

Nelta Choutari

Nepalese ELT Practitioners Meet the World

- [Home](#)
- [Join the Conversation](#)
- [ELT Resources](#)
- [Mentoring](#)
- [About](#)

WELCOME TO NELTACHOUTARI: FEBRUARY 2014

February 1, 2014

Editorial

Choutari Mentorship for Emerging Writers

Uttam Gaulee

(with Praveen, Santona, and Sagun)

Along with my fellow editors for February, I am honored to greet our Choutari audience with the first issue on behalf of the expanded team of editors (added a new member again this month—see his bio below). When it comes to professional networking and contributing to a network, bigger is better! Let me start by saying that I am excited because I believe that our big new team will serve you even better ELT khurak in the days to come. Thank you for being here!

As you may have noticed, the quality of materials that we have been publishing has (naturally) varied, and this is because we have not yet implemented a rigorous enough peer-review mechanism. To be realistic, we won't implement anything like what conventional journals do—and indeed, we don't want to. A blogzine needs to remain flexible, as well as doable within the limits of the monthly cycles and our volunteer work. However, starting this month, we will be implementing some wonderful new ideas. And we need your support as writers and mentors (if you are able to give a little time to help the Nepalese ELT community).

Just to give you a sense about what happens in Choutari before the sun rises every beginning of the month, both the editors and the respective authors generally engage in a conversation for reviewing and editing process. More than half of the entries published here required not only substantial feedback and comments but also guidance on proper language pitch and cohesion. The team has been providing such supports to the contributors by connecting them with the team members and the experts beyond the team.

The concept of supporting the emerging writers to bring an impact in the long run was further refined when I joined the team and pitched my idea. To put it in another way, behind the monthly issues of the blogzine 'NeltaChoutari' is a great community, and that community is characterized by intellectually invigorating discussions, collaborative work for collecting and producing quality materials, and efforts to support and mentor emerging writers in the Nepalese ELT community. It led to the new initiative Choutari Mentorship Project (CMP), which I would like to formally announce through this editorial. The links to mentor and mentee survey forms are provided at the footnote section of this blog post. Thank you in advance for your response.

The CMP is an attempt to make the process of mentoring more organized, more broad-based, and more productive. From our own experience, we editors have realised that the concept is very powerful and could help support the larger audience toward improving their writing skills (specifically) and engagement in professional conversation through networking (more generally). The project is also an attempt to make visible what goes behind among a friendly and informal group of active and productive scholars. We are directed by a strong belief that having a mentor tremendously increases possibilities of 'growing' as a successful writer. Thus, we are developing a simple mechanism for tapping into the expertise and encouragement of a more experienced colleague for anyone who wants to contribute to Choutari.

Going through the process mentioned above, I along with my fellow editors for February have come up with a variety of good materials for this month. In the light of her own personal upbringing as a female in Nepalese society and then in the academia, Sweta Baniya discusses the social constructions of gender and gender roles. In her post, titled "Gender through Socio-behavioural and Academic Perspective," she presents gender identity through social and intellectual lenses. She also appeals the audience to share their views and thoughts about gender and gender role particularly in the context of ELT and their professions in general.

In the second entry, Using Corpora in English Language Teaching, Hima Rawal argues that using corpora could be one of the most efficient ways to teach language. Inviting English language teachers, textbook writers and researchers to use corpora to add value to their works, she presents some of the most prevalent corpora in the field of ELT, briefly discussing how to use them in the ELT classroom.

Based on the personal experience, the third entry (Storytelling for Learning Language with Fun) by our colleague Santona Neupane argues that we should tap into the power of storytelling to improve and develop language skills and creative thinking while making lessons fun and engaging for our students.

The fourth blog entry contributed by Pramod Kumar Sah is a continuity and response to highly thought-provoking ideas presented by Prem Phyak, Bal Krishna Sharma and Shyam Sharma in the post titled Shifting Focus: Building ELT Practices and Scholarship from the Ground Up written last month. The entry had presented a broad and powerful proposal for reinvention of Nepalese ELT from the ground up. Shah's entry takes their ideas one step further by situating them in the context of classroom, textbooks, and such other specifics of ELT practice in Nepal today.

The fifth entry titled Five Books That 'Changed' My Life is our Choutari colleague Umes Shrestha's unique initiative for Choutari to offer the audience not only a list of inspirational books but also how they contributed in changing someone's life. For the same, Hem Raj Kafle shares with the readers how the five books that he read have shaped his writing and added value to his life and career. It is an insightful account of his personal journey growing as a scholar, a writer, and a critical thinker.

In the final entry, An Access Teacher's Reflection on ELT Training, Mandira Adhikari, a teacher from Microscholarship English Access project implemented by NELTA in partnership with the US

Department of State/US Embassy Kathmandu reflects on a two-day training and how the series of training sessions delivered have been effective for her classroom.

As usual, here is the full list of ELT *khuraks* for the month of February:

1. [Gender through Socio-behavioural and Academic Perspectives](#), by Sweta Baniya
2. [Using Corpora in English Language Teaching](#), by Hima Rawal
3. [Storytelling for Learning Language with Fun](#), by Santona Neupane
4. [Need of Evolution: Continuing the Discourse-to-Practice for Local ELT Practices in Nepal](#), by Pramod Kumar Sah
5. [Five Books That 'Changed' My Life](#), by Hem Raj Kafle
6. [An Access Teacher's Reflection on ELT Training](#), by Mandira Adhikari

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

Last but not the least, I would like to share with our readers that we have welcomed Suman Laudari to our team in the verge of expanding our team. Mr. Laudari is a Hornby Scholar (2012-13) and has recently completed his MA TESOL from Lancaster University, UK. As we all know, he is a talented and enthusiastic ELT scholar who can add more fuel to the fire at Choutari.

Uttam Gaulee

Editor

If you'd like to be a part of the Choutari Mentoring Project, please take the survey(s) below.

Mentors: If you would like to help out other writers, please share a few things about that interest through [this survey](#).

Writers: If you'd like to be connected to experienced mentors for improving your blog posts for Choutari, please let us know a few things through [this survey](#).

Share this:

- [Share](#) | [2 Comments](#) | [Editorial](#) | [Permalink](#)
-  Posted by gauleeuttam
-

Gender through Socio-behavioural and Academic Perspectives

February 1, 2014

Sweta Baniya

In this blog entry, I attempt to present my experience of gender from two different points of view in my life: one through social and behavioral norms while growing up as a girl in my family and society, and another through academic and professional perspectives while learning complex intellectual issues about gender in the university. At the end of the post, I ask readers to share their thoughts about gender and gender role in the context of their profession.

My mother still recalls the discouraging reaction of my family when she gave the birth to me, a daughter, as her first child, at Patan Hospital in Lalitpur one chilly morning in February 1988. She felt bad because everyone including her had expected a son. A few years later, she was, however, compensated by the arrival of my brother in the family. But that did not change the dynamics of how a daughter and son were viewed and treated in the family and society at large. Two different boxes, one for a daughter and another for a son, were created at the time our birth. My being was regarded as a daughter and my brother as a son, and everything in life and society seemed to be determined within these boxes.

The first time I realised myself as feminine was when I received the toys different from my brother's. My brother was given cars and guns while I received teapot set. I played with it pouring hot tea and serving to him; that was my favorite game. I never knew the game I used to play during my childhood would turn out to be my stereotypical gender role today.

My mother always used to say "*Chori manche bhaneko mato ko bhada ho ra chora manche bhaneko tama ko bhada*" (Girls are clay pots and boys are copper pots). The binary comparison of daughters as 'fragile' ceramic products and sons as 'strong' metal ones governed my life and sensitized me about morality. As a girl, it was of utmost importance that I become a good woman without any stains in my character. So, from childhood, I internalized gender primarily in terms of how important character and morality was for a person of a particular gender.

However, when I entered academia and pursued gender studies, my viewpoint for gender which I learned through social and behavioural norms since my childhood got a radical change. When I stumbled into feminism for the first time, I turned into a rebel. I think I acted like a radical feminist until I came across the study of masculinity, which changed my stance again.

My mother's quotation about ceramic pots and girls still deeply influences how I conceptualize and experience my own gender and gender roles in general. But beyond the personal experience, when thinking about gender in the world of the academia, my intellectual comprehension about the specific gender roles, ideas and ideologies of gender all become very complex and dynamic. The definition of Gender, the understanding of it and reaction to it have undergone a constant change. I have started rethinking what shapes one's understanding of gender in terms of personal experience and as well as when one is academically sound, how difficult it is for one to comprehend the issue of gender after having different outlook for it breaking away the stereotypical boundary.

Reading the academic discourse makes me look for a middle ground between the rather discriminatory treatment of girls/women in traditional societies and the more complex academic discourse of gender. Indeed, even in the definition of gender by the World Health Organization, “The word gender is used to describe the characteristics, roles and responsibilities of women and men, boys and girls that are socially constructed.” The definition is elaborated as “Gender is related to how we are perceived and expected to think and act as women and men because of the way society is organized, not because of our biological differences.” Of course, the binary opposition that has been the part of society for ages has its roots very deep and this middle-ground understanding of gender and gender roles in the world. However, it seems necessary to also look at more complex dynamics of gender even in our own society.

If I ask question of gender to a hardcore science student like my brother, he has nothing to answer. But on the other hand, the liberality that is given by social science and the enrichment of my capacity has made me able to think in other, very different ways as well. So, I realize that thinking about gender through academic and theoretical lenses can help us develop a balanced and complex view of gender.

Academic studies of Feminism made me think about the role of women in and beyond my community. In the first stage, Feminism made me think of how marginalize my female community was or how marginalized I was. My birth was firstly gendered as it made many people sad. Secondly the teapot given to me as a toy was my marginalization of my own qualities. Peter Berry in his book “Beginning Theory” defines Feminist Criticism as “the movement was in important ways, literary from the start, in the sense that it realized the significance of the images of women promulgated by literature, and saw it as vital to combat them and question their authority and their coherence” (116). The question the then female feminist critics started with was in academic or in the literary sense; it later went to the personal domains.

The introduction of the book, *Feminisms* says, “Feminist theory is also traditionally characterized by its interdisciplinary –its transgression of the usual subject divides (e.g. literary, historical, philosophical, psychological, anthropological and sociological). A lot of countries including Nepal took the way of transgression. But transgression without an in-depth understanding of the state of female or even feminism is worthless. There were movements and happenings in Nepal and I can interpret those events I could interpret through feminism, for instance, through the issue of property or the issue of citizenship. However, the recent “Occupy Baluwatar” movement that was led by some group of people gave me epiphany again. Those who don’t even know about the rights of female, those who have not understand the sociological, psychological burden of being a female in a country like Nepal were demanding rights for women. That made me think how Feminism could also be turned into a political football for anyone to play their own game. It certainly raised many issues, including the issues of hypocrisy and publicity campaign.

The second stage, when I started learning about the limitations and complexities in Feminist theories, was even more fascinating. I now started asking: Does Feminism speak about both genders? Is the discourse of Masculinity necessary? After I started exploring questions like this, I did not completely agree with many feminist scholars, as feminism seems to have its own limits as well. In particular, many feminists blamed the social structure and the opposite sex

only and rigorously fought for the representation. But the blame-game never became fruitful. The emergence of Masculinity ideology was also purported by the Feminist ideology. As females went on to vie for their rights, males also felt it necessary to maintain their own space.

And thus a space for masculinity emerged out of crisis, as Debby Phillips quotes Kimmel, who said that

These crises usually involve radical questioning of the meaning of masculinity, and they occur during periods of significant ideological, economic, and social tensions. It is during periods of upheaval and changes in social values that “old definitions [of masculinity] no longer work, and new definitions are yet to be firmly established” (405).

Certainly, masculinity needs a redefinition, as scholars of gender suggest. In fact, both Feminism and Masculinity need to undergo timely redefinitions. If academia is to shape one’s perception towards gender, these two domains need to move side by side and the redefinitions must be accepted.

These academic and/or public discourses certainly help us to understand more about gender, but what about personal life, socio-cultural life that first shapes one’s mind? Doesn’t academia and personal life come in contrast while one discourses about the gender keeping knowledge and experience side by side? I think that both academia and personal life shapes one’s comprehension of gender.

The concept of gender depends upon many things, including one’s upbringing, one’s culture, society, and one’s academic study and professional experience. As scholars, we should allow the broader and more complex perspectives and issues about gender to shape our understanding of gender. We should allow different perspectives, as well as our personal and professional experiences, to take us into various levels of thoughts, to inquire and seek the best understanding for ourselves. Through this blog entry, I wanted to share my thought that there is much to be gained if we try to understand gender by viewing our personal space through academic lenses.

As a practitioner of English Language Teaching, what are the issues of gender that you find worth discussing? What are the obstacles for female colleagues in our society and our time? Are there limitations for men as well? How can we address the challenges while cultivating realistic and complex views about gender and gender roles in our professions? I would love to hear the views of Choutari readers.

References

- Barry, P. (2010) *Beginning Theory*. New Delhi. Viva Books Pvt. Ltd.
Phillips, D.A. (2006) *Masculinity, Male Development, Gender and Identity: Modern and Postmodern meanings*. USA: Seattle University.



Sweta Baniya works as a Communication Associate at UN Habitat and is a student of MPHIL, Baniya’s interest lies in writing and expressing herself in words when something touches her deeply or hurts her so much. She also runs her personal blog – www.swetabaniya.wordpress.com

[Share](#) | [Leave a Comment »](#) | [Miscellaneous](#) | [Permalink](#)

Using Corpora in English Language Teaching

February 1, 2014

Hima Rawal

English language teachers throughout the world are always in search of a theory or method of language teaching that helps them resolve all the language teaching problems they face. However, there has never been such a method which can do so because of the varied nature of language teaching situations, unavailability of resources, issues about the relevance and applicability of a method in all contexts. Experts in the ELT field try to come up with some tools that can enhance language teaching to some extent. Corpus based language teaching is one of those convenient ways language teachers have been using because this presents an opportunity to teach authentic and contextualized language usage as a readymade tool. In this post, I present a brief introduction to some of the most prevalent corpora in the field of ELT.

Corpus is a collection of natural data from several different fields from which we can draw the materials for teaching, conducting research and so on. It is “a large, principled collection of naturally occurring texts (written or spoken) stored electronically” Reppen (2010, p. 2). Naturally occurring text means language from “actual language situations, such as friends chatting, meeting, letters, classroom assignments, and books, rather than from surveys, questionnaires, or just made-up language’ (p. 2). It includes both qualitative and quantitative data to draw from.

The most widely used corpus is COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English). It is an online and searchable corpus consisting of 450+ million American English words and is arranged by different fields and registers. We can search the words from different disciplines, compare words, and find out collocations. The words can be searched in terms of time frame, frequency, relevance, alphabetic order and so on. It can be accessed through this [link](#) click and also click [here](#).

Let’s look at some of the examples of how we could use COCA. Once we enter the site, we can see four options of display>>list>>chart>> KWIC (Key Work in Context), and>> compare.

If we choose the list option, type the word we are looking for (e.g. proficiency) and it will show us all the contexts in which the word has been found. The contexts will be exhibited from five different sections: spoken, magazine, fiction, newspaper, and academic language. Since the corpus will show thousands of examples of the word in all the contexts in which it appears, we can limit our search by selecting a specific time frame or a specific area, for example, how the word has been used in the academic field between 2005 and 2009. We can also find out the word with which it collocates the most by finding the words that mostly precede and/or follow it.

If we choose the option ‘compare’ and type two words that we want to compare (e.g. proficiency and achievement), the corpus will exhibit both the words appearing in different contexts from which we can draw a conclusion. Likewise, if we search a word (e. g. validity) through KWIC, we can see the contexts in which it appears (e.g. construct validity, discriminant validity, face validity, predictive validity, convergent validity, concurrent validity, diagnostic validity, consequential validity and so on). These combinations will appear in and/or across sentences.

Including corpus data in textbooks is relatively a new concept; however, we are familiar with the concept in the form of corpus-based ESL and EFL dictionaries like Cambridge Dictionary of American English, Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English, Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, etc. Examples of corpus based textbooks are Basic Vocabulary in Use by McCarthy and O'Dell (2010) and Touchstone by McCarthy, McCarten and Sandiford (2004). Basically, corpora provide ready resources for teachers. They are natural and authentic. They can be used for language learning, teaching and testing purposes. They can also be used for research purposes. Language textbook writers can use the data from corpora to include the teaching materials in the textbooks.

The word lists from the corpora can serve different functions: finding words in terms of frequency; finding content vs function words; finding related word forms (abandoned, abandonment); examining the role of prefixes and suffixes, finding the collocation of words (Reppen, 2010, p. 8) and so on. Some words can have different grammatical roles. The corpora provide us with information about those grammatical roles, the parts of speech and grammatical categories of the words as well. We can also find KWIC (key word in context) through which we get the information about the context in which a particular word is used.

One of the widely used applications of a corpus is to teach academic vocabulary to learners of English as a second or a foreign language. The learners in a particular field need to be familiar with the highly frequent academic words in their field. Teachers can use corpus such as Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List (AWL). It is a compilation of academic words consisting of 3.3 million words representing 570 word families from different genres. Within this corpus, we can search through different subcorpora since the collection is from different academic disciplines. By doing so, one can find out the most frequent academic words used in a particular genre and teach them to the learners to equip them to raise their level of comprehension and production in the respective genre. For example, one of the most frequent academic words found in the list is 'analyse' and this word appears along with all the related words such as "analysed, analyser, analysers, analyses, analyzing, analysis, analyst, analysts, analytic, analytical, analytically, analyzed."

However, the problem with AWL is that it just provides the list of frequent words in an academic field and not the context in which they appear. Similarly, it is self-evident that learning a language also includes formulaic expressions to a great extent. On the basis of corpus research, Martinez and Schmitt (2012) have produced a PHRASal Expressions List (PHRASE List), which consists of 505 most frequently used phrasal expressions functioning as formulaic language. If teachers could select from and teach the expressions in the list, it can help English language learners comprehend naturally occurring conversations and texts.

Another very useful corpus site is Michigan Corpus Linguistics which links the users to different corpora and can be accessed through www.elicorpora.info. Two of the valuable corpus sites it links the users to are MICASE (Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English) and MICUSP (Michigan Corpus of Upper Level Student Papers). MICASE is a free and searchable corpus site which is very helpful for teaching and carrying out research on academic spoken language. MICUSP is a site where we can find papers from different disciplines. We can search the papers focusing on different genres, different types of writing (e.g. argumentative, creative writing, critique/evaluation, proposal, reports, research paper, response paper) or even different parts

of writing (e.g. abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology, conclusion, citation, etc). Along with these two sites, Michigan Corpus Linguistics also includes a corpus of conference presentations.

Similarly, Time Corpus (corpus.byu.edu/time/) is another useful site which is the online corpus of Time Magazine and helps us see how language changes over time. There are three other very useful and user-friendly corpus based concordancing programs: AntConc, MonoConc, and Wordsmith. These programs help us find word frequency lists, concordances, key words and so on. AntConc(www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software.html) and Wordsmith (www.lexically.net/wordsmith/) are free programs while MonoConc (www.athelstan.com/mono.html) is an affordable one.

The use from the websites in most of the corpora is free. The teachers can use them for: selecting and teaching academic words frequently found in authentic use in both written and spoken modes; using the contexts to help learners induce the real application of the English language. Corpora like MICUSP also enhance teacher professional development by providing teachers with the collection of conference presentation samples and valuable guidelines to develop different forms of writing. The data in the corpus can be utilized in devising research tools as well. Therefore, I suggest that English language teachers, textbook writers and researchers use some of these corpus sites, play with them and invest some time to see what small changes can be brought.

References

- Coxhead, A. (2000). A new academic word list. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34, 213-238.
- Martinez, R. and Schmitt, N. (2012). A phrasal expressions list. *Applied Linguistics*, 33(3), 299-320.
- Reppen, R. (2010). *Using corpora in the language classroom*. Cambridge: CUP.



Hima Rawal is currently a Fulbright Scholar doing her masters in TESOL at Michigan State University, Michigan, USA. She is a lecturer at the Department of English Education, Central Campus, T.U. She is a life member of NELTA and editor of the Journal of NELTA.

[Share](#) [3 Comments](#) | [Global thought](#), [Scholarly Article](#), [Technology](#) | [Permalink](#)

Storytelling for Learning Language with Fun

February 1, 2014

Santona Neupane

As teachers, we often ask ourselves, “How can we develop creative thinking of our students? How can we ensure that our lessons are fun making and useful for them?” We, the teachers today always seek to find new ways to help the learners unleash their creativity. In this post, I share with you some thoughts about how we can use storytelling to help our students learn language in effective and enjoyable ways.

When I was a young, my sister used to fascinate me and the rest of the family because she had a very captivating way of unfolding events that kept the audience glued to their seats. I remember getting so engrossed in the story that I fell off the stool. Stories, and creative and effective expression still fascinate me, because stories not only made my childhood fun but they also greatly enhanced my language development. As the old Nepali saying goes, those who can tell good stories are worth adorning with garlands of flowers and . Hearing a story is heartwarming and a storyteller can make the world come alive for the listener. The power of storytelling is attested by sayings like this in many cultures. And as language teachers, we all know that power. When telling stories, speakers develop language skills, as well as build confidence for communicating their ideas.

Storytelling in the Context of Teaching/Learning Language

In the context of learning language, storytelling allows learners to learn and express new ideas, use new vocabulary and grammatical structures, and put such language skills to use within the broader context of events and ideas in the story. Storytelling gives learners the opportunity to use language in a holistic way.

Highlighting how the use of story in language classroom is a powerful tool in the language learning process, Jones (2012) argues that “Once learners get into conversational storytelling, it is an enjoyable experience for both them and the teacher.” There’s no doubt that stories can be fun and also there is more to storytelling than it meets the eye. One has to ensure successful learning of language as well. According to Morgan & Rinvoulcri (2003), successful second language learning is “far more a matter of unconscious acquisition than of conscious, systematic study.” The stories could be such method of unconscious input that can ensure creative output. Stories unconsciously draw a learner towards them. “They capture and hold the imagination of learners; they create empathy as children identify with characters and situations in the stories; they present language in authentic contexts, thus promoting both grammatical and vocabulary development; they facilitate acquisition through multiple repetition (both of the language in the story, and as the story is told over and again)” (Maley, 2008, p. 4).

Hence, storytelling can be a powerful tool for teaching language. Stories also help students to be expressive, imaginative and capable of using language naturally in real context. Telling stories is a natural way of engaging students to communicate complex ideas. Stories when used

in classroom help students practice communication and expression. If we as a teacher can help students love stories, we will pave way for them to be extensive readers in the future.

It is worth noting at this point that storytelling is more than just reading aloud. Actually it is NOT reading out loud. When a story is told live, the teller can engage listeners and can create an intimate bond through his/her voice and eye contact. Another obvious benefit of storytelling over reading aloud is improvisation through the use of mimes, gestures and body language.

What Type of Stories?

It is not enough for us as a language teacher to go to a class with any story. If you plan to tell a story to a class full of eager minds, there are two questions to consider first.

Is this the story I enjoy telling?

Is this the story my students would find entertaining or thought provoking?

The stories that you choose to present in the class should touch you and your students should be able to relate to it the way you relate to it. Your reaction to the story and your enthusiasm can really ignite a desire in your students to be better recipient and eager participants. Choosing a good story is a crucial part of storytelling. Don't tell a story just for the sake of storytelling. Let the story be a part of you. Know your students well and choose a story that might easily be their story.

For my English lesson, one day, I chose a fairly easy story about a tortoise, having a bad day, decides to run away from home. I planned my lesson around it and decided to use this story in two different levels: one primary and another secondary. I chose grade 5 in the primary level and grade 10 in the secondary level. I told the same story to the classes, improvising and detailing the story as per their level. After an initial round of storytelling, I got the students talking about their feelings. I asked them if they could relate to the character and if they have ever in their life felt like running away. All the students responded with "Yes". When I asked them to write down a similar story, I saw them eagerly opening their notebooks and writing energetically. In the story, the main character returns home after learning the value of his family and friends. The story not only helped them in their language learning process, it also helped them to meditate on their lives by relating themselves to.

Stories are everywhere; in fact stories are our way of life. "Stories are central to what it means to be human. The human mind seems to be hardwired for the creation and reception of narratives. It is even true to say that we are the stories that make us up: stories we have heard, we have told, we enact daily" (Maley, 2008, p.4). There are lots of sources of story. We can choose our stories from fairy tales, traditional folklores, culture, proverbs, pictures, newspaper clippings, films, personal anecdotes, rumors, imagination etc.

Who can Benefit?

As a teacher of language, I have found storytelling very helpful. However we should not just limit its use in language classroom. Stories can be used in a math, science and social studies

classes as well. Stories are not limited to kindergarten only but can be useful for secondary classes as well. Stories can be told to any level of learner. Beginners can benefit through it and it will aid their literacy and language learning. Even advanced learners are benefited through storytelling; they can refine their already learnt language skills and polish their ideas. Stories give them opportunity to be creative with what they have already learnt.

Classroom Activities

Storytelling is an effective alternative to traditional language teaching activities. There are a lot of ways through which we can use storytelling in our classroom. As stated by Morgan & Rinvoulcri (2003), storytelling activities range from introspective to interactive, beginner to advance, written to oral, individual to group. Stories can be planned and delivered in such a way that it achieves its objectives. If our objective is to help students with grammar, then we can choose a story with recursive pattern of words and phrases. Our telling can give them exposure to the target language. Apart from grammar, we can focus on vocabulary, intonations and phonetics to help them acquire English language easily and successfully.

Choosing a good story is a crucial part of storytelling. The main part is storytelling itself. Your relation and attitude towards the story matters a lot. Once the story has been delivered you need to plan various activities to help the students contemplate the impact. Group discussion based on various probing question can help the students relate to the story. You can prepare the questions beforehand and have the students talk about it with each other. The questions can range from their reaction to various elements or aspect of the story. If your students are advanced learner you can have them discuss the literary aspect of the story. Have the students paraphrase the story individually and they can even write a reflection on it. Another activity would be to write a similar story on a totally new context.

Dramatizing the story is another method of exploiting stories. Either you dramatize the storytelling itself or have your students retell it in a form of drama. Role playing and role taking helps the students with revision and in doing so they get familiarized with the grammatical, semantic, structural aspect thus unconsciously learning language. Retelling a story is fun and enjoyable. Getting the students to narrate their story in the class often creates a receptive environment in the classroom where more than one student will be willing to share similar experience. Tannen (1984) has stated that one person's narrative may often be taken up by one or more of the listeners who will add similar narratives of their own to create what she refers to as a "story chain".

Apart from storytelling, creating similar stories through parallel writing helps them a lot. Get the students create a story with the help of theme words either individually or in a group. Instead of the teacher telling the story, students can also do the telling. This will help in a successful two way communication in a language classroom while giving an opportunity to the teacher to evaluate the learner.

Using pictures and shapes, together the teachers and students can create a new story to tell. Sometimes we can tell an incomplete story and have the students complete it and tell it. Taking an event from a newspaper clipping and telling it in a form of story can also help the students.

Conclusion

Storytelling, which is an integral part of human life, can be vital in language teaching. Basing the language lessons on stories have creative impact on the students. If we cultivate a love of stories in our students through storytelling, we can help them learn without giving them the monotonous drill and bland role play. Stories add a humanistic element in teaching making it quite effective. Various classroom activities based on stories not just make your lesson comprehensible and useful, it also adds fun to your teaching.

References

Jones, R. (2012). Creating a storytelling classroom for a storytelling world. *English Teaching Forum*, 2-9.

Maley, A. (n.d.). From story literacy to reading literacy. *Literacy in the language classroom*, 4-7.

Morgan, J. & Rinvoulcri, M. (2004). *Once upon a time: Using stories in language classroom*. Cambridge: CUP.

Tannen, D. (1984). *Conversational Style: Analyzing talk among friends*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Wright, A. (n.d.). Creating stories. *Literacy in the language classroom*, 23-34.



Santona Neupane is a scholar pursuing her M. Ed. in ELT at Kathmandu University, School of Education. She is an English teacher in a private school in Kathmandu. She has recently joined the editorial team of Choutari.

Share this:

- [Share](#) | [Leave a Comment »](#) | [Creativity](#), [Miscellaneous](#), [Scholarly Article](#), [Teaching Tips](#) | [Permalink](#)
-

Need of Evolution: Continuing the Discourse-to-Practice for Local ELT Practices in Nepal

February 1, 2014

Pramod Kumar Sah

In countries where English is used as a second or a foreign language, teachers have already started grounding their ELT practices on their locally available resources as well as locally viable methods and approaches of teaching English as a lingua franca language. In Nepal, where English is used as a foreign language, it is evidently urgent that we develop our own ELT practices. In a post written last month's issue In their highly thought-provoking essay, "Shifting Focus: Building ELT Practices and Scholarship from the Ground Up" Prem Phyak, Bal Krishna Sharma and Shyam Sharma have presented a broad and powerful proposal for a reinvention of Nepalese ELT from the ground up. This blog entry takes Phyak, Sharma, and Sharma's ideas one step further by situating them in the context of classroom, textbooks, and such other specifics of ELT practice in Nepal today.

Methodology: Prescription or Formation?

Allow me to first briefly describe my stance on ELT/EFL/ TESOL methodology in Nepalese context today. As Phyak, Sharma and Sharma have indicated in their recent article, I strongly believe that there is an urgent need of realizing own potential in language teaching, rather than seeking for solutions to the different classroom problems from in the ideas and experiences from contexts unlike our own. In this post, I intend to add that the "formation" of ELT methods and resources from the ground up may never happen unless our teachers, as the ultimate practitioners, do not see how they can practically do so. I would like to add some more specifics ways to achieve the goal to the many concrete examples and practical suggestions that the authors have provided in their post.

Since the advent of language learning as an academic discipline, there have been gradual shifts in language teaching methodology from Grammar Translation, to Audiolingualism, and those applied in more recent and well known Communicative Language Teaching. However, ELT practitioners have put forward an array of opinions, arguments and concerns over the issue that which of the suggested methodologies works best in language teaching. But, a variety of factors, such as official language policies, the role of L2 in a distinct speech community, learners' need and their linguistic background, cultural and economical state of the institutions, teachers' background, students' previous linguistic competence, etc. affect the selection of methodology – this is why a single methodology was not effective enough to quench the thirst of language learning of all the time and circumstances.

For me, the most relevant experience is that a method should no longer be a prescription made from a linguist; rather it should be a pattern of activities made by a distinct language teacher accounting for his/her classroom scenario. Moreover, all the methods are best for their corresponding situations, as Prabhu (1990, p.161) states '.....different methods are best for different teaching contexts; that all methods are partially true or valid; and that the notion of

good and bad methods is itself misguided'. In the meantime, it is very significant for a language teacher to remain aware of scientific principles of language learning or acquisition, they are more importantly free to make their own personal methodology based on their distinct context, which Prabhu (1990) calls as teachers' 'sense of plausibility'. It is also worth suggesting that a language teacher needs to choose various activities or techniques from a certain method, not because of the faith in the underlying method but because that is suitable in their own unique contexts.

Thus, I assume, it's high time we should start framing our own method that can best fit in our unique classroom rather than following sets of prescriptions.

Need of Teachers' Authority for Syllabus Design

The reason I focus on teacher-driven syllabus is again based on so-called 'teacher sense of plausibility'. I have been motivated to develop my own personal teaching methodology for my unique class, that requires me to set my own syllabus rather than following syllabus set somewhere else. Put it other way, considering learners' need, cultural background, age group, etc., teachers should be authorized to frame his syllabus against marketed textbooks. Furthermore, prescription of a methodology, syllabus, course, materials, activities, techniques, and an assessment procedure does not support the views, such as every class is unique. The teachers should be authorized to make decision on aforementioned aspects of teaching.

A Dark Practice and Ways out

There are a few dark practices in Nepalese ELT that seem to be in high need of evolution, out of which *Teaching a subject vs. language skills* is one.

Teaching English is merely a subject to pass in the examination in our concern, rather than developing our students' language skills. It might be my overgeneralization but this as a consequence of my teaching experience and observation in some leading educational establishments in Nepal. We rely on 'a' textbook and we teach them page-by-page and finally, test them if they have comprehended what mentioned in the textbook. But, in fact it works for no good. Using textbooks is necessary, but what seems irrelevant is just to interpret what are printed on textbook pages. The situation not only exists in school teaching but has been the same in university level; for example, the General English for B. Ed. under Tribhuvan University has recommended three textbooks; (a) *New Generation in English*, that is a collection of exciting and helpful reading texts including some literary pieces written in Nepali contexts- but, what we do is to render the meaning of the texts in Nepali with near comprehension (that helps for nothing) rather than getting out students to read them extensively to develop reading skills and intensively to do the tasks set; (b) *Exploring Grammar in context*, indeed a good textbook that is based on Hallidayan approach and contains grammar for written and spoken discourse – in this concern as well, we just try to teach them rules of grammar, practice only the exercises and prepare them for examination instead of having them explore meaning of the grammatical items for natural communication; and (c) *Academic vocabulary*, at this point, we just teach them the meaning of words in isolation and the students hardly keep those in their head – the best thing we can do is to teach them 'lexical chunks' in contexts with the help of 'corpus' grounding our teaching on Michel Lewis 'Lexical Approach', so the students will be able to make use of

those vocabulary in their real academic writing. Additionally, this gap is the consequence of our examination system, especially question pattern that contains questions from the textbook exercises itself without a word alteration, normally. The textbooks are to be used as reference, rather than a subject to have students' mastery over. Teaching English means teaching language skills that help students expose themselves in English speech community. Moreover, as Phyak, Sharma and Sharma show, there is an urgent need to realize our own potential and bring our local resources to support our students develop their language skills rather than grounding our teaching on mere textbooks.

Making Our Own Ground

Firstly, as Phyak, Sharma and Sharma emphasize, our focus has to be on practice instead of discussing the problems; teaches should build confidence in themselves and use approaches and resources that are readily available to them.

Secondly, where there are potential teachers equipped with the knowledge of different paradigms in our society, we should no longer be reading literature and theory developed in different contexts somewhere else in the world with an aim of implementing those theories and methods in our classrooms—even though ideas from anywhere are good for expanding our knowledge. Instead, we must frame a plot of our own stories, to shape our own educational future.

Thirdly, to develop and implement any approaches, methods, and syllabus, we need to figure out what we can do even within the material and technological limitations in our classroom. Thus, instead of being demotivated, we can attempt to let the things go with what available to us in a best way. In Phyak, Sharma and Sharma's words, we have to shift our belief from what we do not have to what we can do well and with what we do have.

Conclusion

To say in a nutshell, since English is no longer the only language of English, we have freedom to teach and learn it in ways that fit our needs and interests, and it is high time we stopped searching for methods originated in some other situations. It is time that we explore and understand our own teaching scenarios in order to form whatever methods and whatever blends of methods we find good for us. For this to happen, it is necessary to authorize our teachers and allow them to develop their own syllabi and their own materials, however impossible or difficult it may seem at first. Without more independence for our teachers, it may never be easier for teachers to teach language skills, instead of textbooks. And if we are to move beyond complaining about what we do not have and what we cannot do, we must start using readily available resources as well as use available opportunities for teaching language as it is used in life and work, instead of just whatever the textbooks includes.

Pramod Kumar Sah is an M. Ed. in English from Tribhuvan University, Nepal. He is currently pursuing his MA in TESOL with Applied Linguistics at University of Central Lancashire, UK.



[Share](#) [Leave a Comment »](#) | [Critical Pedagogy](#), [Miscellaneous](#), [Native Perspective](#) | [Permalink](#)

Five Books That 'Changed' My Life

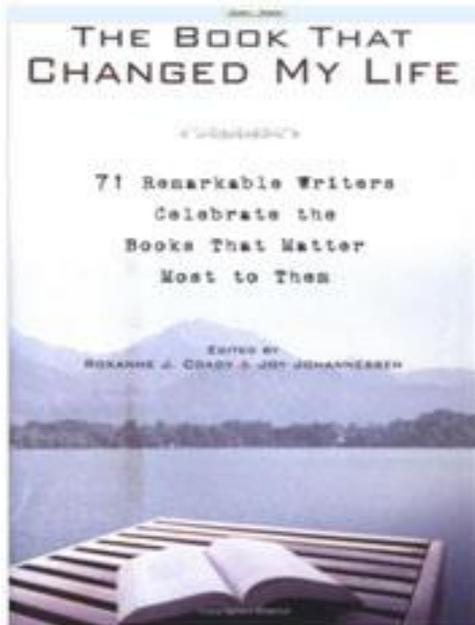
February 1, 2014

Hem Raj Kafle

'Change' is not my word in the title above, but I agree to use it. Do books change our lives? Someone said it is the reader who has the potential to change; the book only triggers that potential. And one who does not have that potential does not respond to the trigger. I agree to this, too.

But I am not here to present a thorough appreciation of 'five classics'. Not that I avoid reading classics, but I am willing to write about those books that have told me their actual worth. Each of the five books came to me almost 'out of nowhere' and left a lasting message. Not that any of them should ever satisfy your intellectual need if you someday decide to read. I write here simply because I have deemed them contributory to my own growth as a teacher. An English teacher.

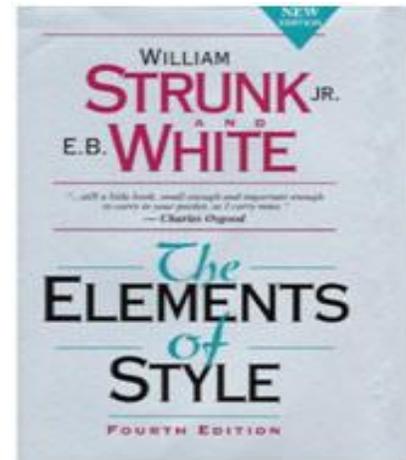
I was delighted when the Choutari Team asked me to write on five books that 'changed' my life. I decided to speak up: I have already read a book with the same title and loved it so much. It is *The Book That Changed My Life* (2006) by Roxanne J Coady and Joy Johannessen. A book about books, and about how books change one's life – I had loved this idea long ago. *The Book* indeed was a reward, such as Coady herself would like to regard as a gift "from heaven".



I bought it in the summer of 2008 at Books and Books, Coral Gables, Florida, only as a memento of my US visit. And, because it was a casual pick, my interest in it turned into epiphany as I read through the short essays inside. This was an opportunity to peek into seventy one writers' celebration of "the books that matter most to them." These seventy one people gave credit to certain books and their writers as their life's important change agents. So, the writers' appreciation of their favourites helped confirm that none of my previous and recent cravings for 'good books' were without meaning. Anyone, even you, will subscribe to Coady's prefatory justification for publishing this book, so will I.

Reading is a way to live more lives, to experience more worlds, to meet people we care about and want to know more about, to understand others and develop a compassion for what they confront and endure. It is a way to learn how to knit or build a house or solve an equation, a way to be moved to laughter and wonder and to learn how to live.

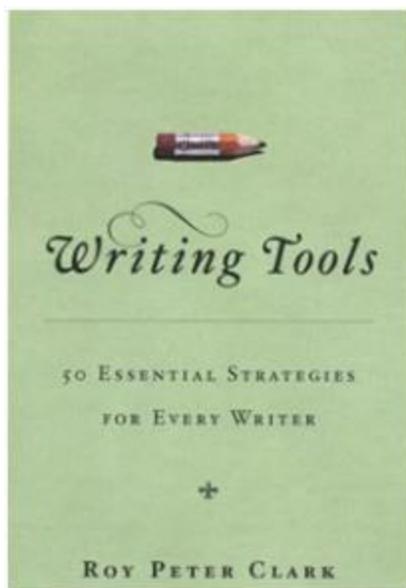
One book that has made great sense to me as a teacher of English is *The Elements of Style*, the tiny work of William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White. You may wonder why such commonplace as 'elements of style' would strike anyone who boasts of degrees in English and years of teaching in a reputed University's central department. But I realized, after having gone through the authors' terse admonitions against verbosity and carelessness, that degrees and years of teaching do not make one a writer and a teacher of effective communication. The actual prerequisite of being a writer is not only the mastery in grammar and vocabulary, but craftsmanship in stylistic and rhetorical choices.



The Elements offers an extremely concise treatment on style. I have nurtured the following assertion more than anything in life and, of course, for writing in Nepali as well:

Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. This requires not that the writer make all sentences short or avoid all detail and treat subjects only in outline, but that every word tell.

Strunk and White made me aware of the beauty of brevity in writing. Then *Writing Tools* by Roy Peter Clark, a writing instructor at Poynter Institute, Florida, helped polish this awareness. The "50 essential strategies," more as rich illustrations of good and bad samples from various established sources than commonplace imperatives, have best corresponded with my zeal for learning rhetorical styles. Clark taught me writing as an artful yet serious activity and knowledge of grammar a means to shape the artistry of expression.

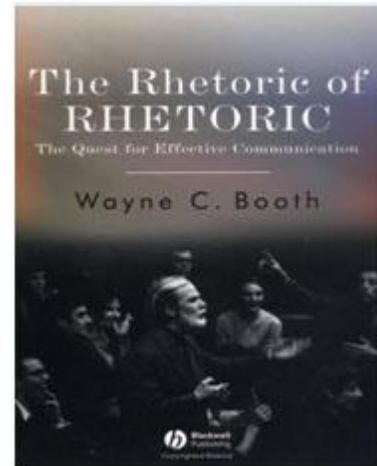


Assuming the role of highly active, playful teacher along the "strategies," Clark encourages every aspiring and established writer to become an entertainer, a performer. He likes to take writing for carpentry, and then has this to say: "You can borrow a writing tool at any time. And here's a secret: Unlike hammers, chisels, and rakes, writing tools never have to be returned. They can be cleaned, sharpened, and passed on."

Clark's metaphors of gold coins, ladder of abstraction, internal cliffhangers, X-ray reading etc. will surely tickle one's sense of sufficiency as a writer and editor. Initially, he makes you skeptic about every sentence you write yourself and read from others. As you move on, because Clark will not allow you to drop midway, you become a better writer, better reader, better editor. Clark follows you directly into your profession. He is with me – in lectures, in instructions, in formal presentations – and now as I write these lines.

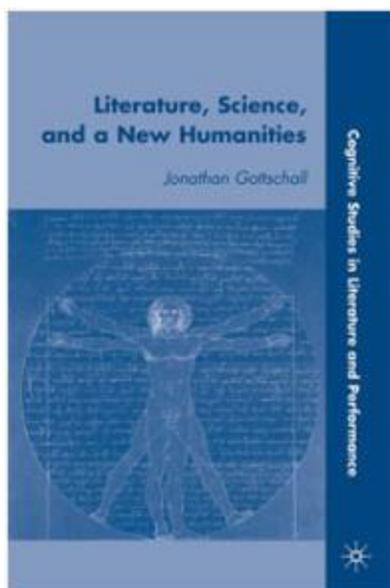
I got Wayne Booth's famous book *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric* at a time I was trying to get clear knack on rhetoric in scholarly, philosophical and practical terms. Booth proved a rescuer, and a guide to the fact that rhetoric is a vastly developed academic discipline way beyond its everyday currency as a signifier of a cheap lie or a political bombast.

Booth observes rhetoric's relevance as much in persuasive communication and study of such communication as in the resolution of conflicts, teaching of science and general upbringing of people. Of special value to me has been his idea of "rhetorology" defined as a "deepest form of listening rhetoric: the systematic probing for 'common ground'", which in other words involves a practice of paying attention to opponent views during a conflict situation.



Booth emphasizes that rhetoric is simply the way we think and communicate in the process of creating a better life, and eliminating slippery situations. So, I believe, after Booth, that "the quality of our lives, moment by moment, depends on the quality of our rhetoric." Isn't it then even more appropriate to say that the kind of political system and social structure we see/experience "depends on the rhetoric of our leaders and our responses to them"? Booth is equally true in his belief that "our children's future depends on how they are taught rhetoric." That is, by us.

Literature, Science and a New Humanities by Jonathan Gottschall is one of my recent readings. It has made much sense in my decision to work across humanities and other disciplines in Kathmandu University. It has reshaped my understanding of the common tension of where humanities needed proper overhaul.



Gottschall makes readers aware of three main fault lines of the current humanities scholarship. The first includes the excessive use of jargons and "theories of human nature that are defunct." The second is a methodological problem involving the impossibility of getting tangible evidences unlike in science because the "theory-generated hypotheses" in humanities are not "closer to truth." The third problem involves attitudinal dilemmas where the dismissal of the "possibility of generating reliable knowledge" is critical among humanities scholars.

Reading Gottschall coincides with two very important contexts of my academic life. The first involves a larger concern of the humanities 'fraternity', to which I belong. This is the concern for the visible decline of interest and intake in certain traditional university programmes like geography, history, political science, psychology and philosophy. That some people still desired to study English literature or journalism is nothing of a solace to a career-ambitious young man in that it is gradually subjected to preparing 'service' writers or higher-secondary teachers. Personally, working in an institution heavily focused to profession-

specific academic programmes in science and engineering, I have always felt the need of reconfiguring my disciplinary orientation to more goal- or job-centric terrains. The second context has to do with the recent shift in my disciplinary priorities. I moved from where I liked to work (social sciences) to where I loved to belong and contribute (humanities and sciences). The move has also added a challenge of helping to interface the mutually complementary facets of communication, teaching, management, entrepreneurship, and economics in the promotion of engineering and science education.

I feel now that Gottschall's book endorses my decision to work across these terrains. It lends adequate confidence in the goal "to establish a new humanities on surer foundations." The foundations would then take more conciliatory yet "diverse and sophisticated methodological toolkit, and the pursuit of disinterested inquiry." I have subscribed to Gottschall's "call to move closer to the sciences in theory, method, and ethos." I have accepted this mandatory, though difficult, challenge to "participate more fully in revealing the ultimate subject of the humanities: humans." To this my life is directed with tenacity. To reiterate, I have set conciliatory, empathetic performance in scholarship to be the main motto of my further scholarly priorities.

Finally, books do not respond to the extent of leading to change unless you approach them with love and passion. Love for books comes with birth. This love becomes passion when books become a part of your upbringing. Books shape our thoughts which shape our actions. Thoughtful actions are change agents. A book's contribution to change lies here. With this belief I seek to read good books, more and more.



Hem Raj Kafle is one of the senior editors of NELTA Choutari. He is an Assistant Professor of English at the Humanities and Management Unit, School of Engineering, Kathmandu University. For more of his literary writings and works at his personal blog: <http://kaflehem.wordpress.com/>

- [Share](#)  [2 Comments](#) |  [Creativity, Teacher's Experience/anecdotes](#) |  [Permalink](#)
-

An Access Teacher's Reflection on ELT Training

February 1, 2014

Mandira Adhikari

I have attended a number of training sessions on English language teaching facilitated by both national and international trainers. And I have conducted some training sessions myself. Whenever I attend or conduct such sessions, I ask this question about their significance: Will I be able to translate (transfer) the ideas into my classroom? If such session doesn't seem relevant to my classroom setting, I return with a sad face, thinking that the time, money and resources invested in that session went in vain. However, I returned home with a happy face from a recent training organized by NELTA in Kathmandu on 20th and 21st December, 2013. Access teachers from the different parts of Nepal participated in the two-day English teachers' training. I found it very effective for my classroom and I learned several new ideas and concepts to implement in my classroom. In this blog entry, I am going to reflect on my experiences.

FIRST DAY

Following the introduction of the participants, the first day of the training began with 'Gallery Walk' and concluded with two different sessions 'Songs in Access Classroom' and 'Co-Teaching'.

Gallery Walk

Through a gallery walk, we reflected on our success stories from Access Program being implemented at different district branches of NELTA. I found the activities of the Access Centers unique, fascinating and different from one another.

Let me begin with GorakhaCenter. The teachers had their students engage into convening an educational fair and they learnt that the students could learn different things when they are engaged in organizing such programs. Similarly, they had organized a literacy campaign targeting the illiterate people of their community with a view to raise awareness, motivate, and encourage them to be literate by joining literacy classes.

Kathmandu Centers had done something remarkable. They had taken the Access Students to the US Embassy, Kathmandu, where the participant students observed various equipments operated with the help of solar power. And the painting titled 'Wall of Hopes' highlighted violence against women. On the International Human Rights Day, they showed a movie related to human rights. They also made their students participate in 'English by Radio' program, which is aired through radio stations in partnership of NELTA and the US Embassy.

Unlike Gorkha and KathmanduCenters, PokharaCenter had facilitated their students to prepare and perform a 'Drama' on the occasion of 'Thanks Giving Day'. I like the concept of students' engagement in the drama as it helps them to be confident, creative and to improve their speaking skills.

BirgunjCenter had their own uniqueness, in celebrating 'Raksha Bandhan'—a popular Hindu festival of the love between brothers and sisters celebrated in Terai, southern part of Nepal and also in many parts of India and Mauritius. In this festival, sisters tie the thread and attractive rakhi (simple, woven and colorful thread or may be intricate with amulets and decoration on top of it) on wrist of their brothers for their long life, welfare and protection. Other remarkable activities in Birgunj —Traffic Week and Ocean Day—impressed me. Students' engagement in traffic management over a week has not only helped traffic police but also they have learnt traffic rules. Considering busy traffic in Kathmandu and need of traffic knowledge in our students, I wish I could replicate such activity for LalitpurCenter where I am an Access teacher. I think that the celebration of Ocean Day could be adapted in the context of our Access Centers too.

I was fascinated by the special idea of developing reading skills among our students from KanchanpurCenter. They have formed a readers' group and a book reviewers' group. We had conducted classes on 'Book Review', students, however, have not been confident enough to write the book reviews. I think the idea of forming of groups of readers and reviewers would help me further building on their confidence.

Songs in Access Classroom

Following Gallery Walk Session, Suman Laudari, former Access teacher facilitated a session on 'Songs in Access Classroom'. Based on his own experience as an Access teacher, he highlighted on the effectiveness of the use of songs for language learning. Songs are the great exposure to our students and using songs is one of the best ways to teach pronunciation with a fun. We can also develop classroom test activities such as gap filling, match the words with their meaning, and put the shuffled stanzas of the song in order. Through this way, language learning can be a fun making for them. On the other side, while using songs in the classroom, some possible challenges such as offensive words and deviated forms were explored in our discussions. However, the learners should be pre informed not to use offensive words and consider deviated forms because they are more often used in songs.

Co-teaching

Access Program has a salient feature of co-teaching at its Centers. As an assessment for such a feature, Ganga Ram Gautam and Miriam Corneli jointly facilitated co-teaching. During the facilitation, they introduced 'Tree Metaphor', as a tool for effectively analysing our co-teaching. Using tree metaphor, the assessment and analysis of co-teaching was carried out by participants from different Centers in terms of fruits, shoots, seeds and roots. We found our analysis of co-teaching almost similar. For instance, when I and my co-teacher analyzed our co-teaching classes, the fruits of our co-teaching –making classroom a fun zone, our shoots – utilizing our experience to make our classes effective by discussing with each other, the seeds—about five hours' discussion to prepare a lesson plan and though we haven't been successful in executing it yet to and the roots—we both are from education background and quite familiar with different methodologies. We both are co-operative and flexible. As a result, our co-teaching has always been successful.

The co-teachers at Access Centers are co-operative and they have been successful in making their classes effective, applying a variety of teaching methods. Before both the facilitators concluded the session, they provided us the effective model of co-teaching, which further helped us to improve our co-teaching further. Our co-teaching would have been more successful and we would not have faced challenges in managing the roles while implying this concept if the training on 'co-teaching' was provided before the Access classes started.

SECOND DAY

The second day of training consisted of four different sessions; ABCD model of lesson planning, public speaking, group discussions and American culture.

ABCD Model of Lesson Planning

Upon the presentations of the lesson plans made by respective Centers, Hemant Raj Dahal, president of NELTA made comments on them. Based on his observation and experience, he shared that most of the teachers usually miss the important parts 'context' and 'expectation' of our learners while planning their lessons. The discussion became livelier when Access teachers shared their challenges for preparing an effective lesson plan. To address those challenges, facilitator Dahal concluded the session with the introduction and use ABCD model of lesson planning for preparing effective lesson plans.

Public Speaking

The second session 'Public Speaking' facilitated by Motikala Subba Dewan was worth effective as it provided us the ideas of public speaking in various contexts. During the session, we were divided into different groups and each group was assigned a topic to prepare a speech. After the group leaders delivered their respective speeches, they were analyzed in terms of both strong areas and the areas to improve. I found the session constructive for not only for speaking in public but also for facilitating students to present their ideas in our regular classroom instruction.

Group Discussions

In the third session, Sara Denne Boltan facilitated us how to conduct group works effectively in our classrooms. She presented to the idea of evaluating the involvement of group members with the help of questionnaire. It can be an effective tool to actively involve all our students in a group work. The handouts and materials provided by her were helpful for our Access classes while organizing group discussions. She also facilitated us with how to play 'Dice Game', which can act as an important catalyst to energize our students for developing speaking skills.

U.S. Values and Culture

Besides improving English language skills, Access Program aims to impart the knowledge of the U.S. values and culture to the participant students and sensitize them about cultural differences. The session facilitated by Sara helped us better understand the American culture that students are expected to learn. Her presentation included contextual conversational

patterns, different meaning of facial expressions, and notion of leadership, concept of 'self' and other different American cultures. She further clarified that Access students are expected to learn visible parts of American culture such as the food Americans eat in different festivals, their language and music.

Acknowledgements:

As an Access teacher, I got this wonderful opportunity to attend the training I have reflected above. For this, I am grateful to 'English Access Microscholarship Program (Access Program)' implemented by Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA) with sponsorship and support of the U.S. Embassy Kathmandu/the US Department of State.



Mandira Adhikari is currently working as a teacher for the Access Program in Lalitpur. She has completed her M.Ed in ELT from Kathmandu University. She is also a life member of NELTA.

[Share](#) | [Leave a Comment »](#) | [ELT Resource, Teacher's Experience/anecdotes, Teaching Tips](#) | [Permalink](#)
