Original Article

Research as/for Reconceptualizing Learning in Nepal: A Praxis of a Teacher-Researcher

Raju Shrestha* iD

Elixir Academy, Kathmandu, Nepal

Email: rajushrestha@elixir.edu.np

Abstract

This paper is an outcome of my MPhil dissertation, in which I was engaged in transformative research practice to critically look into the learning practices that I followed in my non/academic journey from my childhood education to my MPhil research period. The learning practices can be inevitable approaches to transformative learning but might not have been given a space in the educational context of Nepal. Keeping this in consideration, I, as a transformative teacher-researcher, attempt to re-conceptualize learning practices in Nepal by breaking the beliefs taken for granted that learning takes place only within the classroom guided by teachers' pedagogical practices. In other words, I make an argument for the approaches to transformative learning apart from classroom pedagogy. In doing so, I reflect on my learning journey by responding to the guiding research question, '*How did I adopt transformative learning practices apart from classroom pedagogy from my childhood education to MPhil research?*' For this, I engage in critical self-reflection on my learning practices using a multi-paradigmatic (interpretivism, criticalism, postmodernism) research approach and autoethnography as a research method to capture my autobiographical learning journey from childhood education to my MPhil degree. I conclude the paper by providing my transformative learning practices: learning beyond the classroom context, learning through critical reflection, learning through a disorienting dilemma, learning through writing about self and others, learning through perspectival meaning-making and learning through envisioning by critically looking through the lens of knowledge constitutive interests and transformative theories. The theories help me in the process of analyzing, interpreting and making meaning of my experience.

Further, the theories support me to orient my arguments toward transformative education by deconstructing the taken-for-granted teaching and learning practices of teachers, practitioner-researchers and educators in the context of Nepal.

Keywords: Re-conceptualize. Autoethnography. Critical Self-reflection. Transformative Learning.

Introduction

I was born and brought up in a Newar family. Farming was the main economic activity for our livelihood. However, as a member of the Newar community, where business is the main profession, my mother could not stop herself from going to the *Haat Bazaar* (market) to sell locally made goods. So, as a member of such a family, I would assist my parents in every way I could; by going to the fields, herding the cattle, accompanying my mother to the market, and even doing the household chores. This might have helped me develop a sense of the significance of professions in life since my childhood. On the one hand, working in the field enabled me to develop a sense of agricultural practices such as crop production, the value of plants and animals, and most importantly the value of working hard to fulfilling basic needs. I could see how difficult it is to grow crops for survival. On the other hand, going to Bazaar with my mother and encountering different kinds of people developed a sense of how to deal with people.

Having been exposed to this, I could gain real-life knowledge and skills thereby connecting it to school education. This could be one of the reasons why I was able to perform well in my early school education. Therefore, I believe that apart from classroom practices, several factors such as the upbringing of the people, their socio-cultural background, economic background, and the existing beliefs and values may dis/contribute to learning. Thus, learning does not take place only within classroom settings nor do we learn only from the teachers. In this regard, place-based educational experiences may help learners connect children to their communities and their environments (Tsevreni & Panayotatos, 2011 as cited in Tsevreni, 2014). The culture and environment that the learner gets influence one's learning

However, from my experience, I have realized that the learning process in the context of Nepal is conceived to be limited to only the classroom pedagogical practices. In this regard, I would like to share my school diary.

> *In those days, the teachers would come to the class and used to read out their notes in front of the class. Then, we (students) would note down whatever the teacher dictated. There would be no interaction, neither different activities like group work, problem-solving activities and community activities beyond the classroom. The learning was not connected to real-life experience. We just had to read the textbooks and notes and memorize them so that we could pour them out into the answer sheets.*

Reflecting on this, I have realized that the teaching-learning practice in Nepali schools is guided by 'read-recall and repeat' the action confined to the classroom. In this teaching-learning practice, teachers create "instrumental action" through which they control and manipulate their environments (Habermas, 1972; Luitel, 2009; Pant, 2015). It aims for the prediction of social phenomena based on normative-analytic science assuming that control of the natural environment is necessary for the hypothetic-deductive model of logic (Grundy, 1987). This means students' activities are controlled by the teachers assuming that teachers are experts and the students can be observed, experimented and followed. This process follows a positivist inquiry in which students engage in learning deductively. This kind of learning is an act of depositing (Freire, 2005), in which the students merely follow the teachers believing that the teachers are the only source of information with enough knowledge. Similarly, studies and

experience have indicated that our school-level instructional methods are based on traditional classroom pedagogy. Teaching-learning activities are based on textbooks that follow the curriculum developed at the central level. The aspects such as community work and project work beyond the classroom have not been given due importance and the teaching-learning environment happens to be more instruction oriented rather than learning-oriented (CDC, 2007). Such practices may fail to reflect on the socio-cultural issues such as; multi-cultural context, heterogeneous class, learners' differences, etc. as a result, learning becomes monotonous and 'technical' (Grundy, 1987) or mechanical. In this process, teachers are subjects and students are patients, listening to objects (Freire, 2005).

Reflecting on this conventional approach to our school education, I have realized that this kind of pedagogical practice is insufficient to address the principles of transformative education such as learners' participation, inclusion, autonomy, responsibility and empowerment. Thus, there is a need for learning through interaction with self and others adopting beyond the classroom pedagogical practices. Learning through interaction with self and others without constraining classroom pedagogy is an approach to transformative learning. During the process of transformative learning, one may undergo possibly three dimensions (psychological, convictional and behavioural). The psychological dimension of transformative learning is associated with the cognitive aspect of the learner. According to transformative learning theory, real learning takes place when learners change their perspectives themselves by thinking independently rather than letting society or culture command what we think and feel or who we are, we should generate our meanings and interpretations (Pappas, 2016). The next dimension (convictional) of transformative learning is a transformation of beliefs as a person's values and assumptions. Thus, transformative learners may change their cognitions according to their personal experiences. Finally, behavioural transformation refers to the change in habits based on the information received. In this dimension, the learning experience transforms the learners' behaviour and influences their actions (Pappas, 2016).

Arriving at this stage, I seemed to have experienced several learning practices which might have in/directly supported changing my habits of mind and beliefs taken for granted regarding learning. Several practices that I employed apart from classroom pedagogy might have been a milestone for my transformative learning. So, I have realized a need for breaking the conception that learning should be limited within the classroom pedagogy. Keeping this in consideration, in this paper, I have tried to unpack my learning experiences critically reflecting on my journey from childhood education to MPhil research through the lens of transformative education theory. In specific, I re-conceptualize the learning practices apart from classroom pedagogy in the context of Nepal responding to the guiding research question: '*How did I adopt transformative learning practices apart from classroom pedagogy from my childhood education to MPhil research?'* In doing so, I have divided the chapter into five key sections: introduction, theoretical orientation, the methodology followed by my learning practices, implications and concluding remarks.

Theoretical Orientation

I have tried to look into the educational practices through the perspectives of transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991) and emancipatory interest (Habermas, 1972). Emancipatory interest is grounded in power relations and creates transformative action (Taylor, 2004). Autonomy and responsibility are the main constructs for emancipation. Emancipation means liberating the individual from any kind of coercive forces through the means of critical self-reflection. Critical self-reflection leads to meaning-making processes by enabling the person to change their perspectives. Making meaning means interpreting experience.

When this interpretation is subsequently used to guide decisions or actions, then meaning becomes learned (Mezirow, 1991). Learning involves making new interpretations of our prior assumptions taken for granted usually through critical reflection.

These theories argue for the autonomy, responsibility and emancipation of the learner for transformative learning. As per the theories, learning should not be limited to the boundary of four walls conceiving teachers as the only source of knowledge. Learning is not a narrative character where information is being transferred from a teacher (Freire, 2005). Arriving here as I reflect on the notion of emancipatory interest and transformative learning theory, I realize an urgent need for breaking the grip of hegemonic disempowering forces (e.g., reductionist, teacher-centric, mono-model pedagogy, hegemonic practice, etc.) limited to classroom pedagogy. Thus, emancipatory interest and transformative learning theories promote our vision of teaching and learning as a socio-political act that goes beyond the classroom setting.

Therefore, we as teachers, teacher educators and policymakers need to appreciate learners' qualities by providing them with a platform of diverse contexts of learning rather than imposing the 'one size fits all' model limited to classroom practice. Rather, students should be encouraged to develop transformative learning thereby helping them "identify the coercive forces and free them from their coercive influence through reflection, dialogue, critique, discernment, imagination and action" (Dirkx, 1998, p. 9). By allowing them to engage themselves in the process of critical reflection and promoting self-directed learning, we can imagine an environment for transformative education. Likewise, to foster transformative learning, we need to understand the self of the learner in the broader contexts (social, political and cultural) in which he or she lives because learning is related not only to the contents to be acquired but also to how the self-social context informs and influences how the learner comes to define the meaning and nature of subject matter (Dirkx, 1998). In this regard, Freire's (2005) notion of dialogic learning and problem-posing as an act of liberation and awareness-raising are equally significant in transformative learning. Thus, in the paper, the theories help me discuss the moments of transformative learning that promote learners' autonomy, responsibility, emancipation and consciousness by letting them enjoy beyond classroom practices which break the ritualized model of pedagogy.

Methodology

In this section, I reflect critically on conventional education practices constrained within classroom pedagogical practices to critique, re-conceptualize and envision alternative learning contexts apart from classroom pedagogy. In this regard, "Research is an act which engages teachers in the dynamics of the educational process, as it brings to consciousness the creative tension between social and educational theory and classroom practise" (Kincheloe, 2003, pp. 39-40). Hence, as a teacher-researcher, I have critically reflected on my teaching-learning practices representing them in the form of narratives throughout the paper which helped me envision transformative learning.

For this, I have chosen autoethnography as a methodological tool to unpack my learning stories using multiple logics to capture key moments of my life as a teacher-researcher (Adams et al., 2015; Luitel, 2009). Autoethnography helps the researcher to situate himself/herself within their culture thereby enabling them to explore multilayered pictures of their learning practices within themselves and others. Embracing autoethnography as an approach to writing, the researcher tries to describe and analyze their personal experience systematically to understand broader socio-cultural experiences (Ellis et al., 2011). Autoethnography enables the researcher to examine the socio-cultural context of learning from different perspectives as a student, teacher, teacher educator and researcher thereby offering a space for interpretation, transformation and envisioning. In this regard, "autoethnography promotes multiple ways of

knowing by giving multiple voices to personal experiences, thereby cultivating deep, soulful, in/tangible, subjective and objective knowledge systems" (Luitel & Dahal, 2021, p. 3).

Thus, in the paper, I have brought my stories critically reflecting on my past experiences to reveal the broader transformative learning contexts. I have attempted to bring those contexts/practices of learning by describing my personal experiences to understand the cultural experience. As an autoethnographic researcher, I have interacted with the socio-cultural aspects by representing myself as an insider of the broader educational community through the representation of my narratives. In doing so, I have realized that learning should not be constrained within the school because learning practices apart from classroom pedagogy might play a significant role in enhancing the person's transformative learning. In this, "praxis is used to raise the consciousness of researchers, participants and social actors through a constant embracing of a critical stance toward text, discourse, and the lifeworld" (Luitel & Dahal, 2020, p. 1). My envision as praxis-oriented research is to critique the existing ritualized practice and re-conceptualize transformative learning practices which are not limited to classroom pedagogy. Thus, I have used autoethnography as a pathway to transformative learning which helped me revisit the experiences of my past, critically analyze the events, draw implications from them and envision transformative learning practices (Gautam, 2018).

Learning through Participating Beyond the Classroom

I started my educational journey at a community school in the Jhapa district in the late 1990s. There, I spent my late childhood until the completion of the lower secondary level. The plain land, well-connected hearts, loving, caring and helpful people helped me culturally build up in the society and their encouragement to showcase my talents such as singing, dancing, delivering the speech, and taking part in various community activities helped me grow physically and mentally. I accredit this as a fundamental transformative learning context for my education in upper classes of school level as well as higher university degrees to the time. I consider this as transformative learning because the learning was beyond the classroom through real-life experience through the interaction with self and others.

Initially, listening to the folktale from my mother and listening to '*Budha Pakako Kura Sunnu*' (elderly people's talk) made me a passionate listener and also might have enlarged my horizon of knowledge enabling me to think creatively and logically. No sooner had the story started than the curiosity in me would pique: *What happens next? Why was the character so? Is the story real? What can a hero be like?* I also used to compare the story with the situation of the society and its culture. Here I recall my experience of listening to the talks and tales (Chautari Gaf) of elderly people.

> *I often preferred listening to such talks and tales as they helped me compare the present and past as well as be critical of the existing condition. Every evening, I used to complete my homework as soon as possible and would run towards Chautari to listen to the talks and tales by the elderly people. I would listen to them so passionately that every moment I would ask the question self-reflecting on the role of the characters, the context of the story, conditions and situations shared in the talks.*

I enjoyed listening to elderly people talk and chose it over playing with friends of my age. This made me think like a mature man often presenting logical ideas to argue in different controversial situations. They had something I had yet to experience. Reflecting on it, I have realized that the wisdom that comes from an elder is one of the most precious lessons one can get. Their stories transported me to the older days allowing me to relive those times while they dealt with such adversities with much lesser facilities than today. Those stories and folktales divulged the vastness of life and instilled into my mind the trait of logical reasoning.

Next, in the late 1990s, the early grade teachers' encouragement in creating a homely atmosphere to show our talents apart from classroom pedagogical practices might have empowered me as a transformative learner. We were encouraged to recite/sing the poems individually and in pairs. I often tried my best to sing as pleasantly as I could just to receive my parents' and teachers' praises. I was always eager to participate in different activities held in the school such as debate competitions, quiz competitions and community-based activities. I got opportunities to participate in different sports such as football, cricket, marathons, high jump, long jump, etc. Therefore, I always enjoyed going to school rather than staying at home. Participation in Extracurricular Activities (ECAs)/Co-curricular Activities (CCAs) in my early days of schooling developed my physical ability as well as instilled the feeling of cooperation, coordination and unity. I discovered that I had quite a flair for speaking as I was good with words and spoke confidently. I was considered an interactive person. I was often praised by my parents, relatives and teachers acknowledging my way of expressing thoughts. People would listen to me attentively if I were expressing views on different debatable circumstances. This encouraged me to speak on different issues whenever I got the opportunity. My teachers in school and colleges selected me as a speaker in most of the social or cultural functions organized by the institutions including CCAs like debate, and elocution to name some.

These activities perhaps made me believe that I have got some potential to compete with others and the only traits I needed to master are perseverance, determination and passion. As a result, I could have performed well in both academic and non-academic activities. These activities might have been based on the principle of constructivism which states an individual learns through regular interaction with self and others. In this regard, my argument as discussed above is that learning is possible not only through classroom pedagogy but also through experiences beyond the classroom. It is because as learners we develop our understanding of the world around us as per the experience we receive (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010) Therefore, learning is a social process, so the context beyond the classroom is inevitable. This type of learning is transformative learning that may occur either in group interaction or independently due to critical reflection on our assumptions. In this regard, transformative learning can be interpreted further from the concept of emancipatory learning which often takes the form of 'task-oriented problem-solving in instrumental learning and critical self-reflection in communicative learning' (Mezirow, 2003).

Learning from Disorienting Dilemma

During the 2060s B.S. people (well-to-do families) generally used to migrate from the Hilly and Himalayan regions to the Tarai and villages to cities. There were two main reasons behind this. First, as stated by Wagle et al. (2019), "Most of the migrants were attracted by the plain landscape and easy life-world of Southern Tarai" (p. 31). Next, the Maoist insurgency being at its peak was another main reason. The Himalayan and hilly regions were highly affected by insurgency; hence, the regions had difficult livelihoods. Inversely in my case, the untimely demise of my mother was the main reason. After her (my mother's) departure, we shifted to the *Sankhuwa-sava* district, the eastern part of the Himalayan region from the Tarai. Therefore, Tumlingtar (a city in Sankhuwasava) was an entirely new place for me even though it was a beautiful place to reside surrounded by hills and mountains. I could not continue my school education in the school where I had learnt '*Ka', 'Kha'* and 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D'. Let me share my experience of being in the new school as a disorienting dilemma in my late childhood.

> It was the month of Baisakh[1], the beginning of a new academic session in Nepal. I got my name enrolled in the school named; 'Manakamana Higher Secondary School' in

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[1] First month of Nepali Calendar

the eighth grade. The school was 25 minutes of walking distance from my home. Attending the new school and encountering new faces was quite baffling for 14-year-old me. I could not befriend anyone and taking part in classroom activities was a long shot. I was afraid of the teachers and found myself hesitant to talk to them as fear of being mocked haunted me. My self-confidence was badly shaken so I preferred to sit on the last bench. Hence, I was branded as a poor and dumb student. Neither the teachers nor the students of my class were attentive enough to understand my ordeal.

I would feel hesitant to present my problems, and as a result, I could not get on well with what I was taught. It took me a whole year simply to be familiar with the teachers and to make myself stand comfortably and interact with other students. Then I developed images of teachers as; authoritarian, controlling, strict, disciplined, and knower (Gautam, 2018). Therefore, I felt pressured to learn and found the learning process stressful and unenjoyable. However, later on, this stressful and painful experience caused me to question the very core of my existence as a learner being critically reflective on my assumption taken for granted that I was a weak, innocent and poor student. This critical reflection on my role and performance enabled me to change my perspective to continue my learning in such a critical moment as an autonomous learner. This realization is 'perspective transformation' (Taylor, 2008) which "often occurs either through a series of cumulative transformed meaning schemes or as a result of an acute personal or social crisis, for example, a natural disaster, the death of a significant other, divorce, a debilitating accident, war, job loss, or retirement" (p.6). My disorienting dilemma caused by various factors in grade eight might have stimulated me to be more cautious about the worth of education in life. This internalization was as defined by (Boyd & Meyers, 1988; Cranton, 2000; Dirkx, 2000) relating to individuation that "involves the discovery of new talents, a sense of empowerment and confidence, a deeper understanding of one's inner self, and a greater sense of self-responsibility" (Taylor, 2008, P.7).

Learning through Critical Reflection

Critical reflection is a significant element in my learning process because I, as a learner often tried to make meaning through critical self-reflection; this process is named perspective transformation (Mezirow, 1991). These perspectives include sets of beliefs, values and assumptions that we have gained through our life experiences. Throughout my schooling, I had perceived that teachers are the source of knowledge and the students are the receiver of it. Students were supposed to learn by hook or crook irrespective of their hardships. All the students would be considered of the same category discarding their socioeconomic and environmental context. This might create a gap between how teachers perceive students and what strength the particular student has. This may take a long time to overcome such a vicious circle for the student. I experienced this kind of incident when I was in grade eight.

Let me reflect on the experience of being in such a condition and struggling to overcome it by identifying my talents through self-reflection.

In grade eight, neither the teachers noticed me nor had I been able to present myself in front of the teachers as a good learner. I would just remain quiet listening to the teachers in the class. As a result, throughout the year, I struggled for learning. My teachers would perceive me as an academically poor student so they would not care. However, it was the first day of my schooling in grade nine when I had been able to establish myself as one of the smart students.

This happened to me when I reflected on my role as a student by forgetting the other milieu in grade nine. I still remember the incident in which I had become critically reflective on performance. It was the first day of the Economics class and the teacher had assigned us to

read the definitions of economics as defined by three prominent economists: Adam Smith, Marshal and Robins and required us to give the definitions the next day individually.

This time I questioned myself, '*Am I a poor student*?' *Am I not able to perform as other students?'* Keeping these questions in my mind, I was looking for the right time to prove myself as a bright student. To do so, I read the definitions until I was able to remember them well. The next day, I went and recited the definitions flawlessly when the teacher asked. Since then I was recognized as one of the bright students.

After that event, friends began to acknowledge and teachers started to notice me. It was due to the passion I had for learning which was reignited by critical self-reflection. This enhanced my confidence and empowered me to establish my new identity as a talented student. But, arriving at this stage, I also reflect, *what if I had not been able to recall the definitions through memorization? Why was I not recognized by the teacher, though she had taught me for a year?*

I am just an example of such students who are often lost or neglected in our school system. They are unable to recognize their inner talents and often teachers, friends, parents and school management brand them as dull. Here, I find the problem in our education system as an instrumental learning process fully guides it. This process controls and manipulates the environment. Reflecting on it, we have to see if our actions are consistent with our values, are we doing well as per our goals and whether our attitude has been objective and whether our interpretations of the results are convincing (Mezirow, 1990).

Similarly, I would like to share another incident after which I critically self-reflected on my performance in English. The incident helped me critically evaluate my role as a student considering each subject's significance. Let me share the narrative here.

> *Until I reached grade seven, I was doing equally well in mathematics and science as in other theoretical subjects although English was considered one of the difficult subjects like math and science in the Nepali medium community schools. English was considered the toughest language as most of the students would fail it every time. Learning it was, thus, taken as the strenuous task. Many of my friends would also often express 'I wish we did not have English subject in our school education.' I did not wish so because I was doing a considerably good job in this subject too. I used to be one of the very few students who could read and write in English satisfactorily. The teachers would appreciate my performance in English then. Another fact is that I did not have any record of failing English in any of the earlier grades. But, unfortunately, the record was broken in grade nine for the first time.*

This incident compelled me to be critical of myself thereby evaluating my strategies for learning English. Becoming critically reflective on my performance, I realized a need for more concentration on English so that I could do better in it. Then, I gradually improved my performance and now the subject has become a part of my life and has helped me live my life. This experience strengthened, extended, and refined my constructions of meaning by strengthening my prospects about how things (ways of learning) were supposed to be (Mezirow, 1990). Thus, I learned to critique the presuppositions on which my beliefs were built through critical reflection. Arriving at this stage, I have realized that every individual has some talents that might have not been recognized. Therefore, the role of a teacher is not only to pass on information, but also to encourage the learner to critically self-reflect on their taken for granted suppositions.

Learning through Writing about Self and Others

As mentioned above, I started the journey of writing about self and others after I began my research writing project for my MPhil degree. At the beginning of writing, I had perceived

autoethnography as a study of self that detaches the others. Similarly, I was guided by positivist conventional practice, so I was not able to articulate my experiences in the form of autoethnographic exploration. Being habitual to the mechanistic approach to writing, I used to perceive that writing is almost impossible without organizing and outlining my points well. Therefore, writing about self and others as an inquiry became a challenging task for me at the beginning of this project. Specifically, recollecting the memories, recalling the conversations that I had, unpacking the cultural context(s) of the past and present, deciding what to/not to include in the narratives, connecting the narratives with the research questions, and identifying the key learning phases from those experiences were my big challenges during the writing phase (Gautam, 2018). However, after reading several papers (Ellis et al., 2011; Denshire, 2013; Qutoshi, 2015) on autoethnography, I have realized that self is partly other and other is partly in self. In this regard, Ellis et al. (2011, p. 4) stated, "When researchers do autoethnography, they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity".

While doing my research, I unpacked my experiences as a student, teacher, teacher educator, etc. expressing in various forms such as narratives, poetry, dialogue, and so on. In this regard, Ellis (2004 as cited in Vasconcelos, 2011) states that short stories, novels, plays, essays, poems, performance pieces, or other experimental texts containing concrete action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness, and introspection represented in dialogues, scenes, characterization, and plot are means of autoethnography to communicate their self-study. Adopting autoethnography as an approach to research and writing, I tried to describe and analyze my personal experience systematically to understand cultural experience (Ellis et al., 2011). I believe that every individual's stories are powerful means of constructing concepts, visualizing the contextual situation and generating meaning. Our past experiences guide us towards a better future as these stories make us aware of who we are, and what we did encouraging us to change the way of doing and, perceiving the self and others differently. So, I unpacked my personal and professional stories critically reflecting on my past experiences which helped me understand my cultural context as a research participant. The following diary extracted from my dissertation about my (Self) helps to understand the broader learning and teaching culture during my schooling (Others).

> *It was the day the result of English of the first terminal exam of grade ten was to be published. The teachers had already shared the marks in the major subjects and I was one of the highest scorers. Then came the turn of our English teacher, we greeted him as usual and he began to reveal the result. The class was full of students and I could feel the tension in the atmosphere. It was an important moment for all of us and we were impatiently waiting for our results. The self-proclaimed top guns were eager to substantiate themselves as the excellent ones and others as their inferiors.*
> *All that anticipation was nerve-wracking. Finally, my result was read out but the whole class fell into gales of laughter. It came as a shock and I was yet to process the situation. I could feel their disapproving looks directed at me. I could feel my heart pounding and my lungs gasping for air. One can surely imagine the plight of young me. The teacher carried on nonchalantly but I had fallen deep into the pits of misery. I was greeted with mockery. I was agonized by the reactions of my so-called friends. They rejoiced in my failure but I was silently having an internal conflict. I could not believe my failure despite my hard work. My efforts (patiently receive, memorize, and repeat) given for learning went in vain. As soon as the teacher was done, he eyed the failed students with exhaustion and frustration as his efforts too went in vain. I could read his face and saw that he was disappointed with our low marks. I could also see that he had not expected such a poor performance from me. (Shrestha, 2020, pp. 67-68).*

This reveals rote-repeat-recall, exam-oriented teaching-learning activities in which marks were the only sign of learning and other talents were neglected. Reflecting on this, I can relate to the effect of learning constrained to classroom pedagogy by limiting to read-repeat-recall practice guided by the 'technical interest' (Habermas, 1972).

However, when I used autoethnography in my MPhil degree, it might have been a method of exploring self and others for transformative learning. As a researcher of autoethnography, I used this methodological tool not only to analyze my experience, but also to illustrate facets of cultural experience thereby comparing and contrasting my personal and professional experience against existing research, and examining relevant socio-cultural practices. I foregrounded my personal stories and pedagogical practices to describe and critique social injustice and inequalities, thereby emancipating myself from dogmatism. In doing so, reflexivity enabled me to analyze and critique the un/useful, un/relevant and un/contextual learning practices. This might raise the consciousness of myself, participants and the readers (Luitel & Dahal, 2021). Therefore, arriving at this point, I have realized that autoethnography as the method of writing about self and others enables one to envision inclusive and alternative practices of learning that are contextually relevant. In my case, I happened to learn by writing about the self and others using autoethnography as a multi-paradigmatic research design space. This enabled me to reflect on not only the personal and professional practices (Self) but also the teaching-learning practices of the teachers (Others).

Learning through Perspectival Meaning Making

One can learn by analyzing and interpreting his/her beliefs and understandings and can make meaning through multiple logics and perspectives developed out of critical self-reflection on lived experiences gained as a student, teacher, and educator. The beliefs and understanding of a person might vary according to time and context depending on the learning context. In this regard, my perspective on learning has changed gradually from childhood to till date. The learning experiences as a student and a teacher of English transitioned from teacher-centric to learner-centric to transformative.

First, in my earlier life of academic journey, I encountered teacher centric-transmissionist approach thereby giving more emphasis to the objective nature of learning and teaching. I, as a learner, emphasized this approach much as we were compelled to mug up the information passed to us through lectures. Thus, I believed learning is memorizing and being able to answer the questions in the exam is a sign of a good learner. This banking model of education as stated by Freire (2005) remained in my baggage until I was in my bachelor's degree. This might have partly helped me in developing a prior level of skills such as comprehension, understanding and application but learning was limited to a single perspective or reality. This mode of learning heavily relied on the perspective guided by 'technical interest' (Habermas, 1972) in which the learning process was just an act of reproduction.

Next, when I began my master's degree in English Language Teaching (ELT), I encountered an interactive approach to teaching thereby giving more emphasis to communication. There I came to realize Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as an alternative approach believing it as more democratic and learners centred. This helped me engage the learners in various activities thereby creating a favourable environment for learning by focusing on meaning based on practical interest (Habermas, 1972) but could develop a sense of responsibility, autonomy and emancipation as stated by Habermas (1972).

Finally, after joining M. Phil in English Language Education (ELE), I started being critical of myself and other English teachers keeping the students and their ways of learning at the centre. It was most probably due to being exposed to the post-colonial theories, language planning and policies and multi-paradigmatic approach of researching. I reflected on my role

as a transmissionist learner and teacher. I also reflected upon my role as a communicative teacher where I gave more emphasis to meaning sharing thereby believing in English only as the best policy. When I reflected upon my pedagogical practices through the lens of critical pedagogy, critical language theory and transformative learning, I came up with several questions: *Is my pedagogical practice helpful for learners? Are my learners learning as I have expected or thought? Are the teaching and learning practices I adopted sufficient for transformative learning? How can I develop an inclusive, contextualized, and holistic approach to teaching and learning?* These are a few reflective questions in a list that enabled me to conduct MPhil research adopting multiple perspectives and logic.

In the research, I tried to generate meaning as well as represent my perspectives through multiple logic and genres. These logics and genres were likely to be "awakening" for bringing about multiple, interactive and imaginative views of educational reality, thereby letting me promote multi-perspectival envisioning of the issues emerging from my research questions (Luitel et al., 2012). Arriving at this stage I have realized that learning can take place in various settings and ways of learning are multiple. So, the traditional view of learning needs deconstruction, reconstruction and transformation. Thus, rather than relying completely on a single perspective or reality, promoting multi-perspectives in the meaning-making process is imagined.

Learning through Envisioning

Arriving at this stage, I, as an autoethnographic researcher, have tried to adopt the five ways of knowing: Cultural-self knowing, Relational knowing, Critical knowing, Visionary knowing and Ethical knowing (Taylor, 2013; Gautam, 2018) beginning from my school education to MPhil degree.

Cultural Self-knowing

My cultural self-knowing began in grade nine when I had self-reflection on my performance as a student after I failed English for the first time. I was doing well in my early schooling but from grade eight I had to struggle with my study. The incidents in grades eight to ten compelled me to be critically reflective on myself thereby evaluating my strategies for learning English. Reflecting critically on my performance, I came to know my strengths and weaknesses. Knowing them, I could find ways of capitalizing on my next level of success

Relational Knowing

From my childhood to till date, I have collaborated with many people as a student, teacher and teacher educator. I have always been an active member of the groups in taking risks, leading the team and coming up with collaborative results. As a student, I have led the clubs, and students' councils, and as a teacher and teacher educator, I have been running TPD programs in schools and colleges. During the process, I have worked with many people of different natures. This has made me realize that I can make connections with many people from my community who are culturally different. Working with others in groups has helped me learn by sharing. I have found relational knowing one of the fundament approaches to my personal and professional development.

Critical Knowing

My journey to critical knowing began after I joined my MPhil studies. Then I got opportunities to learn about critical dimensions of education and theories and later while doing my MPhil dissertation, I adopted a critical paradigm in my research and used critical self-reflection throughout my study for making meaning of my past and present experiences. My reflections allowed me to envisage a better image of English language policy and pedagogical practices.

Visionary Knowing

My practice of visionary knowing helped me reimagine or re-conceptualize pedagogical practices in Nepal. While doing MPhil research, I discussed how and why English should be taught as an art. In this regard, Baines (2010) argues, "The language arts are foundational in the sense that they provide the supporting structure upon which learning in STEM is built" (p. 255). Moreover, English as a language art is a tool to enhance the creative imagination of learners. So, the reason behind supporting STEAM environments within liberal arts is that it helps to enhance 21st-century skills (Csikszentmihalyi as cited in Lewis, 2015). Thus, English as a language art needs to create creative, innovative and skilled human resources thereby incorporating various skills such as technical skills, problem-solving skills, entrepreneurial skills, etc. In addition, in this paper too, I have tried to re-conceptualize the learning practices that are not limited to classroom pedagogy.

Ethical Knowing

I have always tried to make a difference in work being committed to it as a teacher, teacher educator and researcher. I have not only envisioned the change but I have also attempted to change as an agent. I engage in action research, teacher training and teaching activities to make a difference in academia. The purpose of writing this paper is also to change pedagogical practices.

Thus, arriving at this stage, I have realized that these ways of knowing have motivated me to think, rethink and envision a model of teaching and learning which might break the egoistic belief of education that learning is limited to classroom pedagogy or formal settings. In this regard, "the epistemic metaphor of knowing as envisioning allows researchers and practitioners to imagine inclusive and empowering futures through a humane approach to establishing an active connection between the transpired, ongoing, and emergent" (Luitel & Dahal, 2020, p. 2). Envisioning has allowed me to critique the traditional, one size fits all approach to learning through the classroom pedagogy and re/imagine an alternative vision of learning.

In my case, I got an opportunity to learn through several learning alternatives, such as learning beyond the context, learning through critical reflection, learning through the disorienting dilemma, learning through writing about self and others, and learning through perspectival meaning-making and learning through envisioning. These different types of learning enabled me to reflect on teaching-learning activities as action and reflection for transformation. In this regard 'praxis; the action and reflection upon the world promoted envisioning' (Freire, 2005).

Concluding Remarks

In the paper, I argued how one can learn through various approaches apart from classroom pedagogy. Not only the school environment but also various informal and beyond classroom

environments may affect one's learning. In particular, the multiple ways such as learning through critiquing, reflecting, and envisioning discussed in the chapter, play a key role in learning. These conclusions are drawn from my critical reflections on my autobiographical learning journey. To establish this, I adopted the autoethnographic research study and critical self-reflection on my past experiences.

I presented my narratives reflecting on how I learnt apart from classroom pedagogy, particularly in my home culture including the role of critical reflection, perspectival meaning-making and envisioning. Further, I reflected on the issues grounded on the transformative learning perspective of adult education theory and emancipatory interest. The theories helped me critically reflect on myself and my teachers' teaching and learning practices for transforming myself and teachers, practitioner-researchers and educators. Therefore, I advocate for learning strategies that are not limited to classroom pedagogy believing that a person learns not only within the school context.

However, the study is limited to my personal experience reflecting on my practices and assumptions through the method of autoethnography. Therefore, the study has not incorporated the voices of others, but I have interacted and interpreted my learning practices and assumptions connecting to the broader socio-cultural spectrum using the lens of transformative education and emancipatory interest, thereby critiquing, re-conceptualizing, and transformative envisioning.

Implications of the Study

The paper makes an argument against the teaching and learning process that is limited to only classroom practices. There are many invisible factors such as the upbringing of the people, their socio-cultural and economic background, and the existing beliefs and values which may influence the processes. Thus, teaching and learning activities should not be constrained within a four-walled room in the presence of teachers only. Therefore, this paper tries to break the hegemonic grip of teaching and learning activities that require teachers to be actors and students as audiences. Moreover, learning is conceived to be a change in perspective taken for granted through critical reflections and interaction with self and others. This might shift a paradigm in education by creating "conditions for teachers, teacher educators, researchers, and other stakeholders to revisit, reflect, review, and re/conceptualize the concepts regarding existing practices in education" (Qutoshi, 2021, p.15).

This study promotes learning practices beyond classroom pedagogy through the disorienting dilemma, critical self-reflection, writing about the self and others, and perspectival meaning-making and envisioning. Exploring these practices, I aimed to advocate for learning beyond classroom pedagogy which might enhance 'higher thinking skills such 'as critical (self-) reflection, metaphoric imagining, dialectical reasoning, spiritual awakening and re-envisioning' (Taylor, 2013). This study further might help the teachers reflect upon their practices to see how their pedagogical practices limited to the classroom have been un/helpful, in/sufficient for transformative learning. Besides, this study might create a discourse for the teachers, curriculum designers, policymakers and researchers to rethink learning practices to be employed beyond classroom activities.

Finally, I discuss the moments of transformative learning that promote learners' autonomy, responsibility, emancipation and consciousness by letting the learners enjoy beyond classroom practices which breaks the ritualized model of pedagogy. Therefore, this paper might help teachers, teacher educators and policymakers to empower learners by providing a platform for diverse contexts of learning through interaction with self and others rather than imposing the 'one size fits all' model limited to classroom practice.

ORCID

https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3335-6065

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