

# Nelta Choutari

Nepalese ELT Practitioners Meet the World

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## **Nelta Choutari: Fifth Anniversary Issue 2014**

January 1, 2014

### Editorial

Choutari Editors

It is said that five years is a century in internet time! But this is not always true in every country and context. Due to never-ending political gridlock, our society is not making the type of progress that the discourse of the internet assumes. We have slightly better bandwidth for internet access itself today than we had five years ago; but we don't have better environments for academic and professional progress today than we did when monarchy was replaced by an interim constitution toward the transition to full democracy.

However—and this is a big however—we are also defined by who we envision we can be, who we strive to be, where we want to reach in another five or ten years. In spite of the hurdles in our social, political, and economic lives, we should do what we can to connect more members of our community, to engage them, and to provide opportunities for professional development. Accordingly, at Choutari, we are trying our best to engage our community in professional discourse here at home and around the world. We believe that if we desire, we can turn our conversations into useful resource for our professional work and our professional development.

Those of us who are running NeltaChoutari are optimistic. We believe that in spite of all the challenges in our society, we can and should give back our best to our profession and community. We want to serve as a bridge between a generation of scholars and teachers who have built our professional community from scratch. We also want to be a vehicle of transformation by creating a venue where the ideas and experiences of our professional colleagues across the country can be shared. We are dedicated to the idea that small acts for helping to transmit knowledge, skills and resources between scholarship and classrooms, trainings and publications, and conversations offline and online can make a huge impact in our field.

Our readers don't need to be told that blogging is a powerful means of professional development. We believe that Choutari is perhaps the first and the most popular blog in the country; but our mission is to promote blogging and other emerging modes of professional conversations among individuals and groups who are seeking to share their voices. We are also eager to help promote the professional activities—training and conferences, local events and conversations, and other professional updates—across the country. We encourage our colleagues to share any professional updates through Choutari.

Choutari is also a place for mentorship. We do not just accept and reject submissions when our colleagues want to share their ideas through Choutari; we try to provide resources/guidelines (please see “[join the conversation](#)” tab), and we try our best to help the writers on a one-to-one basis through a review process as best as we can.

With the expansion of our team, we are truly excited and eager to serve the community even better than we have done so far. But for our efforts to be most fruitful, we need your support through promotion, contribution, and feedback.

Let us start another wonderful year together. Happy New Year, 2014 to all our readers, contributors, and well-wishers!!!

Here is a list of this special issue’s khuraks:

- [More Than Status Updates: Choutari Chat with Some ELT Professionals](#) by Uttam Gaulee in support of the team
- [Shifting Focus: Building ELT Practices and Scholarship from the Ground Up](#) by Prem Phyak, Shyam Sharma, and Bal Krishna Sharma
- [A Journey from Information to Transformation in ELT Professionalism](#) by Bal Ram Adhikari
- [Quick Survey with Choutari Audience](#) by Ushakiran Wagle and Lal Bahadur Rana
- [Impact of NeltaChoutari on Nepalese ELT](#) by Ashok Raj Khati
- [2013: A Reflection about Choutari](#) by Praveen Kumar Yadav
- [Welcoming new colleagues to Choutari](#) by Choutari Editors

We urge you to join us again by sharing your responses as comments under any posts, by liking and sharing them, by contributing your own posts for future issues, and by encouraging other colleagues to do the same.

Happy New Year 2014!

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 Posted by praveenkumaryadava

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## **More Than Status Updates: Choutari Chat with Some ELT Professionals**

January 1, 2014

We log on to Facebook—or at least many of us do—when we want to find out what member of our social network are doing. But how do we learn about what the most experienced Nepali scholars and emerging professionals in our field at home and abroad are doing? One of the things we’ve always tried to do in Choutari is to invite experienced colleagues to stop by in order to share their stories and tell us about their current engagements. Especially in the special anniversary issues, we also ask veterans of our field—or our “agrajs” as we call them around here—to share their time with us. We believe that even simply listening to their stories of struggle/success and learning what they are currently doing can have tremendous impact on younger members of the community. In this post, we have tried to present golden nuggets from their experience with the help of three simple questions. We are grateful to our guests for stopping by at the Choutari as they went about their very busy work and lives!

Without further ado, then— we present the voices of six personalities:

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***Choutari: What is the current project or responsibility that you are engaged with in the field of ELT? As an ELT scholar, our audience would be inspired to learn about it.***



Dr. Jai Raj Awasthi, the Vice Chancellor at the Far-Western University and Former President of NELTA

After teaching English for over thirty-six years at Tribhuvan University (TU), the government of Nepal gave me a responsibility of starting a new university at Mahendranagar ... since 2011. As a Vice Chancellor, I had to start everything from a scratch. ... For the first time in my life I felt alone and helpless. However, my colleagues from TU helped me out to design new syllabi and we started the ELT courses at the undergraduate level from December 2012 along with other 13 undergraduate courses. For the first time in the history of Nepalese education, we made all our undergraduate programs of four years duration in line with the international parameters. This year we have launched the M Ed TESOL program for the first time in Nepal. While designing the courses, we have kept the international standard in mind. Since we have started a four- year undergraduate and two year graduate courses under the semester system, we have from the inception of the university proved that we can follow the calendar operation and run classes uninterruptedly. Our aim is to go for M Phil leading to Ph D in TESOL soon.



Dr. Anjana Bhattarai, Reader at Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Currently from the year 2070 B.S, Tribhuvan University decided to implement the semester system at the University Campuses. The big challenge for us is the preparation of courses for the new program. Not only me but also all the teachers are busy in rounds of meeting for devising new courses so that the new system will be delivered through two different modes: face-to-face and online. Online delivery will start from 2015 AD but the preparation has already on the way.



Mr. Ganga Ram Gautam, Associate Professor at TU and Former President of NELTA

Besides my regular service at TU, I'm contributing to government established Far-western University and Mid-western University in the year 2011. I feel fortunate that I have been currently involved in developing the ELT/TESOL/EFL curricula of the undergraduate and graduate programs of these two universities. With the support of the colleagues and the experts involved in this field, we have been able to introduce some of the new courses for the first time in Nepal. Such courses include Nepalese English and Nepalese ELT, Critical Discourse Analysis, Bilingualism and Multilingualism, World Englishes, EFL Seminars, etc.



Mr. Laxman Gnawali, Associate Professor at Kathmandu University and Former Senior Vice President of NELTA

I have my hands on several ELT initiatives at the moment but I would like to mention the English grammar series writing project which is in progress. Why I picked this project to share is that the team is working with the principle of the Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) model in actual sense. When we surveyed the grammar books produced and/or being used in Nepal, we saw that they include only the first two components and fail to continue with the third. If the learners have no opportunity to produce language chunks with the

grammatical items they just learnt, the retention is very low, let alone the proper contextualization. The series in progress follows the inductive approach and the PPP model which I believe will not only be meaningful for the learners but also a principled resource for the teachers in the classroom.



Mr. Kashi Raj Pandey, Assistant Professor at KU & Member of NELTA

I am planning to publish a book on creative writing; a collection of my poems and stories that links with the narratives of journey of language learning.



Dr Prithvi N. Shrestha, Lecturer in ELT, Department of Languages, Faculty of Education and Language Studies, The Open University and Chief-Editor, Journal of NELTA

As a Lecturer in English Language Teaching at the Department of Languages, The Open University, UK where I have been working since January 2006, I am currently involved in a number of ELT projects both in the UK and abroad. My projects have two broad strands which include research as well: UK-based and international development. In terms of the UK projects, I chair an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) module which has about 1,400 students. I oversee 42 tutors tutoring on this module. In addition, I supervise two PhD students (one Greek and one Indian). I have just completed a UK Higher Education Academy funded project which investigated formative writing assessment at the Open University. In terms of my international development projects, until recently I worked as an English language specialist for the £50-million project (UKAid funded) called English in Action in Bangladesh for over five years. It involved both designing mobile technology enhanced teacher professional development materials and research on their use. Since November 2012, I have been working as the academic lead for the mother tongue education strand of the Teacher Education through School-based Support project (£15 million, UKAid funded) in India (TESS-India). I have been working very closely with Indian colleagues to produce open educational resources (OERs) for elementary mother tongue teachers in seven states of India (Assam, Bihar, Karnatak, Madhya Pradesh, Paschhim Bangal, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh). In addition, I currently lead, as the principal investigator on an IELTS research project funded by the British Council (BC). The project runs in Bangladesh and Nepal, examining the impact of the use of IELTS test in these two countries. Another BC project that

I work on is INSPIRE in Bangladesh in which we explore the use of ICT with ELT in government secondary schools.

*Choutari: Please consider sharing about any challenges and/or opportunities that you see for ELT in Nepal? It could be about present or future.*

**Dr. Awasthi:**

Teaching of the English language is both a challenge and opportunity in Nepal. We can easily see the increasing craze of the people toward the English language. A recent study reveals the fact that many more people are attracted toward it and they are ready to sacrifice the MLE at the cost of it, though I don't think it's a positive sign for the initial literacy years. The challenges we face here are both methods and materials suitable to our children and the teachers who can handle them efficiently to yield the desired results. The studies carried out in the past have shown a very gloomy picture of the achievement in English at all levels of examinations, claiming a big loss of the stakeholders. On the one hand, the status of teaching English in Nepal is changing drastically and heading toward a second language and on the other we are not yet prepared to take this challenge. We have to address different EL related issues in time to facilitate its teaching so that we can minimize the loss.

**Dr. Bhattarai:**

English Language Teaching, a global profession, opens many doors to the opportunities. Take for example, being a translator we can contribute to the exchange of ideas, opinions, views and also earn our livelihoods. Similarly, a lexicographer can contribute to the preparation of bilingual dictionaries for the users of different languages. Most importantly, we are teachers dedicated in producing the new generation that can use English as a second language for multiple purposes. I take it as one of the most challenging fields, for we, teachers, must change the attitudes of our students. We should encourage them to review themselves and their views critically, to exchange those views among themselves by creating blogs, to read online books and articles. Moreover, the major challenge is making our students aware of online resources so that they can be intrinsically motivated.

**Mr. Gautam:**

The key issue that remains at the forefront regarding the role and position of the English language in the forthcoming new constitution of Nepal. It is urgent that discussion should be initiated in this regard and we need to redefine the role of the English language in the country. In case of teaching and learning, English is still taught in the formal education merely as a content area subject, not as a language. Systemic interventions and collaborative approach is needed to make English teaching an experiential experience for its learners.

**Mr. Gnawali:**

The biggest challenge in the Nepalese ELT has been, is and is perhaps going to be, the English language proficiency of the teachers. Most English teachers lack the basic of the English language teaching: the proficiency to communicate in English, written and oral. Without the command over the language one is supposed to teach, one cannot do justice with the other nuances of the teaching of this foreign language. I believe this problem is going to stay for quite some time as the problem persists not just in the lower level but in the

teacher educators' level. Unless the English teacher education programmes stress on the language development component, the learners will be exposed to English that will not provide adequate exposure to the target language that they are supposed to learn, if not acquire. When the teachers have the "what", the "how" will be less worrying.

**Mr. Pandey:**

Students from Government schools still feel that they are poor in English compared to other "smart" students in the classroom. Why is this? However, I see a great opportunity in language learning all around, even outside the classroom. If one has passion, No one is poor in the beginning, nor are we born with perfection in mastering the fluency of any language. It's all about the part of our determination to learn a new language. So modern technology has made English a fun, convenient and practical part of your daily life, may it be through mobile phones, TV or other social media, students can connect their learning to the things they enjoy, and English learning becomes a real life experience. This may demand a lot of patience, but it gets easier and easier as our students advance and get engaged.

**Dr. Shrestha:**

As a professional who has been away for many years from the reality of the ELT situation in Nepal, I can only say what I have observed from a distance and what I have read. To me, with regard to opportunities, ELT would highly benefit from exploiting already existing technologies used by learners and English teachers. As far as I know, mobile devices such as mobile phones are ubiquitous in Nepal and they are not exploited enough. NELTA can surely push government agencies and its own members towards this direction. In terms of challenges, I want to mention only two things though there are many: a clear national policy on language education and strategies of its implementation, and making improvements to English language assessment both in schools and higher education. To me, English language education in higher education seems to be an area that has not received much attention. Therefore, NELTA in collaboration with universities and international bodies such as the British Council could help to ameliorate the existing situation.

*Choutari: Please consider sharing an incident/story from your early years (or even recent past) as an ELT scholar and leading figure. We're trying to add something light and fun but thought-provoking for our readers.*

**Dr. Awasthi:**

If I flash back my memory of learning English and the journey that I took to become an ELT lover, I cannot believe myself. I studied English in Hindi from the Gurus who came to teach us from the neighboring country. I even studied Nepali in Hindi. When I started teaching it, I did not have a pedagogical degree. I learned to pronounce English sounds while I was doing my Master's degree at TU. It was only then I came to know that English has 20 vowel sounds. I still remember my teacher, Ms Susan Fortescue at the master's level, who made me pronounce the word 'vocabulary' 15 times in the classroom because I could not pronounce it the way the British people pronounced it. I did not feel otherwise. Since then I have developed a feeling that every moment is a learning moment for us and learning does not have an end in itself. It is a lifelong process. If we work hard we can achieve our goals.

**Dr. Bhattarai:**

I completed my education up to B Ed in a small town of the Eastern Nepal, Dhankuta. After completing IA in political science I did B Ed in English. I was the only female student in the class. You can imagine the situation! With the limited exposure to English, my B ED degree came to completion. Then I decided to do MA in English at Kirtipur. The challenge was immense. After completing MA in 2042 BS, I decided to go for M Ed in 2047. The completion of M Ed paved the way for M Phil and PhD which I completed in 2058. English language learners in education think that completing Master's degree is enough. Contrary to this, I think that it works only as a foundation. They need to construct the whole building of their career by doing many other supporting courses. At present, many online courses available have made it easier.

**Mr. Gautam:**

I finished my high school from Baglung and joined Butwal Campus for further study. When I attended the English class, I realized that I had very little English. I could not speak English at all and writing in English was even more difficult. I could hardly write a paragraph. When my English teacher asked me a very simple question in English and I could not respond to it, there was a big laughter in my class. Feeling a bit frustrated and embarrassed, I decided to choose English as my major and worked extremely hard since then. When I found myself as one of the top ten candidates to pass the English subject in the annual exam, I learned that it is never too late to learn anything. It is the dedication and commitment that takes you to your destination.

**Mr. Gnawali:**

Let me share an incident that took place in 2001. I was doing my Masters course at the College of St Mark and St John ([www.marjon.ac.uk](http://www.marjon.ac.uk)) in Plymouth, England. On a sunny Sunday in June, the college organised a bus trip to Bath for international students. We left early. We had a beautiful view of the English countryside on the way. Next to me was sitting an officer of the college chapel. We were talking about the weather and the scenery. I wanted to talk to her about something related to the Bible.

I started, "Jenny, I have a question related to the Bible. Can I ask?"

"Go ahead," she said.

I asked elaborately, "According to the Bible, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, He punished them by expelling them from the paradise. They were thrown down to the earth. Can you tell which country they came down to?"

She said she had never thought about it.

I said I knew the answer. I drew my answer from the story "The Apple" by H G Wells.

"Which country?" she was curious.

I said, "Armenia"



She said, “Which country?”

“Armenia.”

“Say that again!”

“Armenia.”

“Can you spell that to me?”

I spelt it, “A-R-M-E-N-I-A”

“Oh, Armenia.” She was putting stress on the second syllable. I heard that very clearly. I had put it on the first syllable. I saw the value of the word stress for the first time. I tried to pronounce it the way she had, but it was difficult. I knew the stress shift made a difference in meaning, but only theoretically. I had never had an experience of mis-communication just due to the stress shift even when the correct phonemes were uttered.

I asked her what she had heard when I said “Armenia.”  
She said “Harmony.”

After that, I always tried to imitate the stress pattern when I talked to the local people at the college. When I left England, I felt that I was less misunderstood than when I travelled to Bath.

#### **Mr. Pandey:**

Those were the days (a part of my upcoming autoethnographic research textbook, in print): Our class teacher at Niranjana High School, “Y sir” was a kind of strict man, yet nice to good students like “me”, of course a hard master for others. Go – went – gone = “Janu” – “gayo” – “gayako” a method of direct meaning making was his approach, or recite the whole text in whatever way it was given in the classroom, were several of the approaches we practiced during the initial years of my learning English. Teachers would come to the classrooms and ask us to read the text, making sure we were able to re-tell it – the complete literal comprehension approach.

The success was even measured how we all could write the answers in final exams at the end of every academic year. All we did was prepare ourselves overnight for the tests and write it as a summary, not bothering much on the question pattern. If something was already asked in the previous years, the students would simply escape from it thinking that was dim-witted idea to prepare for what would not come as a question that year.




#### **Dr. Shrestha:**

I remember one incident which I can never forget. It was in the summer of 2004 when I was appointed as a pre-sessional EAP tutor at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. A pre-sessional EAP course is offered to international students (below IELTS band 5.5) who are offered a place at a UK university provisionally. It was my first pre-sessional EAP job in the UK and so I was very much looking forward to it. On the day of our

induction, there were about 15 tutors including myself. Except the line manager, I had not met anyone else before. After we had our first few induction sessions, we were at a lunch break. I was sitting next to a female tutor (short, brunette hair). She looked towards me and said, 'So you are from Nepal! And you teach English here?' I had already heard some rumours that some people were making fuss about me being from Nepal. The lady's comment confirmed what I had heard. I said, 'Yes, indeed. I am from Nepal. And I have been teaching English here for a year now.' The lady realized that she asked the wrong question or made inappropriate comments and said, 'I was just curious, but don't take me wrong!'. I said, 'No, worries at all. I can understand!'. This incident keeps reminding me of the professional journey I have travelled, and linked with this thought in my mind is my current line manager's touching comment referring to Braj Kachru's three circles of countries where English is used 'you came from an outer circle country (Nepal) to the inner circle country (UK). It is such an achievement.' So all I can say to all readers of this forum is: however challenging your situation may be, you can do it if I can!

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 Posted by gauleeuttam

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## **Shifting Focus: Building ELT Practices and Scholarship from the Ground Up**

January 1, 2014

**Prem Phyak, Bal Krishna Sharma and Shyam Sharma**

The subject of this post is our shared recognition that there is a tremendous need for Nepalese ELT practitioners to build on what we already have and what we already do, rather than focusing on what we lack and what we don't do well. We highlight the importance for teachers to understand/appreciate their great potentials to do things innovatively, creatively, and transformatively. We organize this post in three interconnected discussions about the need for shifting our local ELT conversations and scholarship.

### **From Focusing on Problem to Focusing on Practice**

Academic and professional discourses on ELT in our context tend to be too focused on problems and failures. At workshops and conferences, as well in theses produced by our university students, a lot of attention is paid to a more or less fixed set of problems such as large classes, lack of resources, lack of teacher training and proficiency, and so on and on. These discourses often end with a set of recommendations, which again are quite predictable, such as: "teachers should be trained," "the government should provide more resources," "classes should be smaller," and so on.

What is left out from such discourses is how English teachers in Nepal work under constraints and are still able to teach very effectively. Seemingly small examples sometimes do a great job. We remember our secondary school days when our English class consisted of more than 50 students—which is too large by most ELT standards. Our English teachers used to move around the class, make frequent eye contact with us, call names and ask simple questions such as “what did we study yesterday?” “can you see my writing from the back?” etc. We felt great when the teacher called us by name, cared whether we heard her from the back, and valued our contribution; we did our best even while sitting at the back end of a large classroom. We know that even such simple classroom management and motivation strategies can help us overcome many of the seemingly insurmountable challenges of teaching our large-class contexts.

However, in our ELT conversations/scholarship, we seem to regard even the highly effective strategies used in our classrooms too trivial to discuss, too inauthentic to theorize. We lack the confidence to talk about our own and our fellow teachers’ successful teaching practices as the basis of our professional conversations. We rather seek answers to our challenges in the big books, fancy theories, and the occasional trainers who might show us how to fix our problems.

In some ways, our ELT conversations are already rich and substantive, so it is a matter of valuing better our everyday practices. We need to start and promote much more practice-based conversations where we can share how to tackle our challenges and teach effectively in ways that fit our needs. Doing this will help us overcome the particularly crippling hesitation that we have toward developing new knowledge out of our own experiences [See, for example, Jeevan Karki's post on [developing students' creativity](#)].

Of course, there is no need to try to replace conventional methods/practices with whole new sets. But it is necessary to prevent the limited number of “god words” of mainstream ELT discourse from making us believe that what they tell us is incomparably superior and more authentic than anything we know and do in our particular contexts, anything that comes out of our own daily practices and ground realities.

When we think about scholarship/theory about ELT methods, strategies, and practices (including specific classroom activities), we should go beyond thinking in terminologies that we read in textbooks during our college and university days. Communicative or content-based approach should enter our conversations, but they shouldn’t become the only frame of reference in all our conversations. We should not hesitate to go beyond the big words and into our practices, with whatever words fit our needs, inventing our own terminology where fit.

### **From Reading Theory to Telling Stories and Sharing Our Experiences**

Another major way in which we could shift our focus from what we don’t do into what we could and should do—and what we already do—is to recognize the significance of our ELT conversations based on our ground realities as \*material for genuine “scholarship.” That is, our hesitation to produce ELT scholarship/knowledge—which seems even more debilitating than that of sharing and valuing our teaching practices—needs to be overcome as well.

We have an abundance of knowledge that are embedded in our everyday life and socio-cultural practices; we also have creative language teaching and learning practices shaped by our multilingual, multicultural, and multiethnic realities which can motivate students to speak, read and write English. If we think about it, the kinds of stories of hardships that English teachers are facing in rural villages of Nepal can be a foundation of powerful ELT discourse for us and even for fellow teachers around the world. [For example, see [Ahok Khati's discussion](#) on how English teachers in Nepal construct their identities drawing on local values and knowledge].

Our teachers do not just know how to deal with textbooks and teach English grammar; they are usually larger-than-life figures who have tremendous impact on social issues, great respect from the community for their ability to resolve conflicts in society, and an understanding of social values and ethics. Their success as teachers comes much less from ELT theories and methods they have learned from textbooks than it does from their immersion in society; it comes from their knowledge/understanding of the community and students, their status and role in society, and their prestige and identity.

The same is true about their students: many of them may not even have a single pen and notebook, enough food to eat and clothes to wear, and parental guidance/understanding of their education. But the students complete the other half of our success stories through the sheer power of their sincerity, motivation, and hard work. This makes us ask: how can we capture such larger, deeper issues in ELT pedagogical theories and conversations of our own?

This means that we must situate our ELT discourses in our local contexts, our understanding of the environment, occupations, cultural practices, social harmony and cooperation, and so on. Only when we develop practices/methods that recognize the realities of our and our students' lives can we truly encourage them to read, write, speak, listen, and learn meaningfully. It is important to focus on helping them develop their ability to talk about their own culture, community and knowledge first. For example, if our students can read, write, and discuss local society and culture, politics and policies, family life and community issues, environment and occupations—at the level that they are interested and able to engage—then they will learn language quite effectively. More importantly, they can also use these phenomena as a source of ideas, metaphors, perspectives, and professional conversations in the future [Also see Bal Krishna Sharma and Prem Phyak's [entry on critical literacy](#) in the local context].

Very often, we focus on how much our students lack “English language proficiency.” But if we look closer, we can easily realize that whenever they communicate about issues of their own lives and societies, their competency instantly shoots up—even as their accent lingers, their syntax remains shaky as they grow up. Indeed, this is true of our teachers' own language proficiency and scholarly conversation as well. When the contents of our teaching/learning are our own life-stories and social realities, we automatically sound much more competent and capable—for if we do not know what we want to read/write and speak about, our proficiency in language itself will remain to be of little significance [You can refer to [Shyam Sharma's blog post](#) on local linguistic practices as a further reference].

## From What We Don't Have to What We Do (Well)

One question that we often hear from teachers in various workshops and conferences in Nepal is what method they should use for solving this or that problem of teaching English. Too often, we seem to assume that there must be a recognized method for fixing every problem, a method that is more advanced and powerful than anything that we can develop/improvise ourselves. For example, when students do not speak up in class, we reach for “communicative techniques” like group work and pair work, but we are far less likely to recognize that we've already been using other strategies that would work as well.

Suppose that a teacher has developed the following strategy to promote speaking: she walks into her class with fifty pieces of paper (one each for all students) with five pieces containing the word “lucky.” Then she lets her students find out who is lucky, asking them to either prepare and speak during the same class or come prepared for the next class. Also suppose that this speaking activity involves simply summarizing an essay or retelling a story. Now, does this activity fit into any theory or method? Let us say that it doesn't. Will the teacher feel confident talking about it as a “teaching strategy” in an ELT conversation? Probably not. The first activity could be seen as “putting students on the spot” and the second one may be considered as “regurgitating textbook content” within conventional ELT methods/practices.

Unless we as teachers are confident that different local cultures and contexts validate, as well as necessitate, different pedagogies, we may not find our local practices worth even talking about. When we build that confidence, we will shift the current field of ELT in Nepal from worrying about finding the established method in mainstream ELT discourse toward building and appreciating our own practices that work best in our own context.

More broadly, in our professional conversations, we should legitimize and build on what we already do, rather than focus on what is lacking. Often, this is only a matter of looking at our own work a little differently. Imagine a conference where a bunch of us as ELT scholars have gathered to discuss the theme of “ELT in the multilingual/multicultural context of Nepal.” Then imagine that we take turns at the microphone to lament the lack of “policy” about multiculturalism and multilingualism in Nepal. Say that no one challenges the assumption that “policy” doesn't (or shouldn't) only mean what is written on paper, formally adopted by some authority, implemented in a top-down manner, etc. Also suppose that the expert invited from abroad makes a great PowerPoint presentation, highlighting some good theories and perspectives but not really touching on multilingual and multicultural social realities like we have in Nepal.

Now, think about it this way. What is it—if it is not “policy”—that teachers in some schools punish (often corporally) their students when they speak their home languages? What is it when our district education officers quietly, informally encourage community schools under their supervision to switch to English medium in order to retain students and save the schools? What about the whole society's understanding that English medium is a good enough reason to determine quality of schools? None of the above are formal and recognized, governmental or institutionally implemented policies. But they are “policies”. Some are tantamount to institutional policies, others are socially established practices and

expectations, and yet others are individual preferences. The lack of explicitly formal, documented, and top down policies doesn't mean that there are no policies at all.

So, the scholars in our imaginary conference could be talking about a lot of things instead of repeating that there are "no policies." Simply adopting an established, mainstream definition and theory of the key terms can deflect our focus from the real situation and turn reality itself into a gigantic blind spot instead of being the subject matter! Hence, a lot could be done by adopting the right perspectives.

### **Conclusion: Building Critical Mass**

In this brief post, we have argued for adopting a bottom-up approach not only for promoting our students' English language abilities but also for enhancing teachers' own confidence in their practices and, from those practices, local scholarship. Teachers should not be passive recipients of knowledge about grand theories; rather, they should be "change agents."

We are not thinking about "where to start" because our point is that we already have thousands of starting points: we just need to recognize and validate them. More and more of our colleagues across the country need to just come forward and share their ideas. There are an increasing number of ways for doing so: increased numbers of workshops and training events; local, regional, and national conferences; professional events abroad; opportunities to start local and national newsletters and magazines using alternative modes of publication like blogs and wikis; promoting personal blogs and podcasts that teachers may already be doing; and so on. This process, we believe, will help the community of Nepalese English teachers build a critical mass to transform ELT profession from the ground up.

As the current Choutari team completes their first year and rekindles its energy (including additional, enthusiastic members), we are ever more hopeful that this venue will help our professional conversations shift its focus from gazing at failures and lacks to building on our successes and resourcefulness.

As always, please join the conversation!

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 Posted by Bal Krishna

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## A Journey from Information to Transformation in ELT Professionalism

January 1, 2014

Bal Ram Adhikari

When we think about the beginning of a new year, we're referring to the cycle of seasons changing for that many times on a particular calendar (in this case, the Gregorian calendar). In that sense, the marker of 2014 is a mere social construct. However, we do make milestones with passing years in our collective consciousness. At this blog magazine, as we bid farewell to the year 2013 and welcome the year 2014, we hope to invite many more of our professional colleagues under the shade of a tree that is growing taller and bigger and its platform widening farther. We invite you to a platform where we will strive to connect the global and local realities in ELT, to bring about positive changes in ourselves and in our field! As we make this leap, I would like to relate Choutari's vision with relevant scholarship in our field.

Expressing his discontent with the conventional trend of Applied Linguistics and thus appealing for transformation in the field, Pennycook (2004) proposed four types of responsibility on the part of the Applied Linguistic practitioners. They are ethical, political, intellectual, and social and cultural. In the paper entitled *Restructuring Applied Linguistics for the Welfare of the Society* (2012), we (Sajan Kumar and I) proposed the addition of *the creative responsibility* to Pennycook's list. To escape these responsibilities is to fall into the trap of academic hypocrisies is the crux of Pennycook's argument. The appealing element in Pennycook's argument is his call for the transformation in the field without which one cannot fulfill the above mentioned professional responsibilities. We, teachers are supposed to bear all of these responsibilities and also many more. This calls for transformation, probably the most sought for and cherished concept in all fields, variously known as *energy and transformation* (Krishnamurti, 1972), *quantum leap* (Osho, 2001) in the field of philosophy, *paradigm shift* (Kuhn, 1962), *New Physics* (Capra, 1975) in the field of science. Likewise, the field of language pedagogy is replete with such terms as *the postmethod condition* (Kumaravadivelu, 1994), *innovation* (Markeee, 1997), *culture specific-pedagogy* and so on to mean transformation. Whatever the terms employed, the essence underlying them is the call for revisiting the field in question and showing a live response to everyday practice in order to bring out the positive change. I'd like to relate the thread of transformation to Nepalese ELT and to extend the thread to the long-term goal of our Choutari.

*Our goal is transformation.* The appeal for transformation lies at the heart of all post-realities (i.e. poststructuralism, postmodernism, postcolonialism, postcommunism, postmethod pedagogy and so on). I believe that the craving for transformation in various academic disciplines has its origin in the notion of the paradigm shift as hypothesized by American philosopher and historian of science Thomas S. Kuhn in his seminal work *The Structures of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), and the Derridan notion of deconstruction (1967). The post-realities bubbled to the surface most vigorously in the 1990s. We can speculate on a multitude of causes. I leave them untouched here for the constraint of the space and the nature of this writing. However, I cannot help mentioning the dismantling of Berlin Wall on 9th of November, 1989, and the collapse of the USSR in 1991. These two

vital political events opened the window to the free world, “one where every human being would be free to realize his or her potential” (Friedman, 2006, p. 607). These events were coincided with the end of the Panchayat era resulting in the re-establishment of democracy in Nepal in 1990. English language teaching as a globally booming profession could not remain untouched from these changes and new realities in academic and political fields at home and abroad. The 1990s is also remarkable for the booming of ‘the dot.com market’, to use Friedman’s term, that revolutionized the field of ELT in many respects. The field of ELT was in a desperate search for alternatives in its theories, principles, methodologies, resources and assessment. Such a search is evident in Pennycook’s (1990) *Towards a critical applied linguistics for the 1990s*, Phillipson’s (1992) *Linguistic imperialism*, Kumaravadivelu’s (1994) *Postmethod condition*, to mention only a few. These post-thoughts entered the English teachers’ courses. The hope was to bring about transformation in the existing theory and practice. The existing ELT courses in Nepal too were restructured to introduce these critical and alternative perspectives to Nepalese English teaching. Transformation in the profession echoed in the academic air blowing within and across the Tribhuvan University premises. The courses and coursebooks appeared bearing such transformation-loaded titles as *New Generation English*, *Expanding Horizons in English*, *Advanced ELT*, *New Directions in Applied Linguistics*, *New Paradigm*, *Reading Beyond the Borders*, *Across Languages and Cultures* and many others. Some changes in the perspective on the profession are hazily perceptible in the distance. However, to believe that transformation would be on the way on its own after introducing recent information available in the field is but our naivety. There can be no quantum leap from information to transformation. The journey is long and on the way lie knowledge, wisdom and discretion, and application.

Though related, *information and knowledge* are not identical. Information is just an object that can be collected from multiple sources. In our case, we are working with borrowed information from ELT books and articles produced in different contexts and for different purposes. No harm is there in the accumulation of information. Access to information is prerequisite for knowledge. However, such borrowed information has to be balanced against the information that has emerged from the regional/national and local experiences. All courses prescribed to prospective teachers in Nepal are flooded with the imported information devoid of local contexts. Courses like *English Grammar for Teachers*, i.e. a course on pedagogical grammar for English teachers, contain no trace of anything from the Nepalese context. It gives the impression that Tribhuvan University in its many decades of teaching English has not yet produced any expertise in the field of pedagogical grammar. Or, it can also suggest that whatever the teacher educators have produced out of their decades of teaching experience and years of research in the field is either ignored or does not deserve to be transferred to the next generation. Several embarrassing examples can be put forward in the case of other courses too.

Most teacher educators have hardly produced any knowledge to communicate their experience and expertise. They seem to be contented with the accumulation of information from the ‘authentic sources’ and many professors have earned their professorships and wasted their students lives, a sad fact I’d call it, by confining themselves to the information stage. Information is only a raw material for knowledge and the process of knowing. It’s the means not the goal. Its function is to inform the seeker of something. Information is not



experiential nor is it truly existential. It is only a map for the journey, not the journey itself. Unless the seeker embarks on the journey, s/he is in no way to 'know' the actual path and in no way to feel the pain and pleasure of journey. Information becomes knowledge only when it enters the conscious realm of the subject (knower/seeker and doer). My being in the university as a student for one decade and as a teacher educator for seven years as well, and my formal/ information discourse with the scholars give me the impression that many of the university teachers are swayed by the false notion that the accumulation of a wealth of information will necessarily lead them to transformation i.e. the goal desired or the destination aimed at. The Choutari team is and should be aware of this misconception. However, we are not denying the value of information collection and generation. For this, the two types of information are made available at this platform: information generated by the practitioners, and information that we signpost the readers via *the resources of the month*. Our prime focus is on the generation of information rooted in our existential and experiential zones. The Choutari has served as an ever-flattening platform for the signposting and accumulation of information on teaching and learning English at home and around the globe. A word of warning, never should we be contented with the information available in the Tree that stands high at the centre of the Choutari. The visitors to this platform have to climb the Tree itself to taste and test the information according to their desires and needs. The information that we have produced at and via this platform is likely to turn into knowledge only when it is humanized, only when it enters the experiential and existential zones of the seeker.

Knowledge functions in the realm of logic. Logic is *syntax* and the most preferred property in grammatical and mathematical analysis. Each language classroom has its own rhetoric and silence too. The rhetoric of the classroom often struggles to move away from the syntax imposed from the ready-made methods, techniques, and conventional expectations of experts or supervisors. Thus I think it would be naïve of us to expect the teachers to stick to certain methods, techniques, and the steps mentioned in their lesson plans and follow them mechanically. It is because of this, many well-documented lesson plans or well-articulated methods fail in the ELT classrooms. The undue inclination to logic might mar creativity and liberty in the teaching learning process. Logic can be cunning. It can prove something theoretically sound and appealing which might be pragmatically harmful. The taboo of the mother tongue use in English classes as promoted by private schools in Nepal can be a case in point. Practically, the strategic use of the mother tongue or the use of translation as one of the several techniques in the English class has more benefits than harms. Communicative competence is another myth that has been 'Holy Writ' for we information-collecting 'intellectuals'. We are hardly aware of the fact that all the models of communicative competence proposed so far suffer the poverty of knowledge component (Adhikari, 2013). Hence, the Choutari aims at awakening the ELT practitioners to such theoretical taboos and myths that have stood as barriers to successful teaching in their specific contexts. We want them to experiment with their own strategies and share their experience with their fellow beings. Failure of certain methods or techniques borrowed from outside does not mean that we have failed. This means now we need to turn inward for our own sight which we call insight and intuition. It means it is also the time to "move from intellect to intuition, from the head to the heart" (Osho, 2001, p. 98) in our teaching.

The Choutari platform welcomes informal writing, spontaneous and 'non-academic writing' from ELT practitioners, for we value intuition and insight of those who are directly facing challenges in the actual field of ELT. When *out-tuition* (teaching from outside) fails, we need to turn to *intuition*. The mystic teacher Osho, once university professor of philosophy, has brilliantly put it as " You know the word *tuition*– tuition comes from outside, somebody teaches you, the tutor. *Intuition* means something that arises within your being; it is your potential, that's why it is called *intuition* (2001, p.13). Learning by intuition is a lifelong process. It's integral to our professional development too. Intuition ruptures the body of knowledge that we have accumulated in the formal setting and paves a way to the process of knowing. The Choutari as always welcomes the insights from the practitioners and share their insights with each other. However, someone's intuition is mere information when it is communicated with others. We can inform others of our intuition but cannot transfer and infuse into them. Intuition is all experiential and existential at the individual level. It calls for self-reflection, inward journey in our professional life and also the ability to distance our mind from the pile of information gathered from multiple sources. The fusion of knowledge with intuition and insight bears the flower of wisdom and discretion. Then only we can go for application.

I believe that such a theoretically informed and intuitively aware application of theories, methods, techniques and activities might bring about transformation in our professional life. This journey from information to transformation, though looks a seemingly longer one, might usher us in the landscape of post-method pedagogy as envisioned by Kumaravadivelu.

In passing,

*Let the branches of the bodhi tree*

*Planted at heart of NELTA Choutari*

*Spread farther and wider, and rise higher and higher*

*Let all the wayfarers of ELT come and rest*

*Under its cool canopy with novel zeal and vigor.*

*May they move from the mere accumulation of information*

*To the higher goal of transformation.*

Happy New Year, 2014

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 Posted by Shyam Sharma

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## **Quick Survey with Choutari Audience**

January 1, 2014

**Compiled and Edited by Ushakiran Wagle and Lal Bahadur Rana**

The value of a venue like this lies in the conversation that follows the publication of the community's ideas. Just imagine that no one responds to what we publish! Fortunately for us, in the last one year, we have had a lot of new conversation, and we hope it will keep coming.

As the current team enters its second year, we are aiming to further increase the amount of discussions among our readers and contributors. We are also grateful to members of the community who have read the blog but didn't find the chance to leave comments—hoping that more of us will be able to join the conversation this year.

Here are some excerpts of the brief survey among some of the most active commenters:

### **1. When and how did you come to learn about the blog? What is your impression of it?**

Our readers learnt about the blog from different sources. Jeevan Karki came to know about NeltaChoutari two years ago while googling in course of doing his assignment of M. Phil, while Sagun Shrestha knew about it through his friends and later learnt more about it in NELTA conference in 2011. Like Sagun, Rajan Kandel came to know through his colleagues at Surkhet Campus (Education) and NELTA Surkhet few years ago. However, Jyoti Tiwari learnt about this blog in 2010 from her teacher Sajjan Karn during a two day training of NELTA in Birgunj. Samjhana Pradhan, unlike others in the list, said, “I read about it in the Kathmandu Post in 2009. Later, she learnt more about the blog at a NELTA Conference. She “found the blog not only impressive but also its team so energetic and informative.” We are amazed by how far and wide a humble blog (which started as a conversation among a few ELT scholars) is known now, and we are truly grateful to all those who promote it. Without the word of mouth promotion by one colleague to others, we wouldn’t become such a great community with so much value.

### **2. Can you share one or two benefits of reading Choutari blog entries? What particular post or what kinds of materials have you liked most so far?**

In response to this question, our respondents said that they learnt practical and innovative ideas of teaching English. For instance, Jeevan Karki said, “I learnt straightforward ideas rather than abstract ones...very practical experiences.” Similarly, Sagun Shrestha stated:

I learnt some activities of teaching creative writing from Alan Maley’s articles ‘Creative writing for students and teachers: some practical ideas’ and ‘Creative writing for students and teachers.’ I liked and like the reflective articles and the articles which give us innovative and practical ideas in language teaching.

Rajan Kandel said that he liked best “the experiences of the colleagues. I liked them.” Jyoti Tiwari responded to this question as follows:

Frankly speaking I liked all the post of Choutari because all posts are directly or indirectly relevant to teaching, teaching techniques and Education and also that are the experience of the professionals. If I have to name a post that I liked most I would like to name “Creative Writing for Students and Teachers: Some Practical Ideas” by Alan Maley because I find this article helpful for me. Before reading this article I was so confused about how to teach poems in the classroom but when I read this I feel relaxed and took that easy to teach poems to the new learners.

Samjhana Pradhan, another top commenter had a similar response:

We receive updates on ELT. It is good to share and exchange ideas with colleagues in the discussion forum. I like to read articles related to teacher development, teaching techniques and multilingualism.

Thus, most of the respondents said that they found reflective and experience-based blog entries, based on the actual challenges teachers or teacher educator had faced, to be very useful for them. Some of them also expressed their wish to read posts on teacher development and multilingualism.

### 3. Please share one or more suggestions for us to further improve the venue. What kinds of materials would you like to see added in Choutari? Are there any other areas of improvement?

The suggestions provided by the participants during our survey are very substantial. For example, Jeevan Karki suggested that it would be “better if [the blog] proceeded towards internationalization” –perhaps meaning that we should try to make global connections and draw on scholarship from outside. Sagun Shrestha did not make any suggestion but rather opined that Choutari is making good progress: “There is nothing to say right now. Things are getting better.”

Rajan Kandel suggested that we should be more

inclusive and try to reach to those who think you are there for them. Get them to publish through you. Encourage them and inform the writers to improve their articles for the next issues and not just say sorry for the issue.

Some participants provided us more specific comments. Samjhana Pradhan pointed out a weakness: “I have always enjoyed reading articles in the blog. However, there were a number of spelling errors in the blog entries particularly this month. So this should be avoided.”

The most striking and useful comment was given by Jyoti Tiwari:

In my view female writer should be encouraged too for the contribute some articles and share their experience regarding teaching and learning activities.

This is an issue with which Choutari team has struggled from the very beginning. We have tried our best to invite female colleagues to join us, and we haven’t always succeeded. We urge our colleagues to help us correct the imbalance; we want to develop Choutari as a platform that represents the gender balance in the real world.

All in all, we were humbled by the responses, critiques, and suggestions of our readers. With this kind of support from our readers, we hope to be able to serve you and invite you to increasingly better conversations in the year–and years–to come.

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 Posted by praveenkumaryadava

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## Impact of NeltaChoutari on Nepalese ELT

January 1, 2014

When NeltaChoutari was started five years ago, we gave it the tagline: “Nepalese ELT Practitioners meet the world”. As we make the fifth year’s milestone, we greet our readers with the voices of our readers. We present the voices of our colleagues who have read and joined the conversation on Choutari, and thereby translated knowledge, skills and resources from the blog to their workplaces and other venues of professional development. Through NeltaChoutari, Nepalese ELT practitioners have not only met the world but also grown together promoting professional conversation and building local scholarship in line with the vision of NELTA. For this post, **Ashok Raj Khati**, one of our regular contributors, talked to five audience members (3 from outside Kathmandu valley and 2 from Kathmandu University) and collected these voices that largely represent the impact of NeltaChoutari on Nepalese ELT.

“

I have been going through NELTA Choutari for three years. I am impressed with the interviews of senior professors of TU, article on postmodernism in English language teaching by Prof. Govinda Raj Bhattarai. I am equally benefitted from many reflections, practical ideas, for instance, by Umes Shrestha, sharing of new trends such as critical thinking in EFL classroom. NELTA Choutari has been full of rich resources, which bring recent trends in EFL teaching, and it has been directly useful in the classroom for EFL teachers in Nepal.

**Kishor Parajuli**, NELTA secretary, Makawanpur

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I started reading Choutari since its inception. I have made the copies of almost all issues in word format in my computer so that I could read them offline and also during loadshedding hours. I am very much impressed by the blog post on "Growing Together with NELTA" by Shyam Sharma posted in 2012. NELTA Choutari has made me feel confident and enriched as it often brings various ELT related experiences and practices from around the globe and home. It is only the forum which is prominently instrumental for professional development of EFL teachers like me in rural areas.

**Narendra Singh Dhimi** from Khimti Project School, Kirne, Dolkha

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I heard about NELTA Choutari some three years before I joined KU for my Masters degree. I never miss to browse its monthly issues as they contain scholarly articles and write-ups related to ELT, that are really useful for students like me. Many articles written by my teachers and friends have encouraged me too, to write. So this is a very useful blog for sharing and publishing our works and to communicate with other on those topics through comments.

**Manita Karki** from Kathmandu University

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I came to know about NELTA Choutari in a program in 2010 in Kathmandu for the first time. Since then I rarely miss to browse through this blog. I always download the articles in my computer to read in free time. It has significantly contributed in the field of ELT in Nepal. It has helped me in academic writing; it has provided a lot of information to cope with the courses I facilitate at B. Ed level. Furthermore, it generates academic discussions on various emerging issues of English language education in Nepal.

**Jagadish Paudel**, Dadeldhura Shiksha Campus, Dadeldhura

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I started reading NELTA Choutari recently when I was enrolled as a student at Kathmandu University. I utilize the articles of this blog as references to prepare paper for my courses in M Phil. I find that there are less research based articles, views are highly scattered, personal views are prioritized but the blog is highly practical and useful for EFL practitioners of Nepal.

**Rajan Poudel** from Kathmandu University

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 Posted by praveenkumaryadava

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## 2013: A Reflection about Choutari

January 1, 2014

**Praveen Kumar Yadav**

What happens when a whole new generation of farmers who have the ability to meet in the village square to discuss whole new types of crops, agricultural methods, and markets for their harvest? They meet at the local Choutari. They find or create new intersections on the way to one another's fields, villages, and towns—and those intersections can be called new choutaris. The blogzine 'Nelta Choutari' (Choutari for short) is just one possibility among many that could emerge as the world becomes more connected, and as our community gives rise to more productive and active new scholars. This Choutari came into existence when a group of ELT scholars found a way (called blogging) to talk to one another, share their ideas with the community, and ultimately turn to the community to join the conversation. After they ran the conversations for four years, they asked a new group of enthusiastic colleagues one year ago, and that group (the current team) has had wonderful opportunities to continue that project by sharing, creating, and updating professional knowledge in our community.

The journey of Choutari in the editorship of the current team for the first year was a wonderful experience. As young and enthusiastic members, we were so excited to take over the responsibilities of running the blog. At the same time, we took some time to develop confidence in subject matters and technical skills and community engagement.

We are proud to be a team of scholars from diverse background and with diverse expertise (See the introduction compiled by Shyam Sharma in January 2013). We are even more excited because a few new members have joined us at the start of our second year. It has been a tradition of Choutari to invite those who have actively contributed to the professional conversation to start directly contributing their ideas. This year, we are excited to have Umes Shrestha, Uttam Gaulee, Santona Neupane, Laxmi Prasad Ojha, Jeevan Karki, Ashok Raj Khati, and Sagun Shrestha join us. A new colleague, Santona Neupane will also be assisting us in the coming months.

Everyone in the team has their own interesting stories in connection with Choutari. I would like to share how I came to know about this wonderful venue. While I was studying masters' degree in ELT in Birgunj outside Kathmandu valley, I was more interested to learn about technology and its integration into pedagogy. To quench the thirst of my learning and passion for engaging myself in collaborative projects, my teacher Sajan Karn, one of the founding members of Choutari introduced me to Choutari. The more I read and contributed to the blog, the more interests along with passion I grew and finally I delved into this. My connection with Choutari and passion to get involved in ongoing conversation not only qualified me for joining the current editorial team but also enabled me to pick this blog as a case for my Masters' thesis as a means of professional development in Nepalese ELT, which is the first thesis in Nepal focusing on a professional blog.

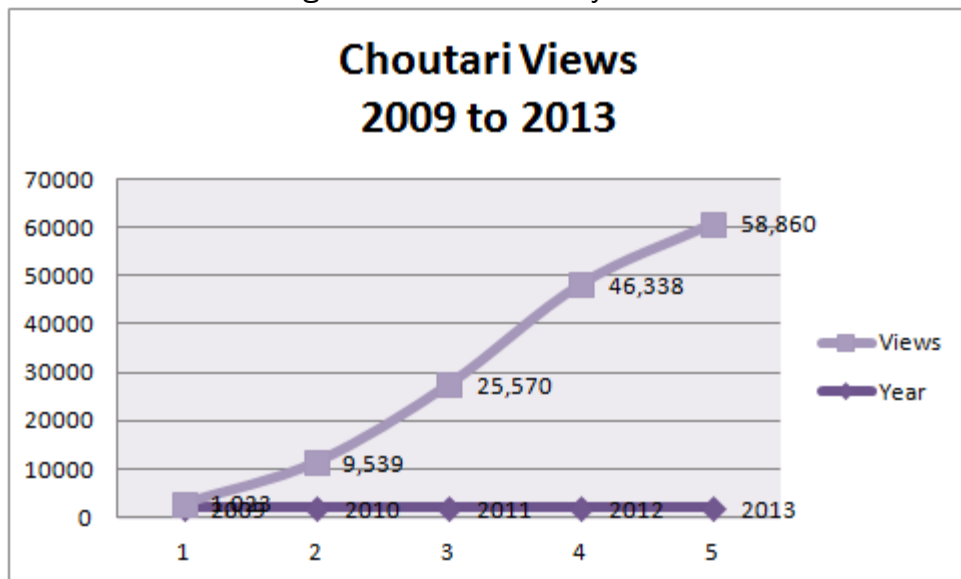
Most of the issues in 2013 leaned toward being special issues. After the joint venture of the old and new teams produced the special/anniversary issue in January, we focused



on seeking a theory-practice interface in Nepalese ELT in February, ; March was a conference special; April issue advocated for the integration of creative writing in ELT; May issue mainly focused on teacher's perspectives on scholarly ideas; June issue stretched from ELT practitioners' reflection on their achievement to action research; and July issue featured topics on local pedagogies especially in multilingual settings. Likewise, August issue focused on teachers' narratives; the entries in September added to Choutari's ongoing conversations about language teaching and learning critically; October issue again specialised on some practical aspects of ELT with creating writing as a focus, November issue explored creativity in young learners and finally we wrapped up the year with a diverse issue addressing multiple entries under diverse theme and thus making the December issue special among specials.

### Choutari in Numbers

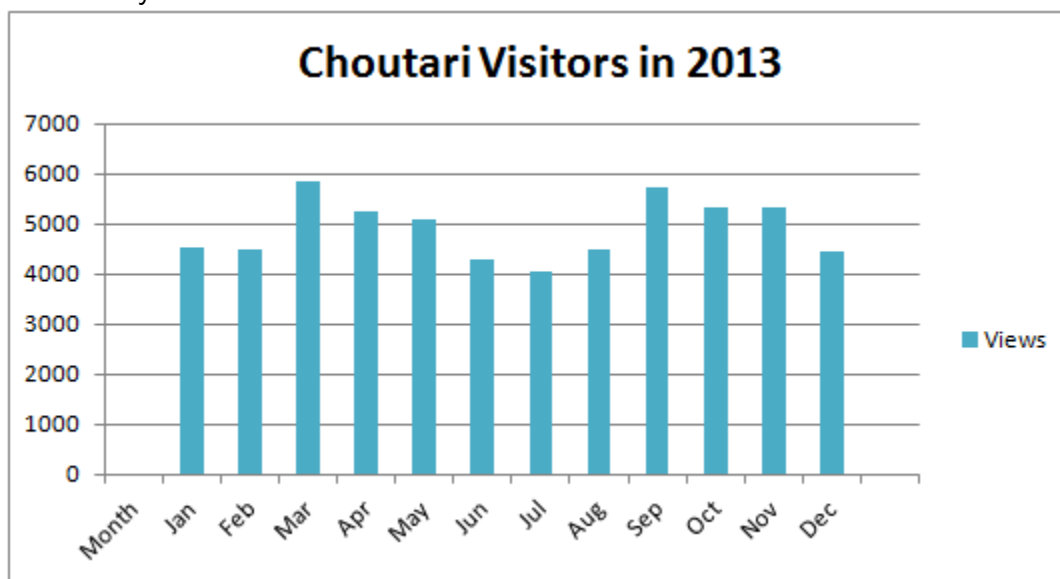
Next, I would like to share some interesting numbers in the tradition of thanking the community by indicating that there is power in numbers! First, here is the big picture of readers' visit to the blog from the entire five years of Choutari.



The above statistics clearly shows that the number of readers visiting Choutari is constantly increasing year after year from its inception in 2009. What is most remarkable and pleasant is the fact that number of views has increased more than double in the last two years.

Let me be specific over the statistics of the Chouatri visitors during the new team's first year responsibility of running the blog. Here is the graph which shows the number of visitors in

months over the year



2013.

While we had around five thousand visitors every month. We had significantly larger number of visitors in March and September. While March could be explained by the being the conference issue, we couldn't explain the peak of September. Could it be due to the festive occasion when readers had more time to read?

### Top five most viewed blog entries in 2013

The blog entry 'T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"' contributed by Motikala Subba Dewan is on the top of the list. Dewan's piece of writing targeted to the bachelor level students of English in Nepal gives a brief glimpse about T.S. Eliot and his poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", a prescribed poem in major English BA course. Similarly, Practice Teaching: A Reflection by Ganga Ram Gautam and The Role of Local Culture and Context in English Language Teaching by Mabindra Regmi stand the second and the third respectively in terms of the number of visits. The fourth and the fifth blog entries among the top five most viewed in 2013 include The Process-Genre Approach: Some Ideas for Teaching Writing in Nepal by Madhav Raj Belbase and Teachers as a facilitator by Mukunda Kumar Giri. The highest number of views indicates that the audience are interested in finding such entries in the blog. We find the opportunities for both the contributors and editors to cover the blog posts related to the theme.

### Top five most commented blog entries till 2013

The page 'Join the Conversation' on Choutari has got the highest number of comments. However, the top five most commented blog entries as of its inception to till 2013 include 'Future of our nation is in Students' Quality Circle\*', What-like what-like English?, English and Scientific Research: Some Reflections, NNESTs and Professional Legitimacy: Fighting the Good Fight and Teaching Language Functions as a Broader Concept.

The most often visited/read blog entry of 2013 was [ERROR ANALYSIS – Third Person Singular Subject-Verb Agreement](#) by Umes Shrestha and the most commented was “[NNESTs and Professional Legitimacy: Fighting the Good Fight](#)” by Davi Reis. Meanwhile, the Choutari team carried out a [quick survey](#) from the top five contributors/commenters of last year and the responses upon the survey has been compiled and interestingly presented in this blog entry in the anniversary issue.

Last but not the least, we acknowledge substantial contributions made by our valued readers, commentators, authors/bloggers and well-wishers for their active engagement and participation in the blog. Like the wonderful support in the past, we urge your active participation so that we can make Choutari as more engaging and more productive place in the days to come.

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Also, if you can find a few extra moments, here is [a visually attractive “annual report”](#) sent by WordPress.com to us.

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[Posted by praveenkumaryadava](#)

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