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Original Article

From Textbooks to Beyond Textbooks in English Class: An Action Research Study

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Abstract

This paper explores the meaningfulness of going beyond textbooks in the English classroom. It aims at exploring the limitations of a textbook as well as the relevance of going beyond textbooks along with learners' achievements which covers the wide range of the academic pursuit through meaningful action of going beyond textbooks. Further, the paper gives the scenario of how I identified the problem, developed the action plan and implemented those plans in the English class. The research has been guided by the Friirian notion of freedom of practice and engagement theory, where engagement implies an effort that one puts attempt to achieve goals and encourages learners for pleasurable participation, which has been presented in this research by bringing the real classroom scenario. The fear of freedom while keeping them bound to the textbook and the practice of freedom while taking them beyond the textbook has been revealed through action research with the intervention of action plans that were developed such as engaging students in newspaper-related activities, watching movies, and doing collaborative work where students learned the English language with much enjoyment going beyond the textbook. Overall, the developed paper is anticipated to the transformative potential of the 'beyond textbooks' concept and to extend the mindfulness upon the curriculum designers and teachers who can think of including activities beyond textbooks in English curriculum and classroom activities, respectively.

Keywords: Beyond textbooks. Freedom. Engagement. Action research. Meaningful learning.

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Introduction

When I was a student, I was bound only to textbooks. I, along with my friends, used to be taught only from textbooks. I was fed up with the exercises given in the textbooks, which comprised lessons, questions, and answers, and exercises of the same pattern in all the chapters. Everything was taught from textbooks. This led me to hope for a teacher who would take me out of boredom and empower me with knowledge by giving me freedom, a freedom to get beyond textbooks. To complete the textbook was the teachers' ultimate target. We used to have a discourse with each other about a boring situation we had because of the same way of teaching. Holding a textbook in their hand, asking students to turn the page number and give lectures from the front holding the textbook in their hand was the habit of our teachers. Amid these teachers, came Mr. Pradhan who dared to do something different than other teachers. Mr. Pradhan, who was often accused of making the classroom wild, became a real teacher for me. I learned much in his class as it was fun to learn differently. He used to teach English without keeping textbooks as a priority. He used to engage us in interesting discussions that would help us understand different topics in English.

Once, Mr. Pradhan entered the class and told us he would not teach the “Cinderella and the Ugly Sisters” lesson. We thought we were going to skip that lesson. To our surprise, he took us to the audio-visual room and showed us a cartoon movie of Cinderella. The movie gave us a good understanding of the story of Cinderella and provided us with powerful exposure to the English language (Kabooha, 2016). Mr. Pradhan asked us to write a summary of what we understood from the movie. Later, he made us do some exercises from the book. I was influenced by his teaching style for which a textbook was not needed. He used to take us to the library and let us read the books. To make us speak in front of the class, he used to give some topics in groups, and we used to discuss which would later help us to speak at least some words in front of the whole class. As I was an introverted learner, I was always backward in speaking with others but due to the activities that he used to make us involved in, I gradually improved my English-speaking ability. When I remember Mr. Pradhan, I acknowledge his way of teaching. Taking students beyond textbooks even in those days, creating an interesting learning environment using different resources was something of coming out of his comfort zone and making teaching-learning meaningful out of students' engagement and commitment towards their learning (Janik & Rothman, 2015). Many teachers at present have not been able to get out of textbook limitations as they have enclosed their minds within the periphery of a textbook, neglecting the meaningfulness in work that comes when students feel in control of their work tasks (Chen et al., 2011).

In Nepal, we take textbooks as an important resource to teach as they have a great influence in fulfilling the curriculum goals (Hadar, 2017). In some schools, even the curriculum is not consulted but the textbooks are made an ultimate resource. Textbooks are not that suitable for the diverse learners in the Nepali context though they are changed and revised frequently (Bista, 2011). In English class, English textbooks are not suitable since students come from different language backgrounds and English is a second or third or foreign language for many (Shrestha, 2008). Teachers in Nepal tend to consider textbooks as the master which has appeared to be the downside of the use of textbooks (Awasthi, 2006). This is the major problem. Textbooks are taken as one of the teaching-learning resources in the international practice as they may not reflect students' needs and they deskill teachers (Richards, 2001). Textbook dependency has encouraged teachers to be the source of information where they read textbooks and try to pour the same thing on learners and thus has discouraged learners to have a learning habit (Hinchman, 1992). Textbooks have the potential to make learners learn. However, they cannot engage learners in meaningful learning where students seek to make sense of their experiences (Mayer, 2002). Though textbooks provide useful resources, they may not be

sufficient to connect ideas on a topic with the conceptual understanding of learners (Kumar & Subramaniam, 2015). A textbook holds the knowledge related to textual genre, specific language, the specific structure, and specific tasks but the concept of a textbook depends upon what the child acquires from a textbook in the school environment (Gavora, 2014). I read biographies from the textbook, poems from the textbook, even the dialogues and letters that were in the textbook, but these were just for the sake of reading, to pass the exam. The melancholy is that I never learned the subjects with interest, neither the language nor the facts like science and Mathematics.

The way I learned in my childhood made me think of this point, "Did I enjoy learning?" and "Did I learn with passion"? My inner self-response was 'No'. Friere (1970) argues that knowledge emerges when the invention and re-invention occur through the passionate and hopeful inquiry that human does with one another giving continuous effort. I can't remember myself inventing anything or doing any creative work other than in Mr. Pradhan's class. At this point, I too questioned myself, "Was I engaged as to how students need to be?" Again, the answer is "No". For me, engagement is a theoretical concept that makes educators and researchers attentive. Engagement is what reduces students' boredom and enhances their motivation in school activities (Alrashidi et al., 2016). When students are engaged in any activity, they get the experience of doing the activity and learning from that. Engagement theory incorporates three components namely relating, creating and donating (Kearsley & Sneiderman, as cited in Marshall, 2007). Relating is to learn in a group and gain something collaboratively. Creating is about learning something in a project-based way and donating is to make a meaningful and useful contribution while learning. Engagement implies an effort that puts an attempt to achieve goals and encourages learners to pleasurable participation (Wigfield et al., 2015). When involving students in textbook-oriented work, they might be engaged but there needs to be the addressing of their pleasurable participation and that does matter in learning.

My experience as a schoolgirl was just the imposed learning and it was the teaching that was not interesting, teaching that was textbook oriented. Here, I am not saying that all textbooks are boring but, in my case, I suffered a lot being bound to textbooks all the time. The complexity of the textbooks affects students' motivation and so, they prefer rejecting textbooks (Schumm et al., 1992) and it could add to the issues of textbook reliance though textbooks may bring a form of normality to the learning environment (Husain & Scott, 2021). Textbooks are complicated learning materials as they contain one lesson after another which brings stress to learners. A lack of supporting materials and interesting resources demotivates learners to learn (Erlina et al., 2020). Teachers need to be responsible for providing the instruction of a new level and the relevant as well as effective one through which the students feel comfortable and confident (Williams, 2017). Assenting with this, the learning environment and the materials for learners need to be enjoyable. This research has tried to undertake the classroom scenario to view the effect of the usual English class with textbooks and the difference made by going beyond textbooks with the intervention of the action plan. The purpose of the study is to explore the meaningfulness of going beyond textbooks to teach English.

Critical Pedagogy

Freire's banking concept of education takes teachers as the depositors of education depositing knowledge on learners (Freire, 1970). In this case, learners are the oppressed who have to do what the teachers (oppressors) ask them to do but cannot go beyond it. Freire's idea of 'Critical Pedagogy' is a movement in education which develops the consciousness of freedom in students and enables them to recognize authoritarian tendencies and empower them with constructive action by connecting knowledge to power (Giroux, 2010). Palmer and Emmons

(2004) put their view as the critical pedagogy set out as a movement to bring knowledge and activism in the same place in the form of praxis. It goes out of traditional subject matter and deals with the need of students and their social surroundings. According to Abraham (2014), the intellectuals were there at the beginning who had exercised critical thinking in the form of viewing reality. Then, no critical pedagogy emerged. Later different critical theories emerged which are the sources for critical pedagogy today.

The social critical theory brings diverse trends in traditional teaching-learning. Habermas (1987) discusses the diversity of the individual learning process. He claims that learning is not only the way to gain knowledge. Rather, it is the process where people interact with one another in society. This theory encourages reflection in the learners. When the reflection is practiced in the classroom, it empowers them to be self-autonomous. According to Hansen (2000), learning takes place with greater impact when it is done in a scientific and experiential way. This is where the social critical theories stand as important. The discourse that goes on in society is a medium to bring out verbal and non-verbal expressions that shapes and reshapes the thoughts so that the knowledge can be thoroughly investigated (Hassen, 2015). The social critical theory comes out of the traditional thought about knowledge and tries to be rational so that the knowledge coming out of such rationality is in favor of every social being.

Critical theory is concerned with the idea of a just society. As per the idea of Aliakbari and Faraji (2011), the major goal of critical pedagogy is to raise awareness in the learners in such a way that they reject the violation and discrimination against people and situations. In critical pedagogy, the learners are made to act in a way that enables them to transform their societies. It is an emancipatory education. It raises students' consciousness, assists them in understanding the real-life struggle and challenges the social conditions which seem oppressive. Freire gives the importance to freedom in education. For this, the content of education has to be taken in such a way that there is a critical awareness in students and teachers, and they must exercise the freedom to teach and learn. When critical awareness is operated as action and reflection, the transformation generates the view of 'oppressed before and transformed after' stratagem. So, this theory has guided my research with an act of Action Research, exercising the freedom to go beyond textbooks.

Freirian Notion of Dialoguing: Empowering Students for their Right to Speak

Freire sees teachers as facilitators who facilitate students while they are on task. Teachers are often made the authoritarian character in the class who gives lectures to students and make them receive what they hear from them. The way teachers teach is acceptable and students are quiet recipients who are supposed to keep quiet and prove that they are disciplined and there is no freedom. In the midst of this, Friere talks about dialogues and says that dialogue is encountered between men and the world to name the world. Dialoguing is the action of exchanging ideas as a whole-class process that engages students in exploratory talk with rigorous thinking (Muhonen, 2018). It is about the right to speak, saying that students need to speak what they think. They must have the right to put their ideas in the world they live. With respect to the official curriculum, not only do children almost cease to ask questions but also teachers do not encourage them to have dialoguing in the classroom (Wells & Arauz, 2006). Dialoguing encourages students to speak in class and empowers them to understand that they do not need to accept the teachers' world where they are bound to take teachers' words as the truth and to live in a culture of silence. This is where students take them as the ones exercising their agencies to voice their opinions and critique and challenge their status quo. Classroom dialogue is taken as productive in terms of the improvement of students' oral communicative

abilities (Veen & Oers, 2017). Dialogue empowers students to change things or to make things better by their oral abilities to speak and put their ideas.

Freirian Notion of Praxis in Teaching and Learning

Explaining the term 'Praxis' Freire puts on that praxis is the action made by people upon their world in order to transform it (Freire, 2005). In his banking concept of education, students are evaluated by their act of listening meekly and being disciplined in terms of just listening to the teachers and accepting what they say and score at least 50% to pass the exam for which they memorize teachers' lectures and their textbooks. Freire's idea is that students should be challenged to ask questions. They should be challenged to solve problems themselves in a group or individually. Whatever they learn, they need to learn by doing, by engaging, applying, exercising, realizing, or practicing ideas. Praxis being invaded in curriculum changes students from being passive receivers of knowledge to being active creators of knowledge (Verster et al., 2018). It is the way to go towards idealism where students are expected to learn with action and reflection. For example, students learn dialogue through a dialogical process. This is where students become active in learning as well as in creating knowledge.

Praxis seeks for dialogic action and reflection, and the learners are engaged in learning for their well-being and by doing something that brings out creativity (Smith, 2011). It is about learners being engaged in meaningful discussion or tasks where they express their ideas either verbally or through their actions. At the same time, teachers become the active creators of knowledge while in the praxis who evaluate their students out of their creativity. Students too create knowledge and become the source of knowledge for other students. Praxis in teaching-learning is the action and reflection that results in freedom and that freedom results in creativity as well as the creation of knowledge.

Freirian Notion of 'Fear of Freedom' and 'Practice of Freedom'

In the Nepalese context, textbooks are the main sources for teaching which helps teachers to organize their lessons and make the contents available to students (Joshi & Dangal, 2020). Learners get much information from textbooks as the curriculum designers and writers decide. Adhering to the Freirian concept of 'Liberating education' where he puts forward the concept of the 'Fear of Freedom' makes teachers become afraid of practicing the new techniques in the classroom and learners are away from 'Practice of Freedom' (Freire, 2005). The learning is there even when things are taught from a textbook but that does not often address the interest and needs of learners. Consequently, learners feel learning through textbooks is a complex process that affects learners' preferences, needs and interests since they consist of academic languages and factual learning (Gavora, 2014). That limits the freedom of learning and leads to boredom and hinders motivation. However, there come other factors like students' interest, their attention span and their learning styles and abilities. Students' learning environment, students' gender, year of enrolment in school, academic performance, attitude and self-efficacy are all prompt to affect their learning (Detlor et al., 2010). This shows textbook itself is not enough to meet all the learning needs. Textbooks have turned teachers into textbook slaves and test slaves which has negatively impacted students' learning attitude (Al-Issa, 2019) and made them confused with authority and freedom. Teachers need to know that there is no freedom without authority but there is also no authority without freedom. Freedom and authority cannot be isolated (Freire, 2005). They must be considered in relation to one another. When learners are made limited only to the textbooks, they become bound to it with the authoritarian way of teaching which keeps them away from freedom and makes them bookish learners. This may

make learners studious but not the overall explorer in education. For making the learners the practitioners of freedom, the textbook alone may not help but taking those learners beyond the textbook may give better exposure to them.

Freedom in education involves learners dealing with reality being critical and creative and discovering the ways to deal with the world for transformation (Friere, 2005). There is much beyond textbooks in today's educational world. Classroom-based resources like textbooks are often taken as the crucial carriers of the contents and knowledge which actually hinders students learning as it does not give opportunity for students to learn a language beyond the classroom (Richards, 2015). The fear exists in students; the fear of examination, the fear of freedom. Students do not learn by fear of failure but by the motivation to have a desire to succeed and to promote group solidarity by class participation (Perrin et.al, 2014). The fear of freedom needs to turn into the practice of freedom which my study concerns with. It is about freedom in education which involves learners dealing with reality being critical and creative and discovering the ways to deal with the world for transformation. For this, teachers need to understand that textbooks may not reflect students' needs and they deskill teachers (Richards, 2015) and English language teachers need to come out of the mentality of meeting the immediate goal of passing the exam but it has to meet learners' need which is possible only by taking students beyond the classroom (Hoi, 2017). Textbooks are taken as readymade and inevitable teaching material and have been used as the one and only teaching-learning materials that have hindered students' creativity and freedom. Now, the scope of going beyond textbooks and exploring students' ability to relate, create and donate in terms of their engagement in learning has remained an unexplored area. This research explores the potential of going beyond the textbook to bring transformation in the teaching-learning process in the English class with the practice of freedom by going beyond textbooks.

Research Methodology

My research was conducted in a school located in Lalitpur district. My participants were students from Grade eight. The method was Action Research. Following the new pathways, teachers of the 21st century need to rise above the mere cognitive development in children and would require a focus on the notion of education for humanity that consists of practical aspects in educating children (Wood, 2014). Making Action Research the method of study, I, as a teacher could address problems in students' learning environment (Lufungulo et al., 2021). Within Action Research, the techniques I followed to collect data were 'observation' and 'interview' (Annex I). First of all, I observed the class for problem identification. When I was there in the class for a day, I could see students not giving attention to their studies and showing their lazy behavior while studying. The teacher was holding a book in her hand and asking students to do certain exercises from the book. All her classes were totally based on textbooks and the activities were totally book-focused. In Grade eight, when students asked with a teacher to give some examples on the language function 'describing a person, they were given examples only from their textbooks relating it to the lesson 'Ganesh Man Singh: The Iron Man'. The lesson was the biography of the famous political leader of Nepal and the teacher described him but being based on the details that were given in the textbook. I could see that students were not contented with the examples they got. One of the students told, "Teacher! I have seen Ganesh man Sing on television. The next student asked, "In Television? I just know that there is Ganeshman Hospital." The teacher immediately brought their focus to the textbook and continued reading what was written there. The teacher asked students to write about Ganesh Man Singh as per the information in their textbook. One student did not miss the chance to whisper, "My uncle is also a political leader. Can I describe him?" Other children laughed. I could feel, their thirst for learning how to describe a person was not quenched only by textbook

content. Some of them wanted to know more about Ganesh Man Singh and some of them wanted to do the same task with other options but I could sense the fear of freedom when the teacher ignored their voice. This made me think, “*Why only textbooks?*” *Why were these students not given the space for the practice of freedom to explore the associative and relevant examples which they could do by investigating more on the same person or by describing their own family members or their friends?* This made me explore more on why this is happening and what if these students are taught English taking them beyond the textbook?

To explore more on it or to identify the problem, I enhanced the trustworthiness of interview questions by making sure that they align with the research being carried out and by developing questions in such a way that they create an inquiry-based conversation (Montoya, 2016). For this, I had an interview with the teacher about her way of teaching in the classroom. The teacher I approached was an English teacher who came up with her idea about why only the textbook is used in her classroom. While talking with her, she sounded like she had the idea about how the class can be run in a fun way but she was committed to her saying that the students can learn well from textbooks. Also, she told me that she had to develop questions for student evaluation is based on the textbook and that makes her teach only from textbooks. I could sense the fear of freedom here too which was a huge problem. For me, teachers need to follow the curriculum and to meet the objective of the curriculum, textbooks are used as teaching-learning materials. However, the teacher told that she focuses on teaching from textbooks as the assessments are done based on textbook-related questions.

The increasing pressure to deliver the lessons to diverse learners in terms of their abilities, social class and background, is one of the pedagogical challenges for teachers (Shrestha & Roffey, 2018). Now, I wanted to know if the teacher has made her students do something different from textbook exercises in any of her classes. She replied that once they were asked to read English newspapers in class where students were not only happy but also enjoyed their learning. She further talked about their stressful expressions when doing exercises from textbooks and said that students must do what the teacher instructed them. So, they do the exercises, no matter how stressful the work is. Here, Friere’s notion of dialoguing was missed somewhere. I noticed that the main problem was the lack of dialoguing that had to have between students and teachers which would help them express their stress when doing the exercise from textbooks one after another and that was observed during the observation too. I established a desire to see this difference in students while teaching from textbooks and from other resources. English teachers have a real need and desire to bring improvement in their teaching practice through action research (Han, 2017). As I also kept an intention to improve my way of teaching through action research, I developed an action plan and implemented the Action Plan in order to view students’ engagement in tasks with only textbooks and beyond textbooks. Being based on the problem identification, I designed the action plan of six days which was implemented in Grade eight in English period to carry out the action research.

Action is conducted by a researcher considering it as the practitioner research. It is aimed to improve one's own practice. Action research is meant to be conducted to improve classroom-related issues of the students (Hong & Lawrence, 2011). The researcher gets the experience of work in the real field and action is maintained for the smooth running of the action plan implementation. Action research makes teachers hopeful to bring changes in the existing situation related to teaching-learning. Action research is research that helps us to know the values that are important to move ahead in our lives and it also helps us to follow the direction shown by those values so that we can take those values as the organizing principles to lead our lives (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002). They focus on the right ways of living through action research. There are some phases of action research that a researcher needs to be aware of. Following the processes of action research helps the researcher to do everything stepwise

and this leads to a successful demeanor of the action research. The action research process is summarized in the figure below:



Fig. 1: Action Research Cycle
Action Research Cycle (adapted from Mackinnon et al., 2019, p. 5)

For the present research too, ‘Planning’ was the first thing I did. Under planning, there comes identifying, informing and organizing. I observed classes and took interviews with the teacher for problem identification. The problem was identified that students were not enjoying their learning with textbooks in English class. I developed the action plan and intervened in the class. During the intervention, the informing process took place in a way that I was updating myself on what to do next. By informing that to myself, I organized the tasks for students where they had to engage themselves in textbook-oriented tasks for three days and the tasks beyond the textbook for the other three days (Annex II). Then, I put the action plan developed in action which is the process of ‘Acting’. Here, the plan was intervened and that was a time where I gathered data from my participants. After assembling the data, data coding was done. Then by comparing the data, I built meaning and interpretations and later the reporting process was done (Burns, 2010). With a continuous process of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, I reached the findings.

Class with ‘Only Textbooks’

I took three sessions of classes in Grade eight with the use of textbooks. The students were taught only from textbooks and the exercises they were given were also from the textbooks. In doing so, I observed the class with views of the activities carried out where I had my observation. On day 1, the students were involved in a warm-up game related to the language function mentioned in the national curriculum of grade eight ‘Giving and following instructions.’ They were asked to be honest and stand if the instructions given by the teacher apply to them. The instructions were like: ‘Sometimes, I tell a lie.’ (Those who tell lies would stand up.) There were other sentences such as ‘I smoke, I watch T.V., I go to the cyber, I have my own mobile phone, I sometimes steal my parents’ money...’ They were made curious about the lesson ‘A memorable journey from Hill to the Terai’ which they were going to study. They were made read the lesson one by one. The explanation was given along with the clarity on difficult words. They were asked to write difficult words and to find the meanings. Then, the class was wrapped up.

On day 2, the students were reminded about the lesson 'A memorable journey from Hill to the Terai'. They were asked to do exercise 1 which was to answer the given questions. I asked them to discuss it in a group first and then to do it individually. I made them do exercise 2 as another work and asked them to discuss in pairs and then solve it. They were supposed to write all those in their exercise books.

On day 3, they were given a question as a warm-up. The question was 'Which word has all the vowel letters in it?' The exercise was discussed. First of all, 'article' was explained, and the discussion was made on the uses of articles. At the same time, definite and indefinite articles were discussed. For making them clear, many examples of the uses of 'a', 'an', 'the' were given. The conditions to use 'the', was discussed. Again, the exercise was given from the textbook. Students were doing their exercises either in textbooks or in their exercise books. The objective type of work was all in textbooks and the explanation type of tasks such as questions and answers were all done in exercise books. Physically noticed outcomes were all limited to textbooks and exercise books. However, the students were expressing their understanding of the lessons, reminding me of the 'oppressed' category as per the Frierian idea.

Class with Beyond Textbook

To make students go beyond textbooks was something of students' surprise. It was decided to teach students English but without using textbooks. Three days were used to teaching them English without textbooks. On day1, the students were looking at my face as I was doing something unusual. I was standing there holding the objective that by the end of the activity, the students will have gained an idea about the newspaper sections and that they will have acquired reading habits along with reporting skills. Students were asked how many of them read newspapers and some of them raised their hands. Some said they read the headlines only. I asked them if they have noticed different sections in the newspaper. I showed them different sections the newspapers have. I held the newspaper and showed different sections there such as the business section, the sports section and the events section. They looked excited to turn the newspaper though it was an annoying sound to me. They worked in a group of four and were asked to read the indicated sections for their group. All four groups concentrated on their task. I could sense them coming out of the fear of freedom as Freud said. They felt free to speak, to discuss, to put their ideas and to collaborate together.

The students were given the group name (1,2,3,4) and they were informed that they were supposed to work in a group. Group 1 was supposed to find out a job vacancy section and read them. They decided which one is better and wrote a vacancy announcement of their own as a part of their assignment. They were encouraged to discuss in a group and to write. Other groups were instructed to do the same but with other sections. This task would focus on the part of the curriculum 'reporting' but by inclining to their own sections. The tasks for each group were like this: Group 1: vacancy announcement, Group 2: events, Group 3: tips, and Group 4: advertisement. They had a nice reading and discussion on how the particular section is written in the newspaper. I provided them the materials such as chart paper, colourful A4 size paper, markers, colours, pen, shine pen and so on. They made the first draft in this class and continued the same work the next day but with greater passion and enthusiasm. They were developing their task as a display and thus were much serious about their work.

On day 2, they were asked to continue the task of day 1. I asked students to be in the same group as that of the day before. They were asked to read the first draft again and to prepare the final draft of their work in the chart paper. The students got exposure to creativity while writing. They acquired the strategy for writing varieties of announcements. They too presented their work which gave everybody an opportunity to learn how to write the different sections in the newspaper as a report. They gained reporting skills, both written and verbal.

On day 3, students were given time to watch the animated movie. Students were instructed to watch the movie and to do the task related to it. They did those tasks after the movie time. Day 3 started with a setup on the projector. It was all about putting the animated movie on, which made students much excited. My objective was that by the end of the activity, the students will have acquired the vocabulary items that are used in the movie even while gaining the entertainment and that they will have gained the ability to describe the things using the past tense. After the movie time, I asked students to list the vocabulary items that were used in the dialogues used in the movie. I had a discussion on what was the interesting part of the movie. I gave my view to make them prepare for similar expressions. The task was given to write about the favorite part of the movie and to write a similar story using past tense in about a hundred words. It was an individual task.

Go beyond Textbooks to Relate, Create and Donate

Students' behaviour was observed and the data were assembled through observation with the data coding and comparing, the meaning was given to the data and through that meaning-making and interpretations, the report was developed (Burns, 2010). The students were doing what the teacher asked them to do. The warm-up was there. They were listening to the teacher, were participated in the tasks that were given. There was somewhere the expression, *write it in your exercise book. You have to write it there anyway*. It was something like that is what they were supposed to do. One of the students after finishing exercise 2 said, *Let's do exercise 3 now*. The students were already aware of what comes next. There was no surprise, no difference in the way they do. That is where the tedium feeling was noticed. I noticed that the confident students who were usually good in the study were the ones who were frequently raising their hands and giving answers. Those who were not very confident were quiet and copying down the answers. Their voice was lost somewhere. Also, the freedom to speak and share was not exercised in class.

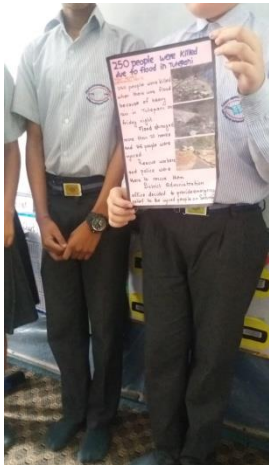
The foremost thing that I noticed as a difference between 'only textbook' and 'beyond textbook' activities was that the students were very much interested in the activities when going beyond textbooks. The students were excited about the work that was in front of them and was visibly out of textbooks. In the case of the tasks in the newspaper, they were discussing in groups, getting ideas from one another and contributing effectively. After all, students can learn from each other's experiences and perspectives when they are encouraged to respond to each other's comments which helps them foster a sense of community (Subedi, 2010). Even the below-average students were giving their effort to make their work better as they were in the team. In the task of a movie, they were quiet and concentrated on getting the overall story of the movie. The individual task after the movie seemed effective too. Everybody appeared to be busy writing their own stories using the past tense. It was good to see how engaged they were while doing the task.



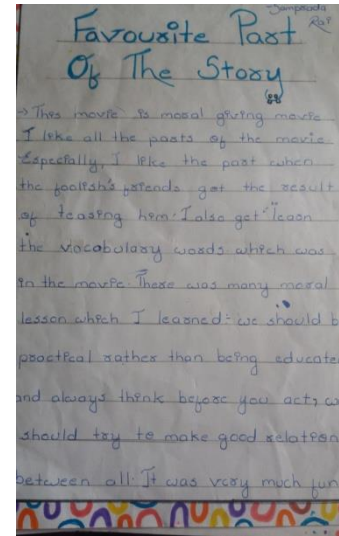
Only textbooks and beyond textbooks were the subjects for my classroom research. Three days lesson plan was for the only textbook-related task and the other three days were for beyond textbook tasks. What I found is that 'only textbook' makes students monotonous. Teaching one lesson after another and making students do one work after another itself, is a monotonous way. *Again exercise???* That was the utterance when students were asked to do exercises from the textbook and the other student said, *Sssshhhh...keep quiet, the teacher is coming*. Students were afraid of raising their voices against boring lessons. They were engaged there too but were not meaningfully engaged. According to Ewing (2010), the activities are

poorly thought of and written as the textbook-oriented tasks are focused more on repetition which the students want to get rid of. Students can make sense of what is to come next. As a researcher, what I established as insight is that following only the textbooks make English class boring and that is not interesting for learners. Whereas, while students are given opportunities to go beyond textbooks to meet the objective of the curriculum, they not only finish their textbook-related exercises but also learn to relate, create and donate. They enjoy their learning with fruitful engagement and at the same time, they enhance their creativity by relating their ideas, contributing to the group and by assembling their effort to come up with the writing product.

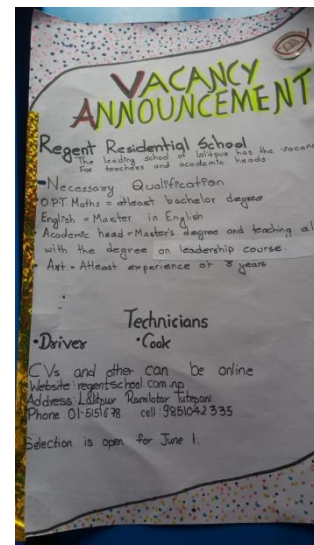
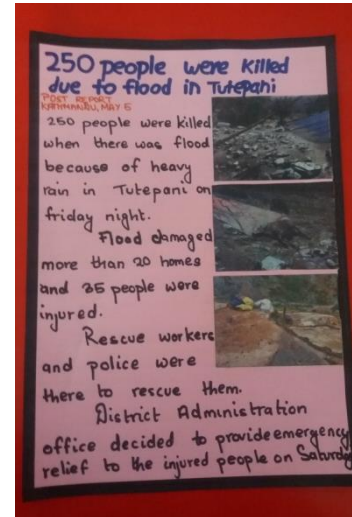
Students have different abilities and the students with these abilities seek the change in the content area (Schumm, Vaughn & Saumell, 1992). There is boredom in using only textbooks. There is a usual routine and there are the taken-for-granted phenomena being existed. Tossing textbooks and being engaged in textbook-oriented tasks is just like leaving all the learning behind school walls (Sarsar, 2008). Along with textbooks, there need to have other teaching-learning materials or there must be some strategies to take students beyond textbooks so that there could be learning as a takeaway for students. Learning beyond the textbook, gives students the freedom to participate, liberty to communicate and courage to contribute. According to Marshall (2007), when



students are engaged in meaningful tasks taking beyond the textbook, they collaborate and give a meaningful contribution as in the picture of 'Favourite part of the story.' Likewise, engagement theory incorporates credence that students are engaged actively in order to make them believe that their engagement is meaningful (Mehdinezhad, 2011). Meaningful engagement gives a meaningful result. This has been ascertained by my participants' active participation in the tasks that were beyond the textbook. Their verbal utterances while going beyond textbook such as *This is interesting, Let's use a marker to write in the chart paper or shall we use colorful pens?? Teacher! Are we watching the animated movie? That is so exciting...* are the expressions that made the English class lively. Moreover, going beyond textbooks and giving a good and enjoyable learning environment makes students creative and expressive.



A good learning environment helps students excel in their studies as well as to develop the spirit of creativity and innovation in them (Aboluwodi, 2018). My participants were found involved in the activities more effectively when they were given such an environment where they could do tasks going beyond textbooks. Also, I experienced that the students' critical thinking was exercised in the form of viewing reality while engaging in activities beyond textbooks (Abraham, 2014). They were analyzing their work by keeping their view on the design and language they used while writing the news report. They were empowered too. When the students were with fear in their faces, the space was created for them saying, *You can speak out if you think we can do it in a different way* for which one of the students said, *Teacher, I know how to write a newspaper report. Maybe I can help*. At that point, I came to realize that teachers can empower them with their right to speak as Freud claimed and the students themselves can find the solution. I got the intuition that learners need some changes in learning stratagem which textbooks cannot make as this has been claimed by many research studies. Over the last twenty years, students' response to this world has been changed regarding their engagement with a technology-rich society and with engaging pedagogy as well as engaging curriculum and this is the need of students today (Taylor & Parsons, 2011). When students are kept at the center and given an opportunity to socially interact and do teamwork in their daily life activities, that can be the best way to achieve the objective of quality education (Qutoshi & Poudel, 2014). Learners when taken away from textbooks and given some challenging tasks, get engaged productively and they bring such products of their learning (as in the picture of Vacancy Announcement) which make them convinced that they were actually learning by participating in dialoguing and engaging themselves in the activities they liked. They are empowered to express their opinion and that gives a space for transformation in education. Depending entirely on textbooks and underestimating learners' ability, making them oppressed, not letting them come out of the fear of freedom and making them a sole receiver of knowledge are the tendencies embraced by the 'only textbook' trend. By developing a broader view on the benefit of taking learners beyond textbooks and to carry out the practice of freedom may lead teachers to a success which they expect from students and that causes transformation with meaningful outcomes.



Insights I Gained

With this exploration, I grasped the insights that students enjoy the activities that go beyond textbooks. Students showed their interest in doing tasks that were beyond textbook. In the beginning, the teacher had addressed that the students were happy to do newspaper reading once, which is again the activity that the teacher made them do going beyond textbooks. From the action research conducted, I found out that students enjoy their learning when they are taken beyond textbook to learn English. I too got the insight that students have a broad mind and that they can go beyond the box of textbooks to bring out their creativity in English class.

Students learn many things from textbooks. However, there is learning beyond textbooks that is more effective than the former. The researchers have even argued that

textbooks are to be eliminated believing that instead of textbooks, personal library books can be rigorous (Burgraff, 2016). When comparing textbooks with library books, students obviously choose the latter one because they are full of excitement and literature which the textbooks might not contain and though they contain, they still focus more on exercises that the students may not enjoy. I am not against textbooks and in alignment with Burgaff's idea about eliminating textbooks but I am with an idea that students need to be taken beyond textbooks. Going beyond textbooks is something that gives learners freedom and that is where they can put their thoughts in front of their teachers and friends. This assists them in connecting the ideas of the topic with their conceptual understanding which is important for lifelong learning. Only the thing is that, to practice the freedom, teachers need to plan the lessons in such a way that students get productively engaged and gain much going beyond textbooks. Textbooks are taken as the heart of pedagogical activities and they are considered as the appliances to provide content knowledge (Kasmaienezhadfar, Pourrajab & Rabbani, 2015) and teachers find textbooks as a framework that helps them save time and to give direction to teach lessons and students take them as a material that is to read and finish to prepare for tests. In midst of this all, we need to realize that textbooks might be helpful to give content knowledge but they alone have not been successful in familiarizing students with curricular matters (Moghtadi, 2014). Textbooks alone cannot aid learners' need and this has been drawn out from my exploration too. Textbooks are the materials used to achieve the aim of the course but they should not become the aim of the course themselves (Ahmadi & Derakhshan, 2016). Textbooks themselves are not the sole aim of the course but they are just the resources to fulfill the aim of the course. By invading praxis in education, students can be supported by taking them beyond textbooks where they learn by doing and reflecting on the activities they do. The teachers can play the role of facilitators to excavate more and more from there and to bring transformation in the teaching-learning endeavor through their meaningful practice of going beyond textbooks in English class.

Conclusion

Freirean notion of critical pedagogy empowers students to raise their voices if being oppressed and to learn with freedom (Luitel et al., 2022). My strategy of going beyond textbooks has been able to achieve this. For example, my students practiced bringing knowledge and activism in the same place in the form of praxis (Hawthorne-Steele et.al, 2015). The activities went out of traditional subject matter and dealt with the need of students and their social surroundings. Students enjoy activities that go beyond textbooks. It is true that students learn many things from textbooks. However, there is learning beyond textbooks that are more effective than the former. Going beyond textbooks is something that takes students away from their usual routine and provides an interesting learning environment for them. For example, my students were more engaged when exercises related to the movie were given. They not only engaged but the aim of the lesson was achieved through the movie and the activities that followed it. Students have a broad mind and they can go beyond the textbook exercises and even beyond teachers' imagination. With praxis in teaching and learning, students get the ability of critical self-reflection which is possible by taking them beyond the textbook. In an English language classroom, there is much to excavate as knowledge and this is imaginable when the Freirean notion of praxis is on the move. Thus, taking students beyond textbooks is meaningful when the planning is guided by the praxis in teaching and learning.

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Annex I- Interview Questions

1. How long have you been in the teaching profession?
2. Are you enjoying your profession?
3. How did you learn English in your childhood?
4. How did your teachers teach you English?
5. How do you teach in your classroom? Do you have a particular method/strategy to teach students?
6. What difficulty have you faced?
7. Do you feel easy to teach from textbooks?
8. Can students learn only by using textbooks?
9. Do you finish the entire course by the end of the year? Is it necessary to finish the whole book? (Your opinion)
10. How do you plan for your lessons?
11. What difference have you found in students' interest levels when they are given tasks from the textbook and from outside?
12. What is the difference in your way of teaching comparing it to how you were taught?
13. In your opinion, what type of teaching could be model teaching?
14. How do children learn the language better, by depending on the textbook or going beyond that? How do you balance students' interests and course factors?
15. What difference have you noticed when you teach something out of a textbook?

Annex II- Action Plan

Lesson Plan for 'Only Textbook'

Class: 8

Subject: English

Period: first

Objective: By the end of the class, the students will have gained an idea about the lesson and the words used in the lesson.

Procedure:

1. Let students be involved in a warm-up game.
2. Ask them to be honest and stand if the instructions read by the teacher apply to them. For example: 'Sometimes, I tell a lie.' (Those who tell lies will stand up.) Read out about ten statements.
3. Make them curious about the lesson that they are going to study.
4. Make students read the lesson one by one.
5. Give the explanation along with the clarity on difficult words.
6. Ask them to write difficult words and to find the meanings.
7. Wrap up the class.

Day Second

Class: 8

Subject: English

Period: first

Objective: By the end of the class, the students will have ordered the events of the story as per their understanding and also, they will have done some exercises remembering the lesson events.

1. Make students sit. Ask them to take their books out.

2. Remind them about the lesson 'A memorable journey from Hill to the Terai'.
3. Ask them to do exercise 2 which is to write the sentences in proper order as happened in the story.
4. Ask them to do it in a group first and then to do it individually.
5. Make sure that the students will discuss in a group.
6. Give exercise 3 as another work for them. Ask them to discuss in pairs and then to solve it.
7. Ask them to write all these in their exercise books.

Day: Third

Class: 8

Subject: English

Period: first

Objective: By the end of the class, the students will have learned about the use of 'a', 'an', 'the'.

Day third

1. Give them a warm-up game. Ask which word has all the vowel letters in it?
2. Discuss the exercise. First of all, explain what the article is. Discuss the uses of articles, definite and indefinite.
3. Give many examples of the uses of 'a', 'an', 'the'. Explain the conditions where 'the' is used.
4. Give them the exercise to do in their exercise book.

Lesson Plan for 'Beyond Textbook'

Day 1

Class: 8

Objective: By the end of the activity, the students will have
-gained a thorough idea about the newspaper sections.
-acquired reading habit.

Procedure:

1. Ask students how many of them read the newspaper.
2. Ask them if they have noticed different sections in the newspaper.
3. Show them different sections the newspapers have. Hold the newspaper and show the sections.
4. Ask students to be in a group of four.
5. Instruct them that they are supposed to work in a group. Give the group name (1,2,3,4).
6. Group 1 is supposed to find out a job vacancy section and read them. After that, they decide which one is better to work out. Ask them to write a vacancy announcement of their own. Encourage them to discuss in a group and to write.
7. Instruct other groups to do the same but give other sections for them to work with;
Group 1: vacancy announcement
Group 2: events
Group 3: tips
Group 4: advertisement
8. Ask them to make the first draft in this class.

Day 2

Class: 8

Objective: By the end of the activity, the students will have

- gained an idea on the exposure of creativity while writing.
- acquired the strategy for writing varieties of announcements.
- gained presentation skills.

Procedure:

1. Ask students to be in the same group as that of the day before.
2. Provide them the materials such as chart paper, colourful A4 size paper, markers, colours, pen, shine pen and so on.
3. Ask them to read the first draft again. Tell them to prepare a final draft of their work in the chart paper.
4. Ask them to present.

Day 3

Class: 8

Objective: By the end of the activity, the students will have

- acquired skills to pay concentration and to focus on certain things even while gaining entertainment.
- gained the ability to express the feelings towards the story that is there in the movie.

Procedure:

1. Tell students that they will watch an animated movie on the day.
2. Encourage them to watch the animated movie with full concentration so that they can have a discussion on it later.
3. Use the digital board that they have.
4. Put the movie on. -15 minutes-
5. After the movie time, have a little discussion on what is interesting there in the animated movie.
6. Ask students to list the vocabulary that was used in the dialogue in the movie. Ask them to list them in a group and to write them down together in the newsprint paper without repetition.
7. Ask a question on an interesting part of the animated movie.
8. Give your view.
9. Give them a task to write about their favourite part of the animated movie. Remember that it is an individual task. So, it is concerned about the individual response.
10. Give them a feedback paper to write their view on classes with 'newspaper task' and 'animated movie '.