - Archiving facilities allow teacher to save input generated during class and refer to them later.
  - Links to CDs that are available to learners are inserted here too so that these links may be used by teacher in class.

## Conclusion

There have been some dampers when it has come to implementing some of these resources. These may be summarized thus:

- Computer literacy on the part of the teacher
- Lack of understanding that it is not a threat to *chalk and talk method* but a supplement
- Impression that it needs extra time to use and thus a waste
- Distracts from curricular teaching
- Not so relevant to teaching particular courses

"The lack of faculty willingness to change" is often cited as a key barrier to wider adoption of a variety of technologies. However, Oxford University Press has broken in gently by giving teachers the comfort of knowing that the discretion of using digital material lies on his/her own judgment and is not an infringement.

*Sonali Bhattacharya is an English Language Teaching (ELT) consultant, resource person, teacher educator and content developer for Oxford University Press, the English Access Micro-scholarship Program and the English Teaching Assistants Program run by the U.S. Dept. of State.*