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Mentoring Teachers during Covid-19: A Collaborative Organizational Approach

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Abstract

Mentoring is an essential part of teacher development. It is generally acknowledged that a master talent in mentoring is the ability to make resources available to a novice protégé to help them educate successfully. This study illustrates how mentorship technique aided in boosting teacher motivation for online instruction during COVID-19. According to the research, learning is successful when there are close relationships between mentors and mentees, opportunities for growth, and a supportive atmosphere. The investigation took place in a Nepalese school in Kathmandu. Ten English Language (EL) instructors from Nursery - 10 participated in the study. They were mentored by the head of the English Department and a computer assistant for two months. The Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) model of mentoring was used, which stood on connectivism philosophy. The study employed a narrative methodology. Semi-structured interview and thematic analysis techniques were used to produce and analyse data. Standing on their stories, the teachers were familiarized with the concept of Web-Enhanced Language Learning (WELL), Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Finally, teachers produced technology enhanced lesson plans fusing the content with technology for the new pedagogy. To assess the results of mentoring during the pre-phase, while-phase, and post-phase, in-depth interviews were carried out. The findings highlight the difficulties mentees faced: a lack of confidence or a sense of inferiority in online teaching environment, as well as how self-sufficiency was restored after mentoring. According to the study, effective mentorship can still take place in challenging educational circumstances.

Keywords: *Mentoring, Covid-19, TPACK, Connectivism, Professional Development*

Introduction

According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2007), mentoring is a process in which individuals with a great deal of expertise, information, and skills provide advice and assistance to individuals at work or who are getting ready for the workforce. Moreover, in the field of education, the process of guiding, instructing,

influencing, and encouraging a new or inexperienced teacher is known as mentoring (Koki, 1997). In a workplace characterised by mutual trust and belief, a mentor teacher is usually perceived as the one offering leadership, direction, and instruction to another educator with less experience. Additionally, mentoring is a continual opportunity in which beneficial, intimate, and reciprocal connections are made while putting an emphasis on success, with emotional support playing a crucial role, according to Wong and Prekumar (2007). It may be inferred from the conversations that mentoring is a nurturing, professional, and cooperative process that motivates mentees to realize their full potential. The mentorship experience during the COVID-19 epidemic is examined in this article as a lesson for enhancing professional mentoring in school sectors and promoting teacher development.

This reflection is a result of helping to foster and support the development of teaching skills while conducting online instruction. During the pandemic, there was a unique opportunity for everyone to pause, reflect, and reconsider. After investing in a mentor/ mentee association before the epidemic, where trust and chemistry had already been built, it was only logical to continue mentoring. This was a special chance for mentors to ramp up amid the emergency and for mentees to offer a new outlook on their future evolution.

After 1990, web-based online learning started to gain popularity, but it wasn't until Covid-19 that we fully recognized the advantages of this sort of education, when the Government of Nepal announced for full online courses starting in March 2020. Online teaching platforms for learning make use of terms like online learning, digital learning, distance teaching, mobile learning, computer assisted learning, massive open online courses (MOOCs), and web enhanced learning. However, except the nation's sole Open University (NOU) (Kunwar et al., 2020), the Nepalese government has not been successful in addressing the online environment. Before Covid-19, many schools in Nepal had never integrated online instruction into the classrooms. Nepalese Government's sudden announcement to transport teaching on this platform, caught the teachers off guard. Many schools in Nepal were unable to conduct successful web enhanced classes in lack of proper operating system.

Schools at all levels were required to make an urgent move to network education in response to COVID-19, which may be both an opportunity and a difficulty (Toquero, 2020). Because of this, there has been a lot of research on emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 outbreak. For instance, Basilaia and Kvavadze (2020) used Google Meet to conduct a case study with 950 students. The outcomes demonstrated that the quick switch to online learning was successful. Likewise, the Zoom transformation, a significant degree of interactive distance learning, innovations for unintentional instructional reform, collaborative competence and self-help, technical difficulties, and pedagogical uncertainty are just a few of the interesting phenomena Langford and Damsa (2020) discovered in Norway. Additionally, Putra et al. (2020) looked into how Indonesian students learned about the COVID-19 pandemic by accessing ten websites

there. According to some academics, using an LMS that supported teaching and learning could address every problem with online education.

A number of learning tools are provided by the Learning Management System (LMS) for effective online teaching learning. It is a well-balanced software that allows teachers to check on students' progress, provide feedback, and form connections. It also enables easy access to learning resources (Kehrwald & Parker, 2019). Al-Fraihat et al. (2020) claim that a well-designed LMS connects people through online collaborative associations, seminars, and specialized trainings. Since Nepalese schools lacked a learning management system, students' learning was affected considerably during Covid-19. While many teachers looked to LMS for a good learning environment, many additional online interactive technologies were used in its absence. The successful stories that were shared by some well-known universities and schools turned out to be useful lessons with interactive tools. Self-awareness, passion, and intellectual engagement all decreased after switching to online classrooms, while technology use also merely improved (Patricia, 2020). Additionally, Coman et al. (2020) emphasized how teachers' poor organizational and technical skills as well as their ineffective teaching methods for the online environment may have led to the decline in learning and engagement. In the same way, Shrestha (2018) had voiced some concerns regarding instructors' motivation, understanding, and confidence regarding information and communication technologies in the setting of Nepal.

Research suggests that at the start of the lockdown, teachers felt isolated from their colleagues and students due to the physical distance (Kim & Asbury, 2020). Teaching students in the virtual world or cyberspace was unthinkable in Nepal at the outset. Concerns were raised about students requiring constant assistance from teachers were left on their own fates (Poulou, 2020). Concerns were also expressed concerning the logistics of delivering distant education, including how to modify lesson plans, give assignments and feedback, and conduct formative and summative tests. The COVID-19 pandemic had prompted people to reconsider schools' and teachers' roles (Colao et al., 2020). The majority of the time, teachers had to do their own preparations because, according to studies thus far, only a small number of schools offered expert-led training for preparing teachers for online sessions.

Theoretical framework

In order to perform mentorship, this study adopts a connectivist perspective. ICT is now a necessary component of the twenty-first century education. Today, it is thought that teachers should have a foundational understanding of ICT in order to best prepare their pupils for future success. Digital skills are now viewed to be essential for teachers as well as students. A digital-era theory is connectivism. It highlights how internet tools like search engines, web browsers, online forums, wikis, and social networks open up new learning opportunities. The instructors adopted connectivism as a way to improve and cascade their learning because they not only learned to connect with

other members of the school community online but also with teachers all over the world through webinars. Both connective knowledge and the connectivism learning theory are modern methods to understanding and studying learning in the digital age, both in terms of what they offer and what they question. (Siemens, 2005; Downes, 2006). Siemens (2005) states the eight principles of connectivism:

1. The diversity of opinion is the cornerstone of knowledge and learning.
2. Learning is the process of linking specialized nodes or information sources.
3. Non-human devices may contain learning capabilities.
4. Knowledge is not as important as learning.
5. Connections need to be maintained and fostered in order to encourage continual learning.
6. One essential skill is the ability to recognize links between different subjects, theories, and concepts.
7. Learning activities are intended to provide learners with current, correct information.
8. Making decisions is a learning experience in and of itself.

The researcher mentored the teachers using connectivism as the theoretical framework for the study. The mentorship process included the implementation of Siemens' (2006) connectivism taxonomy as a phased view of how teachers interact and investigate learning in a wired context. The taxonomy starts with the fundamentals before moving on to the more intricate units:

1. **Awareness and receptivity -** At this stage, the participants (in this case, teachers) are exposed to resources and tools and acquire the fundamentals of organizing a plethora of data. For instance, internet, wikis, blogs, and aggregators.

2. **Forming – connection –** After completing stage 1, the participants move on to level 2, where they actively participate in the learning environment by choosing and utilizing tools and resources. The needs of the participants have an impact on the resource choices.

3. **Contribution and involvement –** At this point, the participants must be able to select the tool that is most appropriate for the task at hand. Depending on what they need to know, do, or believe, a learner might decide to sign up for blog feeds, go to a conference, locate a mentor, or enroll in a course.

4. **Pattern recognition –** The participant moves from passively consuming content to actively contributing to the environment. They now know more about what is going on within the network or environment as a whole. A learner will become

better at identifying new informational connections or "changing winds" of knowledge the longer they engage in a learning environment.

5. **Meaning-making –** The participant is capable of understanding meaning at this level. What do the fresh patterns suggest? What do the adjustments and changes in patterns mean? How should a student react, change, and adapt? Action and shifting one's viewpoint on things are based on making meaning.

6. **Praxis –** The participant can conduct a critical analysis of the devices, procedures, and elements that make up an ecology or network through the cyclical process of praxis, which entails reflection, experimentation, and action. The development, modification, and renewal of their own learning network are actively supported by the learners.

According to connectivism, knowledge is activated when a learner connects to and shares information with a learning community, marking the beginning of learning (Kop and Hill, 2008). The digital taxonomy below, known as Bloom's Digital Taxonomy, illustrates the connectivism taxonomy in Figure 1 and Figure 2 giving the glimpse of the tools used in the digital taxonomy.

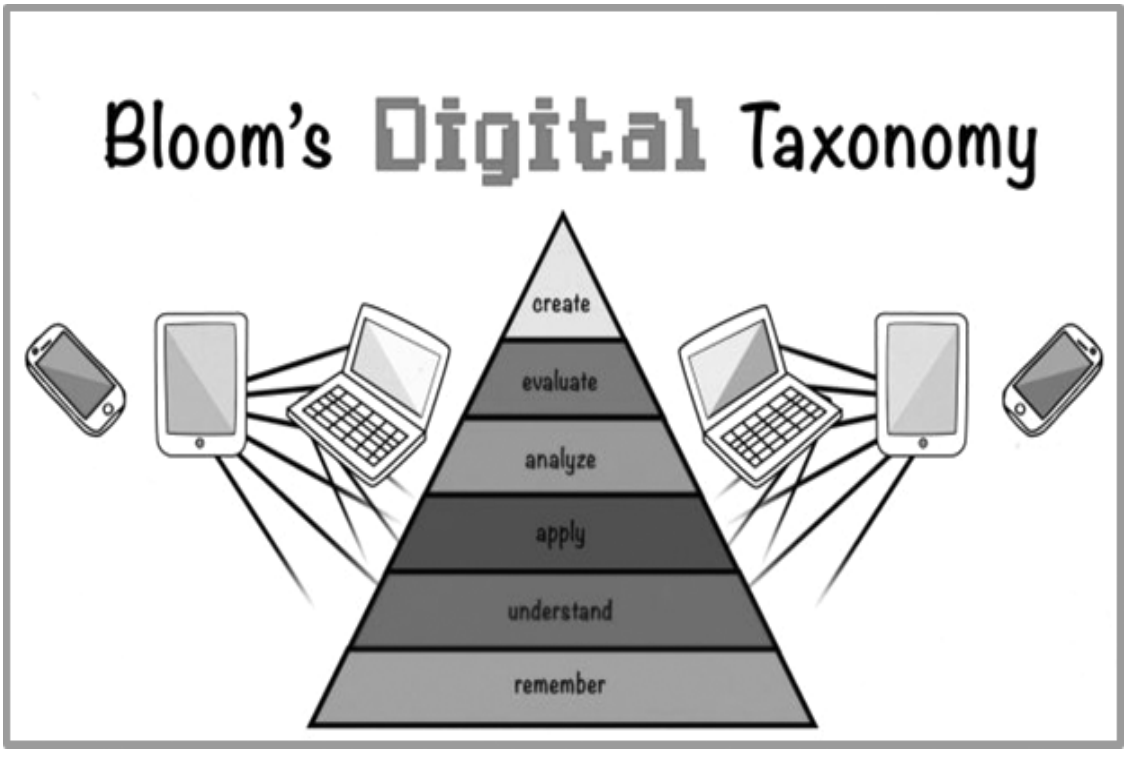

Figure 1: Bloom's digital taxonomy (source: www.educatorstechnology.com)

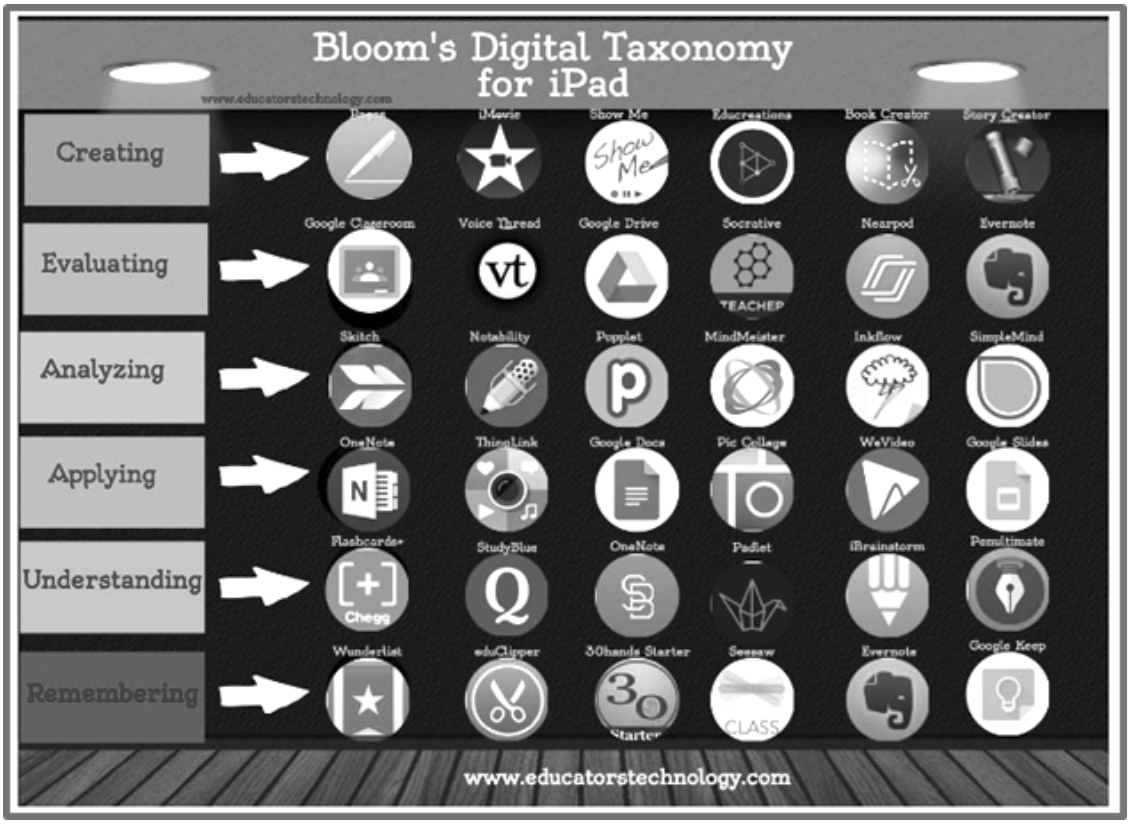

Figure 2: Bloom's digital taxonomy for iPad (source: www.educatorstechnology.com)

Teachers used digital tools such as Zoom, PowerPoint, Gmail, Google Drive, Google docs, Google slides, Power point slides, Canva, Padlet, Facebook, messaging tools and more to engage students in virtual teaching and learning, Teachers formed connections while choosing the most beneficial tools that facilitated self-organization and the spread of knowledge. Social media was used by teachers to apply connectivism in the classroom. During mentoring, the teachers were the learners and later on these learners helped in connecting to the knowledge while teaching other learners in classrooms. Teachers and students connected with each other using common devices including laptops, desktop PCs, and mobile.

In the study that I conducted for the purpose of the article, the learners (in this case, the teachers being mentored) were advanced to the sixth level by including them in various activities required for each level. Setting the goals and objectives for the mentoring process required a great deal of assistance from the taxonomy. Through communication nodes, the teachers had to produce and share their expertise with their connections. From the plethora of digital tools with the help of Bloom's Digital Taxonomy teachers were equipped with the technological tools.

Significance of the study

Several studies have established that online teaching learning provides numerous alternatives for both students and teachers (Koirala et al., 2020). However, as Zarei and Mohammadi (2021) point out, if the technological foundations are not in place, online learning could become a problem. Similarly, the epidemic highlighted a lack of a good system in higher education as well as educated teachers to use digital platforms and become aware of the world's fast-changing education atmosphere (Rashid & Yadav, 2020). Furthermore, two-thirds of 226 Nepalese college students preferred traditional classrooms to online classes, according to an online survey. Furthermore, Nepal et al. (2020) disclosed, 77.8% of children choose conventional schools.

The School Sector Development Plan (SSDP, 2016) emphasizes lifelong learning. Similarly, the secondary English curriculum specifically mentions creative learning (MoE, 2019). Unfortunately, many Nepalese schools still follow the conventional educational style. Despite the fact that SSDP (2016) highlights the importance of ICT-integrated teaching, numerous schools' challenges with online classes were visible during Covid-19 (MoE, 2019). From the empirical study and policy reviews above, it can be inferred that online classrooms can be effective in disseminating knowledge, but there are challenges with technology use, teacher efficiency and student satisfaction.

As a result, it was realized that in the process of knowledge dissemination, the crucial role falls on teachers. Consequently, the Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) method of mentoring was maintained in order to develop competencies required to teach the technologically untrained teachers. Based on the connectivist idea, certain digital teaching and learning tools were presented while taking the Bloom's Digital Taxonomy into consideration. In the early stages of the study, different digital tools were employed for the remembering, comprehending, and implementing phases. The lessons were distinct from those in the earlier stages because they were intended to help students acquire higher-order learning abilities, such as analyzing, evaluating, and making tools. The teachers were required to create their lesson plans based on the taxonomy after receiving mentoring on the use of digital tools. Here, teachers were expected to stand on three aspects: technology, pedagogy, and content while fusing all the three would produce the TPACK lesson plans. The following research questions were addressed in the study:

Research questions

1. What are the experiences of the teachers teaching online classes during Covid-19?
2. What are the challenges faced by the teachers?
3. How mentoring can be helpful during difficult times for teachers?

Literature review

Studies on teacher mentorship show benefits for English teachers on a local and a global scale for teacher research, that is, teacher study into professional issues that affect them (Edwards, 2021). During the mentoring process, teachers who require assistance are watched over by teachers with more classroom experience, pedagogical processes, and classroom management responsibility. According to Mckingley (2017), mentor teachers are qualified educators with in-depth expertise in both their fields of speciality and the conditions of the educational setting. It is much more helpful in emergency situations since it gives senior educators the responsibility of problem-solving. Additionally, in a collaborative effort to support one another, teachers start expressing their problems and learning from each other. As stated by Moody (2020), formalizing the mentor role for seasoned instructors as opposed to an expert also helps to enhance academic professionalism by giving teachers a new position to hold on the career ladder. As a result, mentorship as a concept is evolving.

Mentoring responsibilities should not conflict with those of management, supervision, or training. Instead, it is one of the teacher-to-teacher professional discussions. For many teachers, COVID-19 caused an increase in stress, tension, and isolation. The relationships involving mentor and mentee and the cyclical nature of mentoring allowed for the issues caused by the epidemic to be resolved (Hudson, 2013). Instead of the mentee's normal reliance on their mentor and the idea that the mentor has all the solutions, the adoption of the mentorship can be dynamic and beneficial to both parties. At this particular moment, both mentors and mentees faced the same dangers, demands, and lack of fixed path. Additionally, COVID-19 promoted a sense of urgency for personal growth by promoting a greater understanding of what matters and the value of career ambitions (McMaster et al., 2020).

Mentoring is based on a variety of ideas in educational settings, including those concerning development, learning skills, teaching, coaching skill training models, leadership theory, and the researchers' own theory (Ehrich et al., 2001). The fundamental building block to start mentoring is reflection. According to Cherkowski (2019), the construct of reflection is a key finding in the field of education studies. Schon (1983; 1987) asserts that reflection is an essential task that experts (mentors and mentees) must engage in to aid in their quest for fresh perspectives on their field. According to Woloshyn et al. (2019), encouraging the general growth and wellbeing of the mentors and mentees is a shared commitment. Mentorship thus assists in the growth of instructors. According to Kumaravadivelu (2003), qualified instructors constantly strive for both high standards of instruction and, more crucially, personal growth. As technology-enhanced trainings helped teachers run more effective online classrooms throughout the crisis, mentoring teachers acted as a kind of teacher development. Interactions were crucial to understanding the situation and giving the teachers the proper support during the process.

The review makes it very evident that mentoring is a technique for helping teachers think critically about their own experiences. It can help teachers who want to adapt their teaching methods or achieve their next goal. In the majority of mentoring relationships, educators and mentors examine their work and seek out solutions for any issues they see.

Research methods and procedures

Research design

The selected methodology for this research is narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry, in the words of Clandinin (2013), is a way of studying and understanding experiences. The participants' narrated stories helped the researcher comprehend their experiences, which aided in the process of determining how prepared they were to conduct online lessons. The collection of narrative data, can be oral, written, or even audio-visual, can be done via interviews, observations, diaries, and written stories (Elliott, 2005). The participants' interviews, which were performed in a blended mode, were the study's main source of data.

Interviewing the teachers both in-person and virtually using Zoom was a significant part of the process of collecting and analyzing the data. In-depth interviews were conducted in four different settings. In the first month, there was a weekly meeting with the teachers. Teachers were educated on using the Zoom, interactive tools like Quizlet and Padlet, social media like Facebook, and messaging tools like messenger and WhatsApp in the first two weeks. In the other two weeks, through class observation, lesson planning with the concept of TPACK, and evaluation techniques via Google Docs, and Google Forms were put into effect. Finally, the teachers developed a log book to reflect on their classrooms throughout the second month helping to understand their progress in terms of confidence and context alignment with technology. Narrative inquiry was very useful in comprehending the teachers' experiences, which made it possible for the teachers to receive the proper mentorship.

Research site and participants

Participants of the study were purposefully selected. According to (Wolcott, 1994), the participants are carefully picked to reflect on a variety of experiences in relation to their learning environment, providing the researchers with material to rewrite their narrative. From Nursery to Class 10, ten English language teachers out of a particular school in Kathmandu Valley participated in this study. The research subjects were assigned pseudonyms in order to maintain ethical confidentiality. Before, after, and during the research process, these teachers were preparing for online classes in order to address the issues in classrooms like demotivation of students, online pedagogy, online teaching materials, lesson plans, interactivity, collaborative learning, digital tools and

so forth. When they were ready, the volunteers were selected for the study after being told of its objectives. Teachers used laptop computers and cell phones to instruct pupils online.

Research tools

Interviews, and digital artefacts were used to understand how the classes were being taken. The digital artefacts included the teachers' lesson plan, pictures, videos, audios, documents etc. The teachers were subjected to a hybrid semi-structured interview to learn more about their workplace environment and to understand exactly their prior and subsequent classroom experiences. Over the period of two months, four interviews with the teachers were conducted. After the initial interview, others were also performed to find out more about current events, employees' working conditions, their comfort level with media technology, and the effectiveness of online courses. Interviews were intended to material production, homework, classwork, and feedback, as well as formative and summative evaluation design. The interviews provided the glimpses of practices adapted in online classrooms.

Data collection, analysis, and mentoring

Interviews with participants were conducted in order to gather data since the tales of the participants would be crucial in the process of creating meaning. They were given semi-structured open-ended questions to answer, and were free to do so (Bartholomew, Henderson & Marcia, 2000). In order to be transcribed afterwards, interviews were taped. Second, the evaluation of the online classes was aided by the usage of digital artefacts such as presentations, audio, video, files, photos, etc.

This study used a procedure of data gathering and analysis to obtain the required data. Following the analytical phase, coding and categorization were used to extract information, as well as the participants' common and unique experiences, which had to be related to the chosen study issues. Thematic categorization in relation to research questions was used to evaluate and explain the data (Miles et al., 2014). Inductive coding methods were applied in the study. To gauge the effectiveness of each mentoring week, emergent words, phrases, and paragraphs in the translated data were labeled during the coding process. While in data analysis process, the weekly mentoring stages could be used to gauge how well the teachers were doing in their online courses.

Findings

The results showed that in a learning environment, mentoring can aid in examining co-workers' needs. The instructors' stories demonstrated how the mentors supported them. When we asked them if they appreciated mentoring, they all responded enthusiastically, saying they did since it gave them access to technological aspects they had never

experienced before. The mentoring had a positive impact on the teachers' ability to provide online classes. The ability to create the syllabus for online classes was valued by the teachers. Teachers may experience some pressure during mentoring because of the additional work they must complete, but they may also experience happiness if they receive appropriate professional development guidance and advice. The mentors saw the mentoring relationship as supportive and left them with feeling encouraged, motivated and enthusiastic. They recognized the mentees' needs and encouraged their growth by fostering an environment of openness and affirmation in the classroom. The mentees and mentors worked together to resolve challenges with the online classroom.

The results of this study showed that the TPACK mentorship strategy was effective in teaching teachers how to incorporate technology into their lesson plans and subject matter. The findings indicate that the instructors' confidence levels in their Pedagogical Knowledge (PK) and Content Knowledge (CK) were greater than their confidence levels in their Technological Knowledge (TK) and Technological, Pedagogical, and Content Knowledge (TPACK). After being able to apply technology in their subject matter, their classroom pedagogy, and in both of them, the teachers revealed that the development of the skills necessary to teach using technology was aided by TPACK. It was anticipated that if technology usage in education continued in the future, these instructors would be able to mentor other inexperienced teachers once they had mastered the use of digital tools (see figures 1 and 2) to integrate them with curriculum and pedagogy. The teachers began conducting live online lessons as soon as they were finally able to create their lesson plans using the TPACK paradigm. The teacher accounts from the first two weeks to the next two weeks show how they gradually gained power through technological utilization. The first two weeks were spent introducing the online teaching resources to the teachers and providing them with the necessary technological equipment. The teachers, however, received training to use the technologies in their online lesson plans throughout the course of the remaining two weeks. The teachers were happy and felt more professional because they were familiar with the communication tools. Below are the teachers' comments from the first two weeks.

> *I don't have a laptop. I just feel so anxious how I will be able to run online classes without it. (Nursery Teacher)*
>
> *I have a mobile. I would be happy if I could run online classes with it, but I worry about the durability of the battery. I have six classes in a day. (Class I teacher)*
>
> *Now, I have a laptop and I can also run Zoom classes on it. (Class II teacher)*
>
> *I have a laptop but I am still facing the problem with designing the PowerPoint slides. (LKG teacher)*

In the lateral two weeks, teachers responded this way.

I feel really great that we teachers have started sharing each other's stories to learn how our classes have been running. It feels so comforting when we get someone ready to help. I feel empowered. I guess, now I can guide the new teachers in the use of technology in online classes. (Class UKG teacher)

I had never tried PowerPoint, Videos, audios, or even the pictures in my class. Now, I feel so comfortable with these as my students are more motivated toward completing their assignments. (Class VIII teacher)

Mentoring has helped me so much that I can confidently run online classes. (Class VI teacher)

Additionally, TPACK-trained teachers said it was incredibly straightforward to engage with students using numerous connective tools available online, such as Facebook, Messenger, and WhatsApp. Through the contacts they formed at worldwide conferences, the instructors' empowerment to choose what they wanted to learn also benefited from Zoom. Instead of waiting for mentors to teach them, they may uncover their zone of proximal growth on their own by interacting with like-minded individuals, including other teachers from around the world. By learning about the authentic teaching resources that were available through open resources, the teachers were able to connect their own learning to what they were doing in the classroom. The teachers asserted that the connectivism concept served as the learning framework for COVID-19. As they provided virtual classes for both themselves and their students, they claimed that the advent of connectivism was inevitable. They also came to understand that knowledge has many faces and is not confined to one field, the teachers connected with the appropriate tools from many learning platforms rather than relying solely on one. Since connections are more common outside of classroom boundaries, learning shouldn't be limited to its four walls as narrated by the teachers. The best strategy could be letting the students to look into the matter on their own. Let's look into the teachers' narratives.

I believe that our educational system is perhaps too outdated, making it difficult to handle situations like this. However, because of this circumstance, the teachers have had to sharpen their digital skills, which could be useful for the upcoming new educational system. (Class VII teacher)

I created a Messenger group communicated with each other and provided my opinion on their tasks. This way, it was easy to connect with students. Thank God, technology could be used this way! (Class V teacher)

Previously, I used to have very less activity-based teaching strategy. After connecting myself with the OPEN Community of Practice, I can discuss and ask for help about finding the right teaching materials for my students. This connection worldwide is so useful in shaping my professionalism. (Class X teacher).

I didn't know that knowledge was so pervasive and we could grasp them through communication. (UKG teacher)

The teachers received training on connectivism's application to online teaching as a part of the mentoring process. They were the active participants rather than the mere receivers of information. Teachers were able to connect with other educators from around the world because of the mentorship strategy. During the process, the teachers realized the feeling of togetherness in overcoming the problem. In the beginning, all teachers were found perplexed especially, the foundation level teachers; Nur-UKG. Later, when they worked together with the whole school teachers and mentors, their sense of belonging was developed, which helped in asking and interacting without any fear. As a mentor I learnt, teachers can be the real change makers in school if provided with proper mentoring. It was revealed that, mentoring is useful for both the new and experienced teachers to work and explore the changing classroom pedagogies.

Mentoring was created to assist teachers in their professional development. I realized that online education, in the hands of qualified teachers, benefited the children. Furthermore, inexperienced teachers gained ideas and knowledge about the importance of CALL, MALL, and WELL as the students and teachers used the computer-based teaching, mobile learning and finding resources from the web.

Data analysis gave the mentors a clear map on how to help teachers. For example, from the first interview, the administration decided to provide laptops to all teachers on the condition that the cost be deducted from their salaries over time. In other phases of data analysis, it was understood that the administration needed to organize mentoring to familiarize the teachers with online classes. Mentoring was organized by the head of English department and a computer teacher to guide the teachers with the content's fusion with the technology. In the second week, the teachers received training on how to run Zoom classes. During the third week, the information on teaching methods was collected. According to the data, despite the fact that teachers could now share the screen and teach simultaneously, students' attendance in class was declining day by day. At this price, we had to reconsider whether our classes were inspiring enough to motivate our students.

Then, personally, the researcher set up an interview with students in classes IX and X to find out what was causing the students' distraction. They claimed that they were given a lot of work, that the lecture method was boring, and that they only had a mobile and no laptop. I sought help and began attending webinars hosted by educators who had previously taught online courses. These webinars taught me, using digital tools, teachers could make their classes more interactive and engaging. Teachers also were suggested to look for help on their own so that we could collaboratively work on the problems. Then, we (I and computer teacher) worked on to provide the teachers with online learning mode of teaching environment; WELL (Web Enhanced Language Learning), CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), and MALL (Mobile Assisted

Language Learning). The teachers provided some videos, pictures, audio and texts for the students to download and do their homework, which addressed CALL approach. Similarly, those students without laptop also could download the files in their mobile and do their tasks addressing the MALL approach. Moreover, the teachers searched for already made available material on the internet through the WELL approach.

After all, the teachers started taking class tests using Google Forms, and Microsoft Forms. They used Padlet most often for interactive classes. Likewise, they also used WhatsApp, Messenger for communication and feedback. Finally, the teachers started running improved online classes after the 4th and the final meeting. The data collected from the students and teachers helped to understand the situation with the school's readiness to run online classes which helped in mentoring the teachers.

During mentoring, the two most important tools used were interviews and feedback, which were used in a progressive manner: one after another. The teachers received some feedback following each meeting to help them improve their teaching. The classes of the teachers, then, reflected again on their classroom proceedings. The gap was discovered after listening to the teachers' narratives, and feedback was given once more. This procedure followed a sequential order that lasted for four different sittings, as shown in the diagram below.

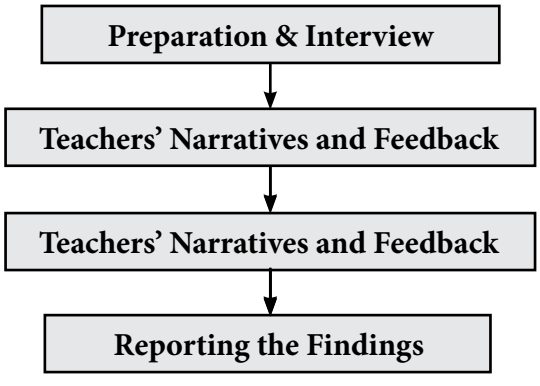

Figure 3. Teacher mentoring steps

Figure 3 depicts the four stages of mentoring in sequential order, highlighting the objective of each stage and its relationship to the next.

As teachers, we had never done such collaborative work together in school before. However, working together, we learnt a great deal of challenges and the benefits of it. The base level teachers were the most anxious teachers in school, but their anxiety was overcome when they were mentored through discussion and search for solution. I clearly recall the LKG instructor calling me the first time she used Zoom to take a video class. I also recall how parents loved the first-grade teacher for her amazing, interactive teaching methods that included the use of photos, videos, and online games. When teachers were later moved to Microsoft Teams, there was no longer any tension between

them, and instead, they appeared more enthusiastic and upbeat. Some instructors even showed me how to use Microsoft Teams' chat features. Additionally, they stated that they had begun utilizing Microsoft Forms for formative assessment. The teachers, then started designing the classes as if in face-to-face teaching, even arranging circle time for Nur-UKG students. From class I-X, teachers used PowerPoint slides as well taught the students to present their projects in PPT slides. Finally, teachers started self-exploratory approach to identify and search for solution in their classes.

Anyone involved in the teaching of children will gain from this study. It motivates teachers to pursue training in technology-assisted learning. My research indicates that if teachers have the right guidance in school, they can give good online classes.

Conclusion and implications

This study focused on the difficulties faced by mentees in a school where they collaborated with mentors to receive the right guidance on managing the online classes. The difficulties the mentees had were examined in order to offer useful suggestions that helped with the issues of technologically ineffective classes. Few could have predicted the issues that educators and school administrators would confront as a consequence of the COVID-19. This small-scale research project demonstrates what it was like for Nepali teachers to teach online throughout the pandemic.

From the examination of teachers' experiences using technology in the online classes, the mentors and the mentees were able to learn a lot about the psychological demands for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. It is hoped that this research will contribute to the conversation on how mentorship can help teachers through challenging circumstances in the classroom while empowering them to feel competent, independent, and connected to their students. If schools implement mentoring in all challenging situations, it will improve both the working environment and the overall well-being of the instructors. Mentoring occurs when teachers feel, they need assistance in implementing effective pedagogy in the classroom. Mentoring is a bottom up approach addressing the needs of teachers and for professional school environment.

In educational systems, mentoring is intended to assist in luring, inspiring, and developing future leaders. There are frequently even additional advantages associated with the use of mentorship programs. Schools with mentoring programs significantly improve student success, effective teaching, and classroom teaching methods for new teachers. When instructors collaborate, schools become more consistent, which has a good impact on the learning environment, student involvement, and school atmosphere. There are two significant, long-lasting effects of mentoring for both students and teachers in educational settings. The teachers meticulously construct the learning process for the pupils while keeping in mind the challenges they face in a variety of circumstances. The senior instructors are always prepared to mentor and coach the new teachers, which is another important factor supporting the teachers' overall wellbeing.

The third benefit of organizational development is that it increases the possibility that exceptional teachers will emerge from less-experienced ones when employees discover a motivating environment among their co-workers. Mentoring is a great method to show that you are human. Therefore, management of the institution must have a structure in place to cultivate an environment that supports mentoring, whether it be in a school or university. The ideal way for organizations to implement mentorship policies is through action research, where teachers begin working on the issues independently after obtaining the most recent information from the literature or assistance from a highly senior person. The organizations should provide a time frame to address specific difficulties the teachers have once mentoring policies have been created. The length of a mentoring relationship might range from a few months to a full year and beyond. Once the problem has been resolved, the teachers may go on to another one in the same way as previously described or conduct another cycle of mentoring. As shown in figure 4 below, the mentoring process is a circular one.

Figure: 4: The circular process of teacher mentoring

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