

Nelta Choutari

Nepalese ELT Practitioners Meet the World

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NELTA CHOUTARI

NEPALESE ELT PRACTITIONERS MEET THE WORLD

EDITORIAL

Laxmi Prasad Ojha

(With Umes and Praveen)

Dear valued readers,

Along with my fellow editors, I am honoured and delighted to present you the April issue of Choutari. Choutari has always been a true source of inspiration for many teachers ever since it was published in 2009. It has been catering the needs of thousands of teachers in many countries now. We are really inspired and encouraged to see support and appreciation of our valued readers.

Choutari was one of the first initiatives of its kind started by our senior editors. When blogging was not something many people knew, they gave a pleasant gift to the ELT community. It has seen tremendous growth in the past and the team will always try its best to bring you the most useful resources available. The government of Nepal has continuously been trying to improve the quality of education and teachers are the main agents to bring much needed changes. Teachers need to develop their professional skills if they really want to move in that direction. There are numerous ways to develop our professional skills and one of them is discussing, writing, and sharing ideas with fellow teachers. In this edition of Choutari, we have included essays on diverse issues ranging from beginning teacher's reflection to in-service teacher training, from using portfolio in ELT classes to explaining research as hegemony, and from probing SLC exam

to reflection on Interactive Language Fair of NELTA Conference. We have also reblogged an entry on Twitter summit which, we believe, will be of new of its kind to many of our enthusiastic readers. Here is the full list of ELT khuraks for the month of April:

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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. Please join the conversation by reading, and sharing your reflections as comments. This will help many readers get new ideas and help you develop skills to look at things critically and present yourself professionally. We also request you to let other people know about NeltaChoutari.

Happy reading!



Laxmi Prashad Ojha

Editor, April issue

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— Please note: [Choutari Mentoring Program](#) is ongoing. We would like to extend our utmost honor to two participating mentors and cordial thanks to three mentees currently engaged in the program. If you are interested in providing mentorship to emerging scholars or seek a mentor to grow, [please click here](#).

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This Year's SLC Exams: Melodrama Continues

April 1, 2014

Praveen Kumar Yadav

The Office of the Controller of Examination (OCE) declared another "successful" SLC this year, despite multiple incidents of violating exam code of conduct. SLC was held across the country this year from March 20 to 28, 2014. Over half million students appeared in the SLC exams, which many of them still perceive as the Iron Gate, which is cruelly known to have slammed on more young individuals than it has opened up life opportunities for.

According to OCE, 1,836 exam centers were set up across the country in order to conduct the SLC exams for 566,085 students, including 419,352 regular and 146,733 exempted this year. However, some students were disqualified to appear in the exams this year since their attendance in grade 10 was below 75 per cent. Only students with 75 per cent attendance in grade 10 are eligible to take the SLC examinations, as per the Education Act. For instance, 162 students, including 88 boys and 74 girls in Khotang, and 644 in Rupandehi district were not eligible to sit in the exams, according to District Education Offices. Compared to private schools, the number of those disqualified for the examinations is higher in community schools.

This year's SLC exams witnessed few changes in previous practice such as restriction of the provision for home centers in the schools. The government had allowed home centers for the SLC exams during the Maoist insurgency, with an aim to prevent unpleasant happenings. But, at many home centers a large number of incidents of violence were reported and consequently, the OCE had amended the Examination Management Regulations 2011 a few months ago, before the exams began.

Some days earlier than the exams began, the OCE had circulated that the exams would be conducted in a disciplined and a sober manner this year. Conversely, the irregularities during the exams, though lesser in comparison to the previous ones, were witnessed in different places as the trend of breaching the exams code continued.

The cheating trend and irregularities in the exams continued this year too in eight districts of the Tarai (Parsa, Bara, Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mahattari, Dhanusha, Siraha and Saptari), which are mostly eyed on for various reasons and also termed as sensitive ones. Many students and invigilators were expelled for their misconduct. In Dhanusha, one of those sensitive districts, police had to open several rounds of bullets in the air to

disperse the mob of agitating examinees and guardians, following a scuffle between the students and police personnel on March 24, 2014. In the incident, two examinees and a policewoman had sustained serious injuries. As a result, the test of social studies paper was cancelled at three exam centers on the fifth day of this year's SLC exams.

The Terai is not the only region where irregularities in the SLC exams were reported from, there were reports from the Hills as well. 11 exam invigilators were expelled in Humla district after they were found involving in violating the exam regulations, i.e., helping students to answer the question papers.

But this year, unlike previously, the OCE has declared the provision of conducting no re-exams for the students in those centers where locals, guardians, teachers or the students themselves disrupted the exams for whatsoever reason.

The students heavily rely on textbooks or guess papers for the exams and most portion of the evaluation system except in few weightage in practical test of compulsory subjects like English, population studies and optional subjects like computer is written. Again, the practical test in those subjects is seen to have been ineffectiveness and raise a question mark due to lack of proper conduct and effective monitoring mechanism.

Now let us give a glance over the results of the SLC Exams. Last year the country witnessed the dismal results of the Iron Gate for higher studies (41.57 per cent), which is five per cent lower when compared to 2012. This is the lowest percentage results in the last five years. The statistics shows that 90% out of those who fail their SLC exams, fail in core subjects such as Mathematics, English and Science. In this gloomy situation in the backdrop, the Ministry of Education (MoE) had argued that the teachers are to blame for the decline in the public education sector. However, the issue of teacher accountability is not that straightforward. Based on need assessment, the teachers needs to be trained and supervised properly before they are made accountable.

To conclude, conducting fair exams is still a challenging job in Nepal, which is yet to adopt other alternative modes of evaluation system than written exam in secondary schooling system. Although our SLC doesn't seem to be serving any different purpose than the Chinese "gao kao" or American "SAT", it is high time we started conversation on how we can make it unique, more acceptable, and more respectable. Until and unless teachers, students, test makers, policy makers, and guardians and other counterparts do not opt for the easiest and the most reliable way to conduct exams with creative techniques, keeping in mind the students enjoy while appearing in the tests, the exams will always remain to be the IRON GATE for the examinees. It is high time the

government of Nepal and concerning stakeholders pay due attention to rectify the exam system, which is an integral part of the education system.

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Praveen Kumar Yadav

Editor

Nelta Choutari

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Exploring Challenges in In-Service Teacher Training in Nepal

April 1, 2014

Rajan Poudel

Globalization of English language demands competent users of English language in the world today. And to producing competent or skilled language users, there is the need of qualified educators and technical manpower. The Ministry of Education (MoE) has been implementing in-service teacher training for a long time to improve the quality of English language teachers. But there are numerous issues related to in-service teacher training, regarding its effectiveness and transformation. Therefore, this article seeks to scrutinize issues and challenges of in-service teacher training in Nepal.

In-service teacher training in Nepal is usually seen ineffective because English language teachers are not adequately trained to teach at school (Shrestha, 2008). There are questions to be addressed in relation to the quality, transformation of knowledge, effectiveness, methodology and approaches of in-service teacher training. School administrators, the major stakeholder, often complain that training is provided only

when there is a revision or changes in core curriculum. But there is a lack of training and continuous support to equip teachers to face challenges while teaching.

In theory, in-service teacher training is training taken by a teacher after he/she has begun to teach. The training aims at enhancing the skills, knowledge and performance of the working teachers. In-service teacher training is important for a teacher because the working conditions and the demands from the society are always changing for professionals like teachers (Gnawali, 2001). Thus, in-service training is necessary to meet the demand of time and demands of the society.

Some of the key objectives of teacher training, as Bhan (2006) mentions, are – to upgrade the qualification of a teacher, to upgrade the professional competence of serving teachers, to prepare teachers for new roles, to provide knowledge and skills relating to emerging curricular change, to make teachers aware of critical areas and issues, and to overcome gaps and deficiencies of pre-service education. These objectives of in-service teacher trainings are equally relevant to the context of Nepali education system. In this light, Bista (2011) mentions that untrained teacher may not be as innovative as their trained counterparts. Therefore, training is important for teachers to upgrade, enhance professional competence and raise awareness in the critical issues and areas.

Role of National Center for Educational Development (NCED)

In-service teacher training programs are primarily run by the National Center for Educational Development (NCED) and Secondary Educational Development Center (SEDC) in Nepal. Established in 1992, NCED is the government run institution that conducts teacher training. The center has nine well facilitated primary teacher training centers spread throughout the country. NCED has also a policy to allow the private agencies to run teacher training programs. NCED has been offering the long-term 10 month in-service training to the working teachers but a lot of permanent teachers are still untrained.

Issues and challenges

Not only is it important to prepare updated teachers, it is crucially important to produce quality learning outcomes through in-service training. For this, one of the ways is that teachers be willing to work collaboratively with other teachers. Neuman (2010) states that many teachers who are interested in exploring processes of teaching and learning in their own context are either unable, for practical reasons, or unwilling, for personal

reasons, to do collaborative work (p.18). However, in our context, teachers are hardly willing to collaborate with each other.

On the basis of my own interaction with major stakeholders, besides collaboration, these are some major issues and challenges of in-service teacher training.

Copycat mentality

Copycat mentality is one of the major issues that strives on imitation of what happens in the western countries. Our curricula, pedagogical approaches, assessment methods continue to be derived from the West. For instance, Vygotsky, Piaget, Bruner and Maslow continue to be perceived as gift for the scholars in Nepal.

Similarly, practicum or teaching practice models are imported from another context. These concepts need to be contextualized rather than adapted. Teacher training institutions and schools have not valued indigenous epistemologies or the culture and value systems of Nepali children. This has led in significant ways to schools being perceived as an alien and unfriendly place, with seemingly irrelevant content and practices that marginalize students and lead to underachievement. Therefore, the need for a culture sensitive pedagogy in teacher training program is crucial.

Shortage of trained trainers and trained teachers

The government of Nepal claims that 92.9% teachers in primary, 79.4% in lower secondary and 90.3% in secondary are trained teachers (Flash Report 2012/13). But in reality, there is a dearth of *well-experienced, appropriately-trained teachers*. Teachers have become training-proof, mostly in primary level because they don't feel differences in many types of training conducted for them. The effectiveness of teacher training has not reached inside the classroom. The achievement of students in different examinations is the evidence of this low training delivery. Similarly, there are also challenges of finding quality teacher trainers who can facilitate teachers to transfer their new knowledge in the classroom.

Teaching conditions

One cannot talk about teacher training or education without adequately looking at their teaching conditions. An inescapable fact in Nepali context is that teachers are underpaid but overworked. Unreasonable demands and pressures are laid at their shoulders, more so when they get transferred to rural communities where the living standard is generally

lower than in urban centers. Policy makers need to ensure that teachers are treated equally so that they could contribute the best in term of effort and outcome in the classroom and communities. Therefore, their teaching conditions need careful re-evaluation.

Ongoing professional development

It is not unusual in Nepal for teachers to continue working without further upgrading of their knowledge or skills for the rest of their teaching careers. For example, it is common for lower-secondary or secondary teachers in either rural or urban schools to fail to undergo any refresher courses for a very long time. They require attending short in-service training courses only when there are changes made to curricula. This has serious implications for the quality of their teaching. It is imperative that Ministry of Education devises strategies whereby their teachers would be continually upgraded on curriculum, pedagogical and assessment area in their respective fields.

Shifting from knowledge to practice

Teacher trainings require a shift of focus from what teachers know and believe to what teachers do in the classroom. In this regard Freeman (2001) states that as there are many problems with this knowledge-transmission view, it depends on the transfer of knowledge and skills from the teacher education to the classroom in order to improve teaching (p.73). This does not mean that knowledge and beliefs do not matter but, rather, the knowledge counts for practicing entailed by the work. A practical knowledge generates tasks and involves teachers in practice. But, practice-focused curriculum for learning teaching needs to include significant attention not just to the knowledge demands of teaching but to the actual tasks and activities involved in the work.

The concern on focusing to the practical tasks is that if the teachers become aware of the practical tasks, they can develop different tasks and apply in the classroom. Getting knowledge means being aware and applying in the daily behavior. For instance in a classroom, the novice teacher needs to know how to conduct a short warm-up language activity at the beginning of the day, it is easy to shift into a discussion of the uses of warm-ups, an analysis of possible language activities, or a reflection on how well a particular activity worked. Thus, teacher training needs to offer deliberate opportunities for teachers to practice the interactive work of instruction. Shifting of training must be observed in classroom context rather than documentation

Besides the above mentioned challenges, teacher trainings are mostly based on aid dependency where concerned authorities conduct training to get aid from the foreign agencies. Thus, teacher trainings are just in name, not in work. Without blaming anyone, training should be conducted for knowledge transferring into classroom, improving teacher skills, attitudes – but not for imposing latest development theories.

Another area of concern is the lack of induction program to new-inexperienced teachers after joining schools. Even national curriculum doesn't talk about new teacher induction, this situation needs rectifying. A teacher goes to school and the head-teacher or principal asks him/her to start immediately, and even sometimes the teacher is assigned to teach Social Studies or Population. What needs to be remembered is that ultimately, it is the students who will suffer the consequences of inadequate support for teachers starting out on their teaching careers.

Conclusion

To conclude, EFL in-service teacher training in Nepal is crawling with lots of hindrances for trifling achievements. Efforts are being made but they are insufficient. The concerned authorities are required to work hard to address the dire needs. One sole organization NCED alone cannot cope up with all the challenges and thus other organizations of similar interests must collaborate. For this government must diversify and ease their monopolistic policy.

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Research as Hegemony

April 1, 2014

Krishna Khatiwada

In this reflective article, I will be sharing my personal belief about why I think research as a subject and practice is hegemonic in nature. I will also talk about the issue of several students dropping out from universities because of the pressures of research work.

For a long time, I had planned to join M.Phil. in English Language Education program at Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED). Some of my fellow friends had already completed the program and were working as faculties in KU. Some of my friends were still struggling to complete their dissertations. They in a way inspired me to join KU for the program. However, the same friends, those who graduated and those who are still under the surveillance of dissertation committee, shared this bitter reality to me – “doing RESEARCH is pain in the neck”.

Due to unrelenting pressure to complete the research work on time, I have seen and heard many of my friends dropping out from the program. But I was determined to face this situation. I was committed to doing my best in all aspects of my M. Phil. course. Initially, things were quite manageable at KU, the classes and assignments went smoothly. I also learned about a few terminologies – the buzz words of research like dominance, emancipation, positivism, post-positivism, interpretive, critical, integralism and HEGEMONY.

In the class, we learnt that research means to search or re-search for new knowledge, to establish the new norms, values and meaning. From positivism (a rigid perspective) to post-positivism, from interpretivism to criticalism, we advocated multiple perspectives, realities, meanings, values and methodologies in the classroom. Meanwhile, the discussions I had with my friends (who graduated from KU's M.Ed.) on 'Research Methodologies in Social Sciences and Education' were quite terrifying. Their experiences about the pressures of writing and defending the research proposal, working tirelessly for many months, reading literature, drafting the document, re-writing these and so on, were intimidating for me. These realities and terminologies got engraved in my mind and heart as a giant ghost, against which I found myself as a tiny dust, a novice learner, a crawler, a breast feeding child, a tyro.

On the first day of my research class, I was expecting the hope and aspirations of a new sun and a warm morning. A professor started his lecture and, to my surprise, wrapped it

up within two sessions. To make the matter worse, his concept on research left my highly expectant mind with mixed feelings. We were trying to see the world through the lens of multiple realities, multiple perspectives, multiple meanings, multiple knowledge, multiple values and post-modern paradigm. We were triangulating the (data) realities, (methodologies) way to search the new knowledge and (theory) previously set up value to come to the real sense of qualitative strategies of inquiry. However, these two sessions of my professor turned back my expectations towards the 19th century's positivist approach in real classroom praxis. The deep rooted concept of extreme positivism in the manner, delivery, discipline, and the way of commenting to novice learners like me, left a hideous mark on my mind, which I felt as the mark of HEGEMONY of research as a subject and praxis.

Hegemony, as stated by Fairclough (2010), is the power over society as a whole of one of the fundamental economically defined classes in alliance (as a bloc) with other social forces but it is never achieved more than partially and temporarily, as an 'unstable equilibrium' (p.61). Research in KU, with the references to above experiences of my friends and my own perception, positions itself defiantly and powerfully among other subjects creating an artificial identity. And hence I feel that research is hegemonic in nature. To put in other words, the group of research scholars, committee members, and as a whole, research as a subject in a real sense has more power, control or importance, which I think is overtly imposed over other subjects and to the students.

Due to this hegemonic nature of research as a subject to be studied and a praxis to be done in a controlled way, I hardly attempted to do my class presentation well, I hardly completed my proposal and other assignments and I hardly took part in classroom discussion as I did not want to make any mistakes in front the professors. I never made any comments and thus lost my confidence, and I accepted everything from my teachers and colleagues. The deep rooted terrifying picture of the giant known as research work scared me so much that I did not touch or turn the pages of Creswell, Cohen, Manion & Marrison and Denzin & Lincoln. That hegemonic stereotyping script made so worried till the day of examination.

We focus on qualitative strategies of inquiry (Creswell, 2011) to establish multiple realities and search for the multiple perspectives. But, why do we still go back to quantitative inquiry and positivists approach to deal in the classroom, establishing an overall dominance over all subjects? Are we still narrow-minded or do universities still prefer traditional approach? If it is not hegemony, why is research a problem for many students and why many students feel the brunt and drop out?

My reflection on the subject, I hope, will be an emollient to sooth and pacify my feelings.

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Need of Induction for Beginning Teachers: My Reflection

April 1, 2014

Ramesh Chandra Bhandari

Thousands of graduates begin their career as teachers every year in Nepal. As they do not have any experience in dealing with various aspects of the profession, they face many problems. Everyone who starts his/her career in a field expects to receive some kind of orientation or briefing (known as *induction*) from the senior staff and administrators. But most of the schools do not provide induction to their newly appointed teachers in our context. Due to lack of induction, they face various problems in their career. In this reflective paper, I have tried to discuss the problems faced by beginning teachers due to lack of induction and the benefits of the same.

Induction: A Brief Introduction

The term 'induction' means to guide, to introduce or to initiate especially into something demanding, secret or special knowledge (Cole & McNay in Dube, 2008). It is the process or ceremony of introducing someone to new job, organization, or way of life. It is oriented towards adjusting somebody in new a context. Every organization or institution needs to carry induction to help its staff function properly in the beginning of their job.

The beginning teachers or newly qualified teachers (NQTs) should be provided with initial training before they enter into full-fledged teaching.

Teacher induction refers to the *assistance, guidance, orientation and support* provided to the novice teachers in order to make them familiar with new teaching environment. Through induction, the new teachers can develop knowledge of professional practice, capacity to assess the needs, awareness of future responsibilities, dedication to the profession and ability to maximize the use of the resources available around. Teachers should also be trained to adopt the new innovations that occur in their professional areas. In this regard, Wong (2004) states that induction is a "Comprehensive, coherent, and sustained professional development process – that is organized by a school to train, support, and retain new teachers and seamlessly progress them into a lifelong learning program."

There is no formal provision of teacher induction in the field of teaching in Nepal, though there are some informal modalities of induction launched by private institutions.

There are many challenges for teachers in Nepal and they continue to face them due to lack of proper induction from the schools in the beginning of their career.

My experience of 'being' a teacher

When I joined the teaching profession, I expected assistance from the seniors, colleagues, and head teachers but I did not get such help. I felt lost and disoriented when I stepped into the class for the first time. I couldn't utilize the theoretical knowledge into practice. I had theoretical idea about different teaching methods like grammar translation method, direct method, audio-lingual method, etc. and different techniques like pair work, group work, dramatization, role play, different language games and so on but I forgot everything. I felt very uneasy to express even the things which I was well familiar. I lost my confidence and even if the students laughed in their own matter, I used to think that I had made some mistakes.

Similarly, I also faced different problems regarding classroom management, students' response and behaviour, handling subject matter, instructional techniques, administrative and co-worker relationship, adjustment to overall school environment, curriculum, evaluation system, etc. The number of students in my class was very large and the environment was completely new to me which created difficult situation to manage the classes. It was difficult to motivate and make the students ready to study, lead the class in the proper direction, and check class work and homework in the class. At the same time, it was also hard to maintain proper classroom conduct among the students. There used to be several queries of the students regarding my teaching items, but I was unable to manage the answers to all of them.

When I graduated in ELT, I thought I knew a lot of things about English language teaching but I realized that I just knew the theories. I didn't feel very comfortable with my co-teachers. I received few support from administration but no help from the other teachers. I expected a huge support from everyone but they were only busy in taking his/her own class and no one cared for what a new teacher was doing. Only few of them shared their ideas, experiences, information and techniques with me.

I found it hard to understand the overall school environment as it was my first experience as a teacher. I was in a state of confusion and had no guideline from the seniors on a regular basis. I felt problems to adjust myself with the rules and regulations of the school, understanding students' psychology, their nature and it took me some time to recognize all those. Likewise, I didn't have sufficient knowledge of curriculum as the course was new and I had very few ideas about the proper ways to handle the tasks

that were given in the prescribed course. I had to study and practice a lot hard to handle the subject matter.

I had many problems related to evaluation of the performance of the students. I had no idea about evaluation system of my school at that time. I faced many problems regarding class tests, unit tests, responding to students' immediate problems, interval between different examinations.

How did I overcome these problems?

If I had been introduced to these systems properly in the beginning, I would have been able to feel comfortable and perform better. Though all the teachers are in favour of teacher induction, it is not practiced in teaching properly. In the beginning, I had no idea how to face the problems I encountered. Later, I thought I should do something to help myself overcome them. I started adopting different techniques. I tried to take the help from my colleagues, head teachers, administrators and even with the students. I got positive responses from some of them but not all. I tried my best. But in some cases it was not possible to overcome those difficulties myself. My seniors and the principal also helped me to make teaching and learning activities effective. I also consulted with teachers from other schools.

My Observation and Suggestions

Over the months, I have realized that teacher induction is essential for the professional development of the beginning teachers. I faced various challenges and problems due to the lack of proper induction. As a teacher who has completed a graduate course to be a teacher, I had enough theories in my mind but I severely lacked the practical skills and understanding of the context I had started working. From my own experience, theories and discussion with other teachers, I have come to realize that, induction helps new teachers solve the problems they encounter in their early stage of teaching career. Here are my suggestions for the effective implementation of induction program:

1. All the novice teachers should be provided with teacher induction program while they enter into the profession. Lack of induction might give them bitter experience which results in negativity towards the profession.
2. Novice teachers should be provided with the idea of dealing with the subject matter, maintaining relationship with administration, co-worker and students, maintaining discipline in the classroom, addressing students' problems and so on.

3. There should be regular provision of collaboration and interaction between novice and veteran teachers at the regular basis. Workshops, seminar, and group should be conducted for the professional and personal development of the teachers.
4. Teacher induction should be made flexible, decentralized, regular and accessible to all. So, the policy should be formulated accordingly. Government should provide sufficient numbers of teacher mentors, supervisors, resources to implement induction program properly.
5. Teacher training program organizers and teacher educators like Ministry of Education (MoE), NELTA, NCED should include and focus on the role of teacher induction program as one of the most effective means for teachers' professional development (TPD).

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 Posted by praveenkumaryadava

Reflections on Presenting in Interactive Language Fair (ILF)

April 1, 2014

Reflections on Presenting in Interactive Language Fair (ILF)

Jeevan, Dipesh and Praveen

The Interactive Language Fair (ILF) during the 19th International Conference of NELTA in February 2014 was the first of its kind coordinated by Laxman Gnawali, Associate Professor (ELT)

School of Education Kathmandu University. The coordinator of the ILF has introduced this special event to the conference, replicating the ideas of similar event of the IATEFL. The idea was that each presenter was provided with one table, which was visited by groups of delegates interested to know more about the theme of their presentation. The separate tables were arranged just like stalls in a fair. Sixteen presenters, including us (Jeevan, Dipesh and Praveen), had interactions with the audience, by providing them information, answering questions, and inviting responses. The participants walked from one table to another, learning the presenters' efforts to different ELT issues through discussion. In this post, we have shared our reflections on presenting in the ILF.

Now, let the world see our students' creativity': Jeevan Karki

Unlike other sessions, the ILF was a truly participants-focused event, where presenters explained their researches and other successful ELT ventures to the visitors, based on their queries. On the contrary to other sessions, the ILF presenters had to share the aspects of the presentation that the participants opted for learning. In addition, they could discover a wide range of issues dealt by different presenters at a single slot. Similarly, they enjoyed freedom to visit the presenter's stall as per their choices.

The title of my presentation was 'now, let the world see our students' creativity'. I focused on publication of creative writings of our students, which I believe is the greatest award for encouraging them. I chose the area of my presentation after I generally found very few of them focused on publishing the creative writings of students. As a whole, I shared my opinions with the audience on the significance of publication when they want the students continue with creative writings.

In order to encourage language learners and develop their competencies in creative writings, we, a group of young scholars involved in creative writing have started a webzine called <http://www.merocreation.com>. I introduced the webzine and shared

my ideas of encouraging students in creative writings and the procedures of how we publish the students' writing on the online venue. As similar to [my last article](#) in Choutari, I discussed on techniques to accommodate creative writings in language class. Many participants visited my stall and we had a very exciting interaction. Besides the interaction, I showed them a video clip on creative writings. I took it for a splendid opportunity to share with them my ideas and initiatives on MyCreation. One among those visitors was a young participant from Bhaktapur, who I find was looking for some ways of giving platform for his students' creative writings. He was so excited to learn our venture that he continued the talk during our lunch time, even after the conclusion of the event.

Let's get the ball rolling 24/7 with Critical Thinking: Dipesh Sah

As the ILF was completely new for ours, I had submitted my proposal soon after the call for presentation was solicited by the coordinator Gnawali Sir. As luck would have it, I got an opportunity to present the research paper, where I made an attempt to show the value of critical thinking strategies for better learning in the ELT classroom.

Critical thinking underlies the three layers, which are mental, critical dialogue, and control based on reliability. It is a process by which the thinker improves the quality of their thinking. It is also an energizing force in education and a powerful resource in one's personal and civic life. In my research, I have analyzed the data in order to find out the quantitative level of critical thinking in the students. My research was based on primary data collected from one public campus and two constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University viz; Sanothimi Campus, Sanothimi, Mahendra Ratna Campus, Tahachal and Nilkantha Campus, Dhading. Finally, I have suggested some the specific techniques used for testing the learners' thinking capacity and also the ways to develop their individual critical thinking skill.

No doubt, I have experienced a good interaction with the audience in the ILF. Unlike plenary and concurrent sessions, it was not only interactive but it was participatory too since there was an exchange of conversation between me and them.

Professional Development in Nepalese ELT through Blogging: Praveen Kumar Yadav

I was thrilled to participate in the special event during the conference of NELTA in February. Taking the case of NeltaChoutari from my M. Ed. research, I have shared with the audience how it has helped ELT practioners in Nepal build on their scholarship and

enhance them professionally and also the ways they have translated their learning from the blog into practice.

Starting with a glimpse of background and rationale of the research study, followed by the methodology I have adopted, I have highlighted on the blog 'NeltaChoutari' has helped to develop ELT practioners in Nepal professionally and also the ways they have translated their learning from the blog into practice. For instance, the informants have used the materials from the blog to facilitate trainings, carry out activity in the classroom, reference into their theses and organize discussions on ELT issues. Based on the findings, I have concluded with some substantial suggestions to increase its readership and circulation and also pedagogical implications.

Wrapping up

Before we attended the ILF in the conference, the event coordinator Gnawali Sir had solicited us one PowerPoint slide, which included our name, institutional affiliation and the title of our presentation. He had suggested us to include a relevant image on the slide as per our wish and also insert some text on our presentation to help us in our talk. While the slide was projected, we had our two-minute thumbnail presentation in the beginning.

As we were asked to bring slide show, video, poster, any other materials that we wanted to display/present and interact with the audience, a table was provided to us for the materials including the summaries of our presentation for distribution. However, had the presenters experienced about the language fair, they could have brought many materials as expected and display them for the purpose.

Indeed, our presentation in the ILF was rejoicing experience for us. As we learnt that this special is going to take place again in the next year, we anticipate our participation as well. But, we are confident that this will be one of the most popular events during the conference 2015.

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Twitter Summit #Write4Pro

April 1, 2014

Choutari Editors

Many of us use Twitter, and we know about the general benefits of it as a tool for enhancing our professional learning network. Recently, one of our Choutari founders, Dr. Shyam Sharma, used Twitter for an entirely different purpose than PLN: organizing an international “summit” of like-minded scholars and students!

Dedicated for his students in an undergraduate course titled “Writing For Your Profession” at Stony Brook University, this classroom event not only enriched classroom experience for his students, but also attracted and engaged participants from Australia, New Zealand, Guyana, Egypt, Nepal, UK, and across the US. Conferences and other professional events add the Twitter Summit for engaging virtual participants, but making that happen right from the classroom is quite an inspiring feat.

Here’s a blog entry that Shyam Sharma wrote about the event and okayed that we reblog it on Choutari, so our readers will know a little about the use of social media in teaching: <http://shyamsharma.wordpress.com/2014/03/11/from-a-classroom-to-the-world/>

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