

## **Welcome to the July Issue of Choutari, 2014**

July 1, 2014

### **Editorial**



Professional development is an ongoing learning process in which teachers engage voluntarily to learn how their language can be made effective in order to meet the learning needs of their students. It focuses on specifically on how teachers construct their professional identities in ongoing interaction with learners, by reflecting on their actions for professional enhancement and adopting them to meet the learners' expressed or implicit learning goals.

Reflections do not only summarize what happened, but also reflect on those experiences and report on what the authors have learned. Through reflection, language teachers share how to improve professional practice, discover what is working and what is not, and explore personal strengths and the areas of improvement. Hence, reflections do not only for action, but also they are in and on action to ultimately help teachers develop their professionalism.

As continuity to the same ongoing professional development process through reflections, the July issue of Choutari includes a series of reflections on from this year's examinations of School Leaving Certificate (SLC) and Teacher Service Commission (TSC), to other aspects of professional development such as mentoring, speakers' club, writing and ELT.

First, Shyam Sharma expresses his deep concerns about the failed national exam of SLC in Nepal that annually labels a huge number of youth as failures. In his well-crafted

piece, he argues that we are carrying SLC exams for too long for nothing. The title is obvious: Ditch it: SLC Exams. But there's a lot more Shyam Sharma has to say on why SLC is "obsolete, misguided, and if you think about its purpose and effect, absurd."

In the second post 'How my mentor transformed me', Priyanka Pandey shares her story of transformation from hesitant soul to a confident teacher. Her story is extremely relevant for the useful insights for anyone in a mentoring relationship or seeking to be in one.

Likewise, Mabindra Regmi reflects on the ups and downs of his writing journey in the third entry 'The Write Way'. Regmi's rediscovery of his own writing not only shares useful insights on how writing can be continuously improved, but also how it can be a collaborative effort.

The fourth post is a compilation of reflections on written test of Teacher Service Commission (TSC), as told by the three successful candidates in the recent massive results. These High School English teachers' experiences passing the national qualifying test conducted by Teacher Service Commission (TSC) is obviously useful for the incoming cohort of candidates.

"The club has made a tremendous impact on me, personally and professionally," says a stellar writer. Wonder how? The secret is out in Umes Shrestha's reflective piece titled Speakers' Club for Professional Development.

The excitement brought about by the Choutari workshop is palpable in Krishna Prasad Khatiwada's piece 'Reflection on Choutari Workshop: Behind Academic Publishing-Why, How & What'. This reflection piece lists useful tips on finding publishing venues, to avoiding plagiarism, and overcoming procrastination.

Finally, the photo blog scribbled with texts brings alive the spirit of emerging writers participating in the academic publishing workshop organized by NeltaChoutari, and facilitated by Bal Krishna Sharma. Combining the sophisticated tools and successful tips, the participants felt equipped to produce academic writing with a fuller understanding of why, how, and what of the academic writing.

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Now we would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all the contributors including the Choutari Team for their support and contribution, and we expect more contributions of yours on Chouatri for the next issue ahead.

We always welcome your constructive feedback to make our publications more reader friendly in terms of the content and issues in ELT. Hence, we urge you to join the professional conversation on Choutari by posting comments or sharing among your circles via social media networks like facebook, twitter, google plus, pressing likes under the blog entries you have read.

Happy Reading!

Praveen and Umes

On behalf of Choutari Team

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[!\[\]\(870f5d5e9c0d57485634be3ecf52f3ca\_img.jpg\) Posted by praveenkumaryadava](#)

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## **Ditch it: SLC Exams**

July 1, 2014

The idea that only a centralized testing system will make teachers teach, students learn and schools "perform" has a high social, financial and moral cost

***Shyam Sharma***

I now teach at a prestigious university within the largest and one of the best American public university systems, the State University of New York.

But twenty-four years ago, when I first appeared the SLC, I failed.

Now, I am not about to tell you a wonderful story. Sorry, there are more stories of suicide than of success in this regard. I am instead telling my story, for the first time beyond my family, in order to make a very broad point about the SLC exam and our society.

The precise reason I failed the exam was that I went to a public school in ninth and tenth grades. I passed the exam after I went to a private school for a year and retook it. Again, before any advocates of private schools start licking their lips, let me make something very clear. In the big picture of education system where I failed—even though it was in the Indian state of Manipur where there was a similar testing system as in Nepal—the private school that helped me pass the exam was NOT a solution of a problem. The emerging phenomenon of private schools was, or it was becoming as it also is in Nepal, a manifestation of an insidious social crisis. Let me explain.

When I failed, it was the system that failed me and my peers in the public school. On the surface, the rate of failure in private schools shows that the SLC crisis would disappear if we had more private schools. Unfortunately, if you're thinking about the big picture of "education for all," it isn't as simple as peeing one's leg for instant warmth. The society has a propensity to be more complex than, say, one's family.

Roughly 44 percent students passed SLC this year; but if we consider the filtration by the sent up test, failed students from previous years, and those not allowed to take the exam (mostly from public schools), the net proportion of first passes is probably one in four!

Even more shocking than just the numbers, however, is that if you tell ten people that you're upset about this situation, you're likely to have six say that the problem lies with poor teaching (or somehow blame the victims); three others might tell you to be more optimistic (have you seen the goodie goodie Facebook post with fake Abdul Kalaam

quotations?); and the remaining person will tell you about his nephew's 90 percent in optional math. We've somehow become a society of leg-peeking spectators of a stupidly designed and run system that sacrifices most of our children's prospects for higher education and greater dignity year after year after year.

We don't need the SLC. It is obsolete, misguided, and if you think about its purpose and effect, absurd. We have the 10+2 as the end of school, as well as other district-level assessments at lower levels. If we really need a national "standard," then it doesn't have to be so misaligned with the rest of education system that it makes most students fail. The system is absurd because it is based on the uneducated assumption that the ONLY way to "certify" secondary school education is to design and execute ONE national test for all students. To those who think that only a singular standard makes it "fair," let me ask this: How about designing a standard based on the reality of the majority? Or, how about requiring all students to learn and take exams on how to prevent and treat DegNala disease in buffalos, write the tamasuk, sing deuda and conduct sociological research among Tharu communities?

Those who run this absurd system from the center believe that IF they don't "unify" and monitor from the center, based increasingly on the standards of "good" private schools, teachers and schools and school districts across the country will simply stop teaching and "eat" public money for nothing. It doesn't occur to these smarty-pants that in reality, if teachers could stop teaching for that one big, centralized test and start really teaching and assessing in their own local terms, they could educate students better (and we wouldn't have "nil" results in entire regions).

They can't give teachers autonomy and dignity, understand variation and complexity, look at the situation from the perspective of failed students who were tested on what they weren't taught, see that they didn't have the opportunity and privilege to meet the standard. They cannot see how the idea that only a centralized testing system will make teachers teach, students learn, schools "perform" has a very high social, financial, and moral cost.

Should we not instead, you might ask, fix teaching and learning so that more students will pass the SLC? No, actually. Students from vastly different backgrounds, material and social conditions, learning opportunities and privileges can and must never be tested by using a one-size-fits-all test made in the capital. The society will NEVER be able to achieve the pipe dream of creating equal teaching/learning conditions for the rich and poor, for cities and villages, for differently abled students, for students with different talents. For many, many reasons, students will perform differently in tests; but they

should all be allowed to pursue higher education in different ways. The idea that everyone needs math to go to college is bogus, and so is the idea that advanced scientific knowledge is only available in English.

What about “accountability”? Isn’t it because public school teachers are not responsible toward the principal who can fire them and parents who will take students out? Maybe. But until we take into account the entire picture with the differences and complexities mentioned above, we will solve the wrong problems, if any. Reality matters. Students in Karnali should be judged in terms of the best they can do there, using the best from their teachers there.

Am I saying that every student who takes the SLC exam should be given a “certificate”? No. But everyone deserves fair and flexible ways to continue. Fairness and justice means that those who don’t get equal opportunity, those who need alternative and flexible ways to keep moving ahead in life should also be given the basic right to continuing education (instead of wholesale regional inequalities across the country).

In the end, it all comes down to trust. So, let me end with an anecdote. Some time ago, a bachelor’s first year class I was teaching started becoming rather unengaged. So, one day, I went to class and said that I wanted to give everyone full credit. One student raised her hand: “Please stop joking. Let’s get to work.” Imagine a teacher, school, and district- based system that is built on trust! If those who think that only Kathmandu can ensure quality in education were to trust other stakeholders, a sensible set of alternatives would begin to emerge.

Until then, the SLC is likely to be the unfair, unjust, and irrational system that it is—an immoral system where children across the country are made to run a mad race against those who go to school in fancy school buses in Kathmandu.

The article was published in [Republica on June 21, 2014](#).



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Posted by Umes Shrest

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## **How my mentor transformed me**

July 1, 2014

***Priyanka Pandey***

I feel very fortunate for getting a mentor when I started my teaching career. My mentor was an experienced and skillful teacher who guided me, changed my perceptions regarding teaching profession, and later made me determined to be in the field of ELT.

The school I worked for (Tiny Seeds Pre-school, Kathmandu) had a system of assigning two teachers in one class; a grade teacher and an assistant teacher. I was selected to be her assistant but initially it was very stressful because I didn't have any idea about "play-way" method. Being a student of Education, I knew how to make lesson plans in theory, but I didn't have clear idea about how to make practical lesson plans and how to teach effectively in English medium.

On top of that, I didn't have good communication skills in English. For instance, I used to feel scared when I had to respond to the principal. I used to feel difficult to answer even to the children. My heart would start racing when I had to speak in meetings. In the school, we were not allowed to speak Nepali inside the school premises. We had to tell stories in English every day which used to be the biggest challenge for me because I was extremely poor in English. Therefore, I could not tell stories clearly and make the students understand them.

Naturally, it gave me a lot of trouble and made me restive. Decorating the class, making lesson plans to match the learners' level, being more creative, teaching through the play-way method in English medium became huge challenges for me. It was not easy at all to fulfill their demands and sometimes I would think of quitting the job instead of having unnecessary headache. And if it was not for my mentor, Kalpana Subedi, I would have left the job altogether.

It is not easy to teach young children because we (adults) have to match their level and interest. However, these things became easier for me later because of my competent mentor. She motivated, instructed, trained, and directed me and guided me through the beginning stage of my teaching career. Because of her, I succeeded to overcome those challenges and later I became able to handle all the ups and down very well.

Because of her helpful, cooperative and supportive nature, she became a source of inspiration for me. I cannot forget her in my life and I always mention her name when I

have to talk about the person who inspired me to teach. She was the one who aroused the beautiful passion to teach and helped me overcome the difficult situations when I had to go through.

She not only inspired me to teach, but she was also provided solutions to my problems. She listened to me with great care and gave me right and valuable suggestions whenever I faced a problem. She was there for me when anyone tried to pull my leg. She taught me how to deal with such situation in a work place and taught me how to work in a group. It is common that in every institution, there are some bullies who create difficult situations for others and sometimes I had to face such bullies in that school as well. But Kalpana ma'am always alerted to stay far away from them.

Because of her, I overcame the problem of hesitation to speak. She always stood by my side and pushed me up by mentoring me on how to get the things done. She taught me a lot of strategies which we need to apply while teaching young learners. She used to observe me teaching and gave me positive feedback and that encouraged me to work. She had patience to tolerate my mistakes and ability to correct me in an encouraging way.

In addition, she would also give me emotional support whenever I got restless, hopeless and depressed. As a result, all the negative things, fear, anxiety, tension, nervousness, stress gradually went way after spending some time with her; and it would make me more confident than before and my own learning started to take place rapidly.

And thus, her unconditional and continuous support made me more skillful, knowledgeable, and more mature. As a result, teaching English became a passion for me once I started to teach in English medium and later I decided to become English language teacher. Transformation which she brought on me helped me to become an ideal teacher for pre –school as well as other higher levels.



– **Priyanka Pandey**

Kathmandu University (M.Ed. ELT)

Currently in the Fourth semester

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[Posted by Umes Shrestha](#)

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## **The Write Way**

July 1, 2014

***Mabindra Regmi***

When I graduated from my high school, I thought I was a great writer. I had written for countless assignments and examinations. I had written poems and stories. I had scored relatively high marks in English during my high school final examination. How could I not be a writer? It was a bitter shock when reality crashed in and I had to redefine my so called 'expertise' in writing when I faced the challenge of writing a proposal for an educational endeavor. I spent many a night poring over the proposal and scribbling on a piece of paper in that pre-ubiquitous-computer era to keep my inflated writing ego alive.

When I look back in retrospect after what seems like eons, and teaching writing to students for over a decade, a few questions arise. Why did I feel that I was 'good' at writing when I apparently wasn't? What were the factors that I had missed altogether to write well? What were the strategies that I had to adopt in order to enhance my writing skills? And what it takes to create your niche in the world of writing- specifically academic writing?

I would like to address the first question regarding why I wasn't a good writer. The premise to this would be that the writing that I had been exposed to at school was entirely different from the world of academic writing. I had goaded myself to believe that just by getting my grammar correct and by using some fancy words interlaced with 'impressive' looking, torturously long recursive sentences, I was good in writing. The praises of my school teachers for writing, what I believe now to be just childish philosophical ramblings that I used to call poetry, did not matter in the real world. I was expected to get results through my writing skills. For example, the very first draft that I submitted for the proposal mentioned above brought cynical remarks and questioned my very proficiency of English language.

This brings us to the second question regarding necessary factors for writing well. The reality is that in order to impress the academic world, writing is more like 'mathematics'. There is the central idea expressed in the topic sentence. Then the main points have to elegantly support the central idea. Further, clarifications and exemplifications have to be integrated to get the main idea across. And all these are cohesively bound together with connecting devices. Each part added to create the central whole. The structural unity of paragraph writing was something I had to acquire the hard way amidst ridicule and

cynicism. This realization introduced me to a whole different game of writing academically.

The word was out that I could be counted on to write and edit works in English. First, my close friends started requesting me to edit their application essays. Then I was logically burdened with the responsibility of editing school magazines at work. Whenever someone had a difficulty in structure or vocabulary, I was the person to ask. It escalated to more professional level when I started receiving requests to write proposals for non-government organizations. My journey into the world of writing was enhanced by these responsibilities I was given, and alternately it provided me the impetus to work hard and to come up with polished products that would assist the organisations to achieve their institutional goals. I think it important to believe that you have the skill and the tenacity to perform at a higher level than you actually can. It provides necessary drive to move you forward- keep you on the edge. As I reflect on this journey, I am sure I would not have come this far had I shied away from the trust that my colleagues and acquaintances bestowed upon me. As in any field, it is necessary to accept challenges and strive to excel in the realm of writing as well.

To address the final question regarding creating a niche of your own, it is imperative that you consistently update yourself and the social connections that you have. There are multifarious means that can be adopted for professional growth. The magic word here is collaboration. Without collaboration with peers, it will be difficult to enhance your professional skills in writing and to create a space of your own in the field. Professional networks provide unique opportunities to showcase your skills and to disseminate the knowledge that you have gained. In addition, professional get-togethers provide opportunities for interaction and networking. Another keyword that one should remember in the professional world is 'sharing'. Writing is a skill that is visible only when you actually write. As I gained more proficiency as a writer of academic texts, I started sharing it to my peers through workshops and seminars. NeltaChoutari can be very effective platform to share your ideas. As I write for this webzine now, I believe this will further enhance my own skills through the act of sharing.

As I wrap up this short personal reflection on my journey in the field of academic writing, I would like to reiterate the main ideas once again. No matter how good you think you are in writing, there is always place for improvement. Since there are many different types of writing, gaining proficiency in any one of them requires constant effort. Moreover, it is through collaborative effort and sharing that one can truly build a niche within the professional circle. Skill enhancement is a constant effort, and as Steve

Jobs stated, it is important to 'stay hungry and stay foolish' in order to attain and retain proficiency in the field of academic writing.



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## Reflections on TSC written test

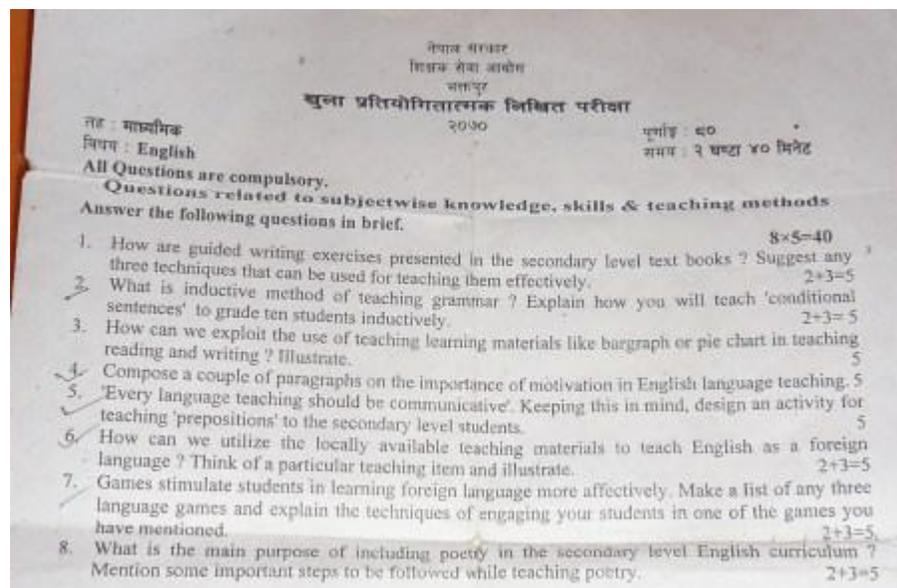
July 1, 2014

**Praveen Kumar Yadav**

After a gap of nearly 17 years, recently Teacher Service Commission (TSC), the government body to appoint teachers for community schools, has recruited teachers for Secondary, Lower Secondary and Primary levels across the country. The process consisted of both written and oral examinations. For written examinations, a total of a total of 413,000 examinees across the country had appeared. Based on results of the written examinations, those successful candidates were called for the interview.

**NeltaChoutari would like to congratulate all those who succeeded in TSC exams and have recently become teachers in government owned community schools.**

Out of those successful teachers, the three have shared their experience and reflections through this blog entry. They have been appointed by the government to teach English in secondary levels. Specifically, they have presented their reflections fewer than three different sections included in the written test.



### **Kishor Parajuli:**



I have been teaching aspects of ELT theoretically to students pursuing higher studies on the one hand, and at the same time, I have been implementing those theories while teaching English at secondary level.

As you see all the questions included in this section are basically related to pedagogy. While answering them, I have integrated my experiences of teaching students English theoretically as well as practically.

Even facilitating and attending in different professional development activities, especially conducted by NELTA in Kathmandu, Makwanpur and other branches have provided me enough exposure to answer these questions comprehensively.

### **Upendra Kafle:**



Teaching means creating environment where our students can learn many things. While creating such an environment, we apply many theories, methods and techniques. When applied, some of them become effective while others turn out to be ineffective. Hence, based on the best of classroom teaching practices, I have answered the questions from this section. Besides, my answers have reflected on my own experience of teaching different aspects, including teaching grammar, use of teaching materials, language games, teaching poetry and writing exercise.

### **Abadhes Ray:**



Apart from my knowledge and experience with ELT, I, as a regular reader, must give credit to Choutari for enabling me to answer these questions. I recalled different blog entries that I have read here on the blog while answering those question. For instance, some of the articles I found useful for me to answer the questions of this section include [the blog post](#).

Not only this, I did two online courses from Oregon University and Maryland University, which were very effective for learning. Training and access program have also enhanced me to effectively write answers.

| Problem Solving Questions  |  | 2×10=20 |
|--|--|---------|
| 9. According to the data, the percentage of trained teaching force in Nepal is very high. Despite this fact, the achievement of students, is not satisfactory. As an ELT expert identify the problems regarding English Language Teaching in the secondary level and suggest practical measures to be adopted for the betterment.  |  | 5+5=10  |
| 10. Most of the classrooms in Nepal consist of learners from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Due to mother tongue influence each learner may perceive English language as a difficult subject. In such a situation how should a teacher cater for the needs of individual student and how should a school ensure the supply of appropriate learning materials and the use of relevant techniques. |  | 5+5=10  |

### **Kishor Parajuli:**

This section includes problem solving questions. While answering such questions, I reflected on my own experience of facing challenges and problems teaching English to secondary schools. Some of key pertinent problems I mentioned in the test include English teachers' reluctance in adopting changes in teaching practice, methods and techniques, traditional translation method that still exists in schools, lack of reflection about their teaching and how the learners can learn better, lack of evaluation and follow up of trainings, and application of action research. For such problems, there's the only solution, i.e. comprehensive engagement of English teachers in various modes of professional development. A teacher should not only teach, but they should also play a series of roles—of a facilitator, a problem solver, a trainer, an instructor, a guide, a leader and many more.

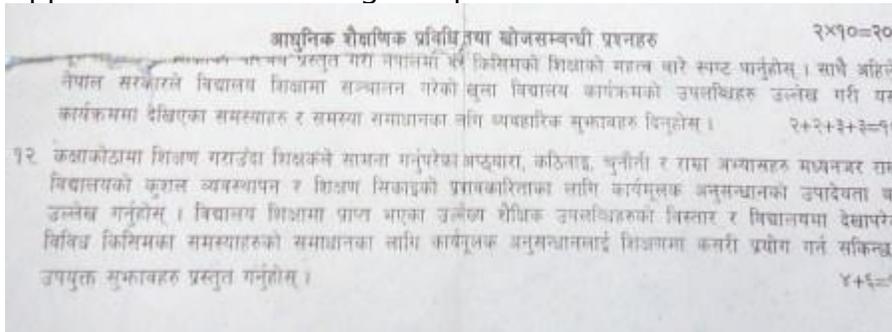
To cater the needs of individual learners from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the teacher should apply an appropriate method and practice based on action research. Besides, they can organize group discussions, focus group discussions, and role plays for their active and meaning participation in the classroom, by adopting learner centered teaching methods.

### **Upendra Kafle:**

Over a decade of my involvement in English language teaching, I have come across several problems, and I have also solved them properly by adopting practical measures. Firstly, based on my own experience of problem solving, I attempted the question. Secondly, ELT researches and case analysis of different contexts that I have gone through during and after my academic career were equally helpful. Finally, I have used my observation and learning from various professional development trainings in order to answer the questions.

## Abadhesh Ray:

As a reader of Choutari and a teacher, I was familiar with the problems and their solution faced in ELT. Besides, I had taken two online courses from Oregon University and Maryland University respectively. I was also an access teacher and attended ELT trainings. All these professional engagements with ELT community have been quite supportive while answering the questions.



## Kishor Parajuli:

In my opinion, the concept of open school program introduced by the government is quite good with the view to providing education to all and especially targeting to those who cannot attend school regularly. However, problems I have seen are on the part of execution. The success of the program would reach a high only after all the stakeholders are sensitized on the significance of open school program, and they also play their respective roles.

I find teachers themselves responsible behind classroom problems. While teaching the students, they face challenges and also celebrate their achievements. It is the teachers who witness stories of success and failure of their efforts in the classroom. What they can do is they can carry out an action research in order to learn from failure and replicate and scale up best practices to improve teaching learning activities.

## Upendra Kafle:

Awareness for the government's open school program is yet to be raised as I do not find many target groups, viz. students and guardians familiar with the program. As a result, they have not been able to get benefitted substantially. Besides, local ownership for the program needs to be developed for effective implementation.

No doubt, action research is an appropriate and common tool to solve all the problems related to teaching. It includes problem investigation, taking action & fact-finding.

Based on the findings, teachers can adopt most appropriate strategy within its own teaching environment.

**Abadhes Ray:**

Lack of massive orientation to the target groups and low participation are key problems I have identified so far in the government's open school program. The participation needs to be encouraged through stakeholders' engagement in execution.

In order to scale up effective classroom practices and solving pedagogical problems in ELT, action research can be applied for tangible improvement. It is useful for both classroom management and effective teaching practice. A small scale research can be carried out on a specific aspect of teaching. Its application can further improve the teaching and learning outcomes.

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 Posted by praveenkumaryadava

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## **Speakers' Club for Professional Development**

July 1, 2014

*Umes Shrestha*

As we wrapped up the June 20 session of our Speakers' Club (KU), I remembered how a small dream that I always had turned into a magnificent reality. I had a dream of getting involved in a professional club like the Toastmasters but with English language teachers as its members. And in this article, I want to share the reasons why I wanted to set up the club and talk about how the club helped me in my journey of personal and professional development.



After joining KU's M.Ed ELT program, I had this idea – the idea about setting up a speaking forum – in my head and luckily my professor Dr. Laxman Gnawali had also thought about it for some time. After spending some time with some seniors and my classmates brainstorming about how to set up such forum and discussing on its name and modality, on August 2013, we officially started with the first session of the Speaker's Club. It had the participation of students of M.Ed. ELT and M.Phil. English Language Education as well as a number of faculty members.

Our sessions would follow the Toastmaster's model with four featured speakers, four guest speakers, there would be a grammarian, a time keeper, a fidget analyzer and an

'aha'-counter. After the designated speakers complete their four-minute speech on a pre-defined topic, the other participants would vote for them, and the four guest speakers would complete their sessions. To make these weekly sessions more interesting, we would also have short video clips of inspirational speeches downloaded from youtube. Then, the evaluators would step in front to present their evaluations, usually in a constructive way. The following week, we would switch around our roles and there would be a new set of speakers and evaluators.

In this way, we have been running the sessions for almost a year. We have seen the number of participants increase from mere a dozen to over seventy. We have also had a few wonderful professional speakers come to the sessions and share their stories and ideas. Some of them were – current NELTA president Hemanta Raj Dahal, youth motivational speaker Rajendra Mulmi, member of a Toastmasters Club Sikshit Bhatta, English Language Fellow to Nepal Miriam Cornelli and media personality Santosh Shah.



One of the reasons why we needed to have the club is very obvious. English language teachers of Nepal usually do not have a very good command over the language they are supposed to teach. I may have put this very bluntly but I do believe that many of us focus on learning 'declarative knowledge' but we miss out on how to acquire 'procedural knowledge' and 'communicative competency'. We know the grammar rules and definitions by heart, but we commit various mistakes/errors specifically while

speaking in English. The club therefore gave the English language teachers and students the perfect venue to enrich their communicative skills.

Likewise, another reason to set up the club is to give a unique space for the English language teachers to enhance their personal and professional skills. Similar to any workshops or trainings, the club itself could become an opportunity for teachers to develop. And for this very reason, I was so passionate about the Speakers' Club. Many a times, I concentrated more on the club sessions rather than focusing on my regular studies because I could feel my speaking skills developing in a very tangible way. For instance, I have significantly cut down the filler words (um, aha, you know, etc) while speaking and I have also developed how to control my movement and gesture.

I vividly remember the first time I gave a speech in the club. I was literally scared stiff through out my speech, I got stuck so many times and my filler words were embarrassingly all over the places. It was a pretty nerve wrecking experience. I used to think – "I am a teacher, and I speak all the time. So speaking in public should be a simple task". But I soon realized that teaching in a classroom full of students and speaking in front of an audience and evaluators are two completely different games. And thus learning the art of public speaking, I can bet my life on it, has definitely made me more effective and confident teacher. I have seen some of my club friends transform from very shy, zero-confident speakers to very self-assured, energetic speakers.

Another reason why the club sessions are so beneficial to the teachers is because of the evaluation process. The team of evaluators gives a speaker feedback, comments and criticisms on his/her grammar efficiency, timing, structure of the speech, movement, gestures, eye contact and overall effect. This gives the speaker a chance to improve his/her verbal as well as non-verbal communication skills. Most importantly, this process makes the participants more open to criticism. We don't like being criticized, do we? But here, we learn the art of giving constructive criticism and we also develop the art of reacting positively to such criticisms. (I like comparing this to the concept of peer-observation because one of the ways to develop teachers is by having peers give honest and supportive feedback.)

There are a couple of more things very important related with the evaluation process. First, it makes the audience truly appreciate the effort speakers put into their speech and not form 'opinions' about anyone who speaks in public. With this appreciation comes the feeling of empathy. Second, audience members can learn from the mistakes the speakers commit and understand 'dos and don'ts' of public speaking. In theory, the club provides both reflective and experiential learning to all participants.

And finally, one of the direct benefits of the club is that we can 'network' and build relationship with fellow teachers and public speaking enthusiasts. Human beings are inherently hardwired for communication and the club provides the context for English language teachers to communicate with each other. For us, the club has been an amazing place to meet and interact with colleagues from different batches and level.



As I mentioned earlier, the club has made a tremendous impact on me, personally and professionally. It has given me a space to 'practice' and has helped me become a better presenter and a confident speaker. I believe the club has also provided a push for me in my continuous drive to 'becoming' an open-minded and reflective teacher.

And here's the biggest takeaway for anyone reading this article. You can easily set up the speakers' club in your schools and colleges with zero expense. All one needs is a group of motivated members who can 'invest' at least two hours a week. The club could have your own model and procedures which the members can collaborate and decide on. If the club can have consistency, it will turn out to be a great learning platform for both the teachers and the students. So don't wait, just jump right into it.

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### **Umes Shrestha**

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👤 Posted by praveenkumaryadava

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## **Reflection on 'Behind Academic Publishing-Why, How & What'**

July 1, 2014

Krishna Prasad Khatiwada

'Get your name registered!'... I excitedly followed the post on the timeline of NeltaChoutari, after I came to learn that Mr. Bal Krishna Sharma was the facilitator of the workshop titled Behind Academic Publishing: Why, How and What. I find the workshop as a crucial step forward for an aspiring writer like me to know more about how to write academic journal articles and get them published. Upon signing up for the registration, I made a call to Umes, one of NeltaChoutari editors, prior to the scheduled workshop to confirm my participation. Finally, I participated in the three-hour workshop which I believe paved a way toward academic writing and publishing with the knowledge and styles that the facilitator shared with us during the session.

Academic writing and publishing plays a vital role in pursuing our higher studies. Everyone's shoes pinches when they sit for writing something, especially starting with what we have thought of and writing the thought in a coherent way. Writers are not born, but made. What those who are already writers or who aspire to become writers do is; they encompass a writing process, that includes some stages such as jotting down the ideas, making mental picture of what we are supposed to write, bubbling the ideas around the theme, organizing them, write, re-write, review, re-review, and final write up. In this reflective blog post, I try to recapitulate the workshop with my own experience of writing aligning with why, where and what to write.

Writing and research are the integral part of facilitating our success in academia. Until we demonstrate who we are with our writing, our knowledge seems like a beautiful flower having no scent, unrecognized, undecorated and unvalued. To be more specific, although writing and publishing is an integral part of the higher studies, many scholars are not found engaging in such an activity. In the wake of such scenario, I believe the workshop organized by Choutari team was so fruitful for over thirty passionate scholars who participated in order to rigorously engage in academic writing and publishing.

The session started with the statement, 'It is too late to dig a well when your house is on fire', meaning that, it will be too late to start writing and publishing when one thinks of applying for the M. Phil or Ph.D. abroad. So, let's start writing for the purpose of, name and fame, eligibility for pursuing our higher studies, sharing our expertise and contributing in a larger society, and also for our passion. Until we do not start writing

and publishing, what worth we write, we do not know who we are. Forget about the rest of the world who are unknown to us, and let's write to make us known to the world.

Looking back to few of my academic papers, they have been well written and the problem what I always faced is publishing them. Hence, once writing task is over, many of novice writers wonder where to get it published. We cannot deny the fact that scholarly writing contribute to the larger society and the field they are aligned with. However, such a contribution is not worthwhile until they are disseminated through publication. No worries for where to get them published; why not to start with our own weblog, local journals and other publication venues like NeltaChoutari, Journal of NELTA, and Journal of Nepalese Linguistics. They can be the better options for novice writers to write and get published locally or nationally. Even beyond the boundary, one can publish in Asian EFL Journal, Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics, Korean Journal of Applied Linguistics, JALT, and other regional journals. Based on publication experience in domestic and regional journals, the novice scholars in ELT can easily get their work published in the world renowned TESOL Quarterly, Applied Linguistics, Modern Language Journal, Studies in SLA, Language Learning, Journal of Sociolinguistics, etc. Local and national newspapers, magazines can also be the venues to get one's writing published for the wider readership.

Let's talk about what to write, and how to we make our writing worth publishing. We can start publishing our academic articles, may be, the term paper, if worth, to the local journals. It gives us a lot of feedback for polishing our writing. The publication may be of data-based empirical articles, conceptual and theoretical proposals, reflections and anecdotes, commentaries of field related survey, book reviews, software reviews, article reviews, and responses to the articles. The data-based empirical articles are the highly prioritized for of the best manuscripts of publishing. And it is recommended that they are to be specific format according to the need of the publishers' guidelines.

The major part of the academic writing is giving credit to previous knowledge creators. Addressing, taking, assimilating or confronting with their ideas need rigorous reading process and we need to plan carefully for making our writing an established one. The concept of academic theft or plagiarism was highly brought to a live discussion among participants during of the workshop.

These acts of academic dishonesty, or theft, or plagiarism include: representing the words or ideas of someone else as one's own without giving credit to the author; cheating: getting credit by deceptive means; fabrication: making up information;

falsification: altering information/records; multiple submissions: using the same work to receive multiple instances of credit. These sorts of plagiarism are very common to us, knowingly or unknowingly we plagiarize other's is which is an academic crime. Our reluctances, lassitude habit, lack of time for the submission of the work, language deficiencies, cultural differences and lack of knowledge about what is plagiarism and how it is held are some of the reasons for committing this crime. Sometimes, without knowing what would be the consequences, we plagiarize, resulting defaming our name, being expelled from the universities, rejection from the job, publication and grant. So, it is highly prioritized area in academia to be conscious about giving and taking credit to the sources we work on. These focuses of Mr Bal Krishna Sharma has given me a view the world of academic writing consolidating the ideas with the plagiarism.

Finally, the workshop, a highly participatory one, has given us the fine particles of ingredients in writing and publishing academic journal articles. The only thing we need to do is to make the ingredients mix up with the established knowledge we have with and develop reader friendly write up. This not only makes our writing a sharper and stronger but also contributes us in our professional development. I believe, we are in the process of getting eternity through our write up and the only thing we need to do is 'start with a good heed'. Let's write with passion. Happy Writing!



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 Posted by praveenkumaryadava

## **Choutari Workshop: Photo Blog**

July 1, 2014

*Texts by Praveen, Photos by Umes*

NeltaChoutari organized a workshop titled **Behind Academic Publishing: Why, How and What** at King's College, Babar Mahal in Kathmandu on June 28, 2014.



Bal Krishna Sharma, a founder of NeltaChoutari and a Ph. D. scholar at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA, facilitated the one-day workshop, attended by over 30 emerging authors, especially English teachers and students from Kathmandu University and Tribhuvan University.



Sharing his experience as a past editor for the Journal of NELTA and NeltaChoutari, manuscript reviewer for several national and international journals, and a teacher of academic writing and publishing at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, facilitator Sharma highlighted on significance of publication in the academic field. Besides, he also brought into discussion on some important issues such a plagiarism and citation in publishing.

In this workshop, the participants were informed about different venues of publishing, and opportunities and challenges that lie within each. Toward the end, the workshop focused on some examples and types of academic writing products such as journal articles, magazine and blog posts, reflections, etc.



The participant writers were engaged in an activity that urges the potential writers to think about their workable topic and brainstorm, and draft their own piece of writing. The product of the workshop will be published in upcoming issue of NeltaChoutari and other appropriate ELT publication venues after making necessary editing and other changes.

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[Posted by Umes Shrestha](#)