

“HONESTLY, I HAD NEVER IMAGINED BEING A TEACHER”:  
NARRATIVES OF NEPALESE EFL TEACHERS’ PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT

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## AN ABSTRACT

Of the dissertation of Tara Sapkota for the degree of *Master of Philosophy in English Language Education* presented on 5 November 2017, entitled “Honestly, I Had Never Imagined Being a Teacher”: Narratives of Nepalese EFL Teachers’ Professional Development

Abstract Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Assoc. Prof. Laxman Gnawali, PhD

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Professional development of EFL teachers is a major concern among Nepalese stakeholders of English language education as elsewhere in the world. Teachers’ professional development benefits teachers and students directly. It boosts students’ learning achievement (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss & Shapley, 2007). It also increases opportunities for teachers so that they may find some places for themselves where they have other things to do, for example developing curriculum and activities, teacher training, and so on, in addition to teaching. There are indirect benefits on other aspects for teachers that teachers’ professional development may bring about.

The theories of adult learning indicate that there is not a single formal mode of adult learning (American Institute for Research, 2011). The studies carried out in the past on teacher development infer that there are different ways that teachers as adults learn from. The approaches that teachers follow for their professional learning is affected by several factors like their context, funding, workload, motivation and so on. However, when teachers realize the benefits of their development, they try to bring changes in their practices.

I got opportunities to work with many teachers and scholars of EFL education when I was working as a teacher and studying as a university student of EFL

education. The time I spent as a teacher and a student fed me with a lot of different experiences. I met teachers who were in the profession because they loved teaching. Likewise, I met teachers who became teachers because they had to find some ways to earn their daily bread. I also met some teachers who had been doing more than teaching merely in their school. Such differences in experiences led me towards this study.

In this study, I explored the experience of professional development of EFL teachers in Kathmandu. I carried out this study with the purpose of explicating the experiences of professional development opportunities used by EFL teachers of Kathmandu. I also aimed at explaining how EFL teachers develop, the challenges they face in course of their professional development and their coping up mechanisms.

It was a qualitative study in which I used narrative inquiry as the research method. I interviewed five EFL teachers. The experiences shared during the interviews were used as the narrative data for the study. From the study, I found that EFL teachers keep their efforts to use diverse professional development opportunities for their development. The development of teachers results in changes in their classroom practices as EFL teachers and also as teacher-learners. Although the teachers entered the profession without much learning and preparation, they have realized the change in their classroom practices. Their entry into the profession and the efforts they kept making their teaching effective have resulted in betterment in their students' learning outcomes. The improvements in students' learning, in turn, reinforce teachers' beliefs that professional development impacts them. The teachers have brought about the changes in their professional practices by following the ghosts of their former teachers, joining university degree courses for further studies, attending conferences wherever it is possible, attended training sessions in their

schools, outside schools and in the teacher network they are associated with. They participate in workshops for in-service teachers and get enrolled in professional networks for their professional development. Although they do not enjoy much, they participate in the discussions/sharing and professional meetings with their colleagues in the schools. In addition, sometimes they write reflective journals, usually when they have time. They follow their mentors' suggestions. These days teachers have started using social networks like Facebook for their professional development.

I also found out that EFL teachers are aware of the significance of professional development for themselves and their students. They want to transform their classroom practices through learning from different strategies. However, professional development is a challenge since it is difficult for them to balance both everyday professional responsibilities at school and professional development events. Similarly, learning English to be able to teach appropriately, less appropriate training and lack of sponsorship from their institutions are other challenges faced by EFL teachers. I found that the EFL teachers try to minimize the effects of the difficulties managing convenient alternative time for their professional learning. They also request for some fund from their school for such activities.

EFL teachers could bring about positive changes in students' learning if they were provided with learning opportunities. It is necessary to encourage EFL teachers by increasing their services and privileges. It is also necessary to provide them with learning opportunities according to their need.



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Tara Sapkota

Degree Candidate

November 5, 2017

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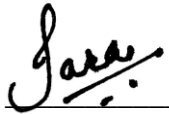
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and it has not been submitted for candidature for any other degrees at any other university.



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Tara Sapkota

Degree Candidate

5 November 2017

## DEDICATION

To all committed teachers struggling for their own professional development!

*M Phil in English Language Education dissertation* of Tara Sapkota entitled  
“Honestly, I Had Never Imagined Being a Teacher”: Narratives of Nepalese EFL  
Teachers’ Professional Development and presented on 5 November, 2017.

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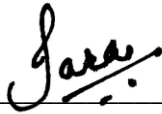
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## ABBREVIATIONS

AR	Action Research
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DEO	District Education Office
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
IATEFL	International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
NCED	National Centre for Educational Development
NELTA	Nepal English Language Teachers' Association
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCED	Office of Curriculum and Educational Development
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PUPT	Professionally Unqualified Practicing Teachers
RC	Resource Centers
SEDU	Secondary Education Development Unit
SEE	Secondary Education Examination
SLC	School Level Certificate
TPD	Teachers Professional Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a poetic expression of my personal experiences as a student of English language at different points of time and responses that my teachers made in my learning. The poem subtly expresses the meaning of learning English for these EFL teachers. I present their responses as the reflection of their state of development in the profession. Along with the poem, I also state the problem of the study. Likewise, I write the purpose of the study and research questions followed by the structure of the study before I conclude the chapter with the delimitation of this study.

#### **....the English Teachers Said**

*Auntie Teachers:*

*Fair your face and limbs*

*Eyes and smile bright,*

*Melody rang as you speak*

*Pictures drawn as you write.*

*Teacher 1:*

*Yours an intelligent child;*

*she knows every letter*

*she does all her home works*

*she scores always better.*

*Teacher 2:*

*I tell her, 'Read aloud',*

*She reads loudly*

*I tell her. 'Help your mates'*

*She does it proudly.*

*Teacher 3:*

*How hardworking your girl is!*

*How well mannered!*

*She's clear, complete and punctual,*

*She has everything planned.*

*Teacher 4:*

*Your girl keeps her effort,*

*yet, she misses points*

*She's good ideas,*

*But can't knit them with joints.*

*Teacher 5:*

*Oh! from there???*

*Then, why are you here?*

*You have to be a doctor or an engineer*

*How can you end up being a teacher?*

*Teacher Me:*

*Like aimless tides, like a broken kite*

*English kept going, looking for an expensive ride*

*Yet, some utopic dreams in heart and mind*

*Though doubtful if I am really to find!*

The first fold: when I look back myself as a student, I see not only my images in the mirror of reflection but also that of my teachers who were always with me in

one name or the other; all of them teaching me English and commenting on my learning. The text above is the manifestation of the same experiences I collected at different intervals of my student's life which is largely varying. A very thin researcher's lens I built in course of learning has made me believe that student's learning is highly influenced by his/her teacher's teaching, and their focus of significance, else, I would have got similar comments.

The second fold: I entered teaching after I had got the first phase of pre-service teacher education. When I look back my profession of teaching, I, similarly, see different images of self in different institutions. However, the commonality in the experiences is that I sensed lack in learning although "knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for optimal teaching is not something that can be fully developed in pre-service education programs" (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald & Zeichner, 2005, p. 358); more of skills than that of knowledge. The eight years of teaching took place in four different schools, some tuition centres and as a tuition teacher at home. In the first school, I had problems with the school staffs; I left the school because I felt excluded and lonely all the time. In the second school, I had problems with the students; their level of learning was incomparable to the grade they were in; I had very difficult time teaching them basic things and preparing them suitable to their grade. The third institution was a better place for me since I had built a good relationship with the colleagues and the students were updated. Similarly, the school climate was more "democratic and liberal" (Reedy, 1998, p. 318) I enjoyed teaching in the school but I was not satisfied with the services and privileges for teachers; I felt the teachers deserve more when they work more. The fourth institution was a renowned place with better facilities but the insults, harassments and domination made my life miserable. Therefore, I left teaching.

### **Rationale of the Study**

When I was struggling with research method for my dissertation a few years ago, my tutor suggested me to carry out an Action Research (AR). He told me that an AR requires me to do a lot of work but it, in turn, develops me as a teacher. His idea is in the line of Diaz-Maggioli (2003) who states that when teachers strengthen their knowledge and skills of teaching, the students' learning gets better. My tutor further said that it would help me to identify the problems that are typical of some classroom situations and solve them. His suggestion helped me to learn from my own teaching to young learners. After the study, I realized that when teachers continue learning and implementing their learning in their profession, it leads to improvement of their own skills.

Regarding the need for professional development, Murray (2010) states that professional development approaches help teachers to overcome the problems they face in their workplaces. Every individual teacher in the world has their own ways of teaching that may or may not match with other teachers hence, it keeps them aloof from their counterparts although they work in the same institution. However, teachers are found to be going through similar situations and encountering similar impediments throughout the globe as the goal of schools and education is similar. The novice teachers, in particular, are likely to face many problems because of the school administration and their requirements. They may feel overburdened at school. In such situation, if they do not have a mentor to support them frequently, they may be depressed with their profession. However, when such teachers get into the process of professional development, the number of such situations decreases since they meet with other teachers who have similar problems and desires for change. Having opportunities to share their practices, opinions, problems and endeavours teachers not

only help other teachers who face similar situations but also create a common society of teachers and their professional attachment to it.

Similarly, my eight-year experience of teaching in schools and being around teachers as professionals have informed me that teachers are known about changing situations and demands of professional development. It was at the same time I could see teachers joining universities and colleges for higher degrees and attending training and workshops. I could see some teachers forcing themselves into such processes because they had to fit in the competitive situations. Such experiences, thus, have made me carry out a study around the similar phenomena. This study was necessary to uncover such opportunities for professional development that EFL teachers are utilizing and in some instances, creating for themselves. Likewise, it was also necessary to shed light on the difficulties that EFL teachers face during the process of professional development. As a result, this study might be helpful for EFL teachers who are looking for their professional development despite the difficulties and contribute to the effective teaching-learning process.

### **Problem Statement**

The pass percentage in Compulsory English in school leaving certificate (SLC) examination of 2014 was 30.26% which was the second poorest result after Science among six core subjects taught in Secondary Level (Office of Controller of Examination, 2014). In 2016, SLC was replaced by the name Secondary Education Examination (SEE). The result of SEE 2017 shows that the sum of 1,49,029 students failed in English which is 33.44% of total examinees (<http://oenepal.com/passed-percentage-of-see-exam/>). The data shows that one-third of the total students who are taught English, still fail in school examinations. This data not only reflects the learning achievement of students but also less developed state of teachers since

Harwell, D'Amico, Stein and Gatti (2000) opine, teachers who have undergone the progressive process are able to bring about better learning achievements. Likewise, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] (2016) mentions, that the studies around the globe have come up with the conclusion that teachers have the greatest influence on students' learning, especially those who are disadvantaged learners. When teachers are not professionally competent, their teaching also becomes less effective upon all of their students. The teachers who are always looking for positive changes in their professional roles are more "procedural and productive" (Evans, 2002, p.131), they have improved ways of working out their duties which in turn brings in improved products i.e. better learning achievements in EFL learners. Therefore, professional development is necessary, however, it is the less researched area from my perspective.

What I did as a teacher and what most teachers seem doing is different from what Villegas-Reimers (2003) has to say that professional development is the proactive change in a person's role in his or her profession. There are some other English teachers who have spent their whole life teaching English. Some of them have explored their place in other adjacent areas like teacher training and textbook writing. I wonder if those enigmatic teachers were born with such proactive qualities. The question that keeps ringing is if it is possible to fill up such qualities in a human-like filling a water bottle or downloading it from the Internet. And the answer to the question is "No" (Wright, 2009).

There are discussions on the professional development of teachers every now and then, at schools, at the universities, at training centres, in conferences and seminars. I believe the changing meaning of learning of both teachers and students have made the professional development of teachers also a hot cake for discussion.



The teacher educators and researchers have always been looking for the ways teachers learn and change their practices in a positive manner; teachers' professional development thus has become a prominent issue for them frequently (Hammerness, et.al. 2005) although the satisfying answer has not been found yet.

Professional development of EFL teachers in Nepal, like in the other parts of the world, is the subject of study since their development and the ways of development cannot be kept aloof of the development of the other teachers like them in the next corner of the globe. I borrow the ideas of Awasthi (2009) to shed light on the professional development of EFL teachers and teacher education in Nepal which he finds terrible because of teachers' poor command over English language and lack of pre-service teacher education and retraining. Despite such challenges, there are teachers whose practices are praiseworthy as well.

When I was looking for reasons behind teachers' inconsistent stay, in the profession I came across some interesting lines of Huberman (1989) as cited in Diaz-Maggioli (2003) that state, teachers go through five different stages; exploration and stabilization, commitment, diversification and crisis, serenity or distancing and conservatism or regret. In the first stage, they use the knowledge and skills they have learnt in the classroom. They get familiar with the environment and resources. The teachers are very enthusiastic at this stage. When they enter the second stage they get focused on improving student's learning. In the third stage, they start questioning their identity. This is the stage many teachers give up their job if they feel identity crisis. In the fourth stage, even though the teachers continue their profession despite identity crisis they may get distanced from their profession. In the fifth stage too, the teachers who have been compromising with their profession due to several other reasons may get retired regretting at their job whereas, some other teachers regret that they have to

get retired. The latter group keeps motivating both teachers and students for better learning.

Likewise, my placement in different kinds of schools with varying services and privileges for teachers enriched me with the experiences of working with teachers from diverse backgrounds and helped to get known about their opinion and practices for their professional development. There were teachers who were in the school because they needed a job. These teachers were ready to change the profession as soon as they found something else to do. In the same place, there were also some other teachers who had been teaching for a long time as a professional teacher.

It is the same experience that led me towards this study. My quest for the study was the experience of the EFL teachers who have been teaching for several years despite varying circumstances. How can some teachers stick into the same profession keeping themselves proactive, developing their knowledge and skills and hoping for a change in their existing situation? This question had a profound implication for my study.

### **Purpose of the Study**

I carried out this study with an aim to explore EFL teachers' experience of the process of professional development and utilization of professional development opportunities. Likewise, I also studied the challenges that the EFL teachers encountered and their ways of overcoming them for their professional development.

### **Research Questions**

- a. How do EFL teachers experience their own professional development?
- b. Why and how do EFL teachers utilize/ not utilize professional development opportunities?

- c. What are the challenges for EFL teachers' professional development? How do EFL teachers overcome challenges for professional development?

### **Delimitation of the Study**

This study was carried out on EFL teachers who were teaching in Kathmandu. I studied only the process of professional development of the EFL teachers including the opportunities they used for their professional development. I also included the experiences of the challenges they encountered for their professional development and their personal ways of overcoming the challenges.

### **Structure of the Study**

In Chapter I, I introduce my research topic through an anecdote of my experience as a student and a teacher of English language. I present the problem that triggered me towards this study. I state the rationale for the study. I also mention the purpose of carrying out this study. Then I set the research questions for the study.

In Chapter II, I present a thorough literature review. I review the themes that are directly related to the study. I review the theory for the study and the concepts I use in the study. While doing so, I blend the theoretical concepts with scholars' ideas and professional development of EFL teachers. I also present a brief account of the previous studies carried out on professional development of EFL teachers in Nepal and around the world. Then I present the conceptual framework of the study. Finally, I mention the perceived research gap in my study.

In Chapter III, I elaborate the research design I implement for the study in detail. I discuss the philosophical bases I have under ontology, epistemology and axiology for the study. Then I discuss the research method, Narrative Inquiry, in details. I also discuss the analysis of the experiences of teacher participants. Then I

discuss quality standards of the study which is followed by ethical issues for the study.

In Chapter IV, I present the stories of experience of professional development EFL teachers. I present their stories in different sections. The different sections depict the different stages and aspects of their professional life. I narrate their experiences and insert their statements wherever possible.

In Chapter V, I present the analysis for the first and the second research questions. This chapter is about the process and opportunities of professional development of EFL teachers. I analyzed EFL teachers' experiences of professional development at different stages of their professional life. I also explicate the additional opportunities that EFL teachers got as they kept developing in their profession. Likewise, I present the sub-themes as the opportunities for professional development of the EFL teachers.

In Chapter VI, I present the analysis of the third research question. I discussed the experiences of obstacles that teachers faced in their profession. I also discuss teachers' overcoming strategies of the problems so that they sustain in the profession and keep developing.

In Chapter VII, I discuss the insights I got from the study. Similarly, I present my reflections on the study I carried out. I also mention the possible implications that I perceived, of this study. Finally, I conclude the chapter with the conclusion of the study.

### **Chapter Summary**

The study of literature on the professional development of EFL teachers and its impact on students learning achievements and my personal experiences as an EFL teacher were the foundations of the study. In addition, the important place the English

language is occupying in several aspects of everyday living has raised its value, hence, teaching and learning of English and experiences of teaching and learning of teachers and students have been accepted as an important subject to be studied. Why do EFL teachers need professional development? How do EFL teachers develop? What opportunities are available for teachers for their development? How often do teachers participate in professional development activities? What problems may hinder EFL teachers for their development? These are some of the frequently raised questions among stakeholders of EFL education around the world. This study is a piece of similar literature that studied experiences of Nepalese EFL teachers.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, I discuss the related literature that I reviewed for the study. I present the literature review in four different sections; thematic review, theoretical review, previous research studies, and policy review which are followed by the research gap. I also present the conceptual framework of the study at the end of the chapter.

#### **Understanding Teacher Professional Development**

Besides joining the university course for developing my professionalism as an in-service EFL teacher and participating in training, workshops and seminars at different points of time, I intentionally carried out some action research in my classes. Those were action research documented in the action words, action sentences and action meanings; quite mechanical where I let my feelings flow very less in comparison to the facts I collected. Nevertheless, it was an aspect of this research which, I believe is broader; broader in meaning, broader in insights and broader in the resources I approached. There were two major reasons that made me choose action research; the first my obligation of accomplishing the task conveniently at my workplace and the second was, as said by Burns (2009) that the teachers who make attempts for research are likely to develop as professionals because research helps them in building knowledge both about and in their profession, therefore, I, as a novice practitioner, needed to make attempts in construction of professional knowledge to add to the knowledge and skills to my professional growth. In addition, one of the tutors at the university always told the students that action research is one

of the best ways to develop themselves. He always inquired if they had been trying one at their place.

Until I was doing my masters, though I had been teaching for several years, I had never known about professional development and why I needed it. School teaching was one of the income generating means, and that I knew and that was all I knew. Teaching was bare. There was nothing encouraging except the salary I received every month. Nobody helped in difficult situations. Although I managed to deal with the contents I had to teach, there were other difficulties as well that I had to face alone. There were problems while teaching in the classroom. Sometimes there were difficulties in dealing with students' behavioural problems. At such moments, I expected somebody to help me to solve the problems, however, there was no such help. In those days, teaching was just teaching the content to the students whether students liked or not or even whether I liked it or not as a teacher. I expected someone to provide me with some feedback on my teaching and other professional behaviours in the school. I studied in the university classes that teachers perform better when they are helped by other teachers and the school administration. However, it lacked all six categories of intervention analysis, originally developed by Heron (1973) as put forward by Underhill (1989) prescriptive, informative, confronting, cathartic, catalytic and supporting. Later, at the university, I got acquainted with the real professionals and other resources which hit my passive professional slot.

I was worried not having a very pleasant time in teaching, there were some problems with me and some others outside. The interesting line from Borko (2004) made me think about something on my part that professional development about widening comprehension of teaching and generating innovative ways of teaching and I might have some problems with my professional roles. I cannot convince myself

completely, yet, it contributed, at least, a little to my blank understanding of my self-professional-development. However, I was confused to read Diaz-Maggioli (2003) where he says, teachers' professional development does not influence students' learning; either there is the very little effect of teachers' learning or there is no any effect at all. The confusion is if professional development does not make an improvement, why is it called development and why would it be necessary at all? The understanding of professional development that has come to me is the state of the improvement in self and the improvement that self-development has caused in others. I attribute the notion of development in myself if I am able to help others change their state in a positive manner if not more, at least a little. One of the major aspects of reforming our school teaching and the education as a whole is professional development on the part of the educators. Clair and Adger (2000) write that heart of US school reform requires the application of principles and reformation of schools so all students meet the goal of learning. The vehicles that drive the schools and education system on the right track are school teachers. The teachers can create a dynamic change in the system if they are made capable of.

### **Models and Ways of Teacher Professional Development**

In our classes at the university, we were made to carry out an action research. We did. In addition, if we wanted we could keep the notes every day on what happened and how it happened. We could look at the notes later and evaluate ourselves. Moreover, we could also plan accordingly. They said we would be changing our professional behaviour with them. Villegas-Reimers (2003) has many such ways which help us to develop. She has divided the models of professional development broadly into two categories; Organizational partnership model and small group or individual models. The first includes professional development schools,



other university-school partnerships, other inter-institutional collaborations, schools' networks, teachers' networks and distance education. The second includes supervision: traditional and clinical, students' performance assessment, workshops, seminars, courses etc., case base study self-directed development, co-operative or collegial development, observation of excellent practice, teachers' participation in new roles, skills development models, reflective models, project-based models, portfolios, action research, use of teachers' narratives, generational or cascade model, coaching/ mentoring.

Of these different models, I have used action research myself and experienced how it helps. I have also participated in seminars and conferences to help myself perform better. As it is mentioned in National Center for Curriculum Development [NCED] (2011), experts, face to face workshops, online communities, informal talks, individual reading, reading groups, doing a formal course, giving sessions, membership of a professional body are some of the other ways for continuing professional development. They help the teachers to explore new ideas and techniques for my classes, though all teachers may not be able to transfer all of them into classes due to several reasons one of which could be an irrelevance to classroom and inadequacy in terms of resources. They suit especially to the professionals who are in need of incentives to renew their commitments to their career Diaz-Maggioli (2003). Hence, I need not worry now that I have not been able to transfer all the learning in immediate situations, I can do afterwards too.

The different models of professional development I illustrated in the previous paragraphs of this section of the chapter is a facet of available professional development opportunities that the scholars of teacher education frequently discuss. However, it does not mean that teacher professional development is limited within

them. Nor does it apply that all EFL teachers follow both models for their development. The models and approaches to teacher professional development and their benefits on teachers may differ with the differing situation. Recognizing the significance of teachers' professional development and management, School Sector Development Plan 2016-2023[SSDP] (2016) plans to strengthen various teacher development programmes including one- month in-service certification training, refresher courses and other on-demand short-term courses like online self- learning courses, and special need courses. However, teachers' professional development has not been overlooked if not prioritized either in the past.

Similarly, Richard and Farrell (2005) discuss eleven different procedures that support the professional development of language teachers that include workshops, self- monitoring, teacher support groups, journal writing, peer observation, teaching portfolios, analysis of critical incidents, case analysis, peer coaching, team teaching and action research. Cole (2004) regards professional development not only as a way to enhance students' learning but also as an influential approach for change in school, however, when professional development becomes a collective effort of school teachers. He suggests strategies for teachers' learning that are school-based. The list of the strategies for teacher professional development includes self- directed learning, listening to or viewing training materials, participation in- house workshops, mentor advice, classroom observation, and team teaching.

### **Impediments of Teachers' Professional Development**

The available literature around the issue of impediments of teachers' professional development in Nepal shows a number of problems for teachers in being benefitted from the opportunities of teacher professional development I discussed in the aforementioned paragraphs of this section. Bhattarai and Gautam (2005) assert

that EFL teachers need a significant professional shift in order to meet the requirement of changing EFL context in Nepal and expectation of parents and students so that the students can sustain in the complex linguistic world where English is assumed to be the must-know language. This might be one of the reasons that novice teachers and teachers in teaching profession like me look for professional development activities. However, as Pokhrel and Behera (2016) discuss that the Teachers Professional Development (TPD) programmes are not yet to the expectations of teachers since teachers are still looking for learning that is directly applicable in their classroom. Likewise, they also mention that inadequate sharing opportunities for teachers, inappropriate teaching skills that can be transferred into the classroom directly, no involvement of teachers in preparation of TPD programmes and, lack of feedback and supervision after professional development programmes are some of the impediments of TPD in Nepalese context.

Regarding the issue of the challenge of professional development in international context, Diaz-Maggioli (2004) argues that top-down decision making at the institutions and lack of ownership of the teachers over their development process are some major challenges of their professional development. Likewise, the less practical content of professional development, less or no institutional support in transferring the content into practice, lack of variety in delivery mode of the professional development are other challenges for teachers on their way to professional development. In addition, lack of varied professional development opportunities for teachers with varied interest and abilities, and lack of systematic evaluation of the professional development of teachers are also the problems of professional development of teachers. On top of it, the professional development

planners' inability to cater varying learning needs and characteristics of learning of teachers is also an obstacle to teachers' professional development.

### **Adult Learning Theory**

I had to spend considerably long time in finding out the theory that the research could rely on. I revisited my class days at the university and tried to make the memories alive. In classes with our projects and assignments, our professor used to make us work in groups whereas I preferred working alone. I remember many a time I had asked him if I could submit the task alone, he let me do so without any objection in the class. But after the classes were over he talked to me separately to say that I would learn better if I worked with friends, he said that the ideas multiply in a group whereas they are limited in individual effort. He told these words simply to motivate me to work with the group. During workshops too, he used to make us work in groups, if not possible, in pairs at least. Later, I discovered a theory his belief was based on, cooperative learning; Doolittle, (1995) opines that the children who work with their friends in the team at present become able to work individually in future; therefore, group work is necessary for children. The opinion was about children but it suited my context too. Although all of the classmates were adults, it helped us to work independently in the schools in better ways.

I had been learning independently since I was a school student. However, working in the groups in the university was helpful to enhance my learning. In addition, the series of reading and writing assignments also helped me to change my ways of teaching in better ways. The experience of working in different ways made me decide 'Adult Learning Theory' of Knowles (1973) as the theoretical base for the study.

In 1980 Knowles came up with four assumptions of adult learning which included self- concept, experience, readiness and orientation to learning. Later, two more assumptions were added in the list of the assumptions of adult learning i.e. motivation and knowledge of the need to learn (as cited in Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2006). I discuss five of these assumptions in the following paragraphs individually.

The first assumption states that adults have self- concept of learning, therefore transmission of knowledge is less effective than the process of inquiry, analysis and decision making with the adult learners. Adults do not prefer to learn that someone asks them to learn or rely on someone for their learning completely. Their concept of learning keeps moving towards independent learning. Regarding Knowles's assumption of self-directed learning, Herod (2012) opines that learning is for development of individual learner where learner's needs are addressed. The domain of teachers' professional development is teachers determined, which implies that teachers tend to take the development approach that best apt them and their context rather than the ones prescribed by a teacher education syllabus. The benefit of self-directed learning according to American Institute for Research (2011) is "learning can easily be incorporated into the daily routines and occur both at learner's convenience and according to his/her learning preference" (p. 2). The teachers may follow any approach to their professional development that is suitable to their context and needs in their way and at their time.

The second assumption states that adult learners are rich with experiences; their learning is easier if they can relate the information to their experiences. Experience has a vital role in formal and other modes of learning. Laird (1998) argues that teachers who tend to follow andragogical model while teaching asks many

questions because they know the adult learners have a lot of experience which is worth sharing; it may also help them to strengthen their learning. McGrath (2009) writes that this assumption of Knowles about adult learning is about the significance of experience that teachers have collected during their lifetime, which firmly aids their learning and helps them to decide which way to take to continue learning for their development. The adult learners, i.e. the EFL teachers in the context of this study, decide what to learn and in what ways to learn according to their previous experience.

The third assumption states that the adult learners' readiness to learn is influenced by their awareness of the specific learning needs generated by real-life events like marriage, divorce, taking a new job, losing a job and so on. Their readiness to learning at different points of time is affected by such events and the social roles and developmental tasks they need to perform in their lives. Brookfield (1986) argues that Knowles's assumption of readiness to learning and influence of developmental tasks and social roles upon their readiness is a narrow concept of learning since it may encourage adults to perform better in some specified areas only leaving others behind (as cited Marriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2006). Although there is the realization of reality that everyone might not be equally able enough to learn everything with similar outcomes, according to this assumption, adult learners may drop learning if that does not relate to the social roles they have or the development tasks they are involved in.

The fourth assumption is adult's orientation to learning. This assumption refers to the idea that adults prefer problem-based learning rather than content-based learning hence, they prefer to learn the skills that they can practically implement to fulfil their immediate needs. I blended this assumption with the assumption of

knowledge of awareness of learning which according to McGrath (2009) agrees Knowles's assumption that adults need to know the reason behind why they need to learn. Litster (2016) asserts that adult learners prefer to learn those things that have connections with their everyday living, moreover, they are more interested to learn the things that help them to solve or reduce their immediate problems.

The fifth assumption of learning that Knowles put forward, added later in the list, is motivation towards learning. Adult learners learn the knowledge and skills that they find worth learning from them. Adult learners' motivation towards learning for professional development expressed in the line of Marriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner (2006) states that adult learners participate actively when they know that their learning brings positive changes in their profession. Likewise, Litster (2016) asserts that adults are motivated towards learning when they know that there are multiple, complex and highly personal gains from learning.

These assumptions of adult learning serve as the basis for exploring the teachers' experiences of their professional development. I not only explored their experiences through the narratives but also related the teachers' experiences of professional development to these assumptions. It led to the discovery of new ways for teachers' professional development.

### **Teacher Change**

Guskey (2002) explains the model of teacher change through professional development activities which are also a supporting theoretical base for this study. The notion of change that the model of teacher change incorporates changes in three aspects in teachers i.e. in their attitude and beliefs, student learning outcomes and teachers' classroom practices. These concepts of change helped me to explain the

experiences of change that EFL teachers felt and narrated in their narratives during the study.

An important idea that Guskey (2002) reaffirms in his discussion of the results of teacher change is that there is an enhancement in student learning. Student learning achievements is an indicator of the betterment of teachers in their profession. I mentioned it in the previous chapter that low level of professional development has resulted in the low level of learning achievements in students while discussing the problem statement. Therefore, the analysis of the experiences that EFL teachers shared in their narratives and the changes that they refer to in themselves resulted from their involvement in professional development activities/programmes could add to the rationale that teacher professional development is inevitable.

As Guskey (2002) proposes, I discuss changes and development in three aspects of teachers' profession, i.e. belief and attitude, teachers' classroom practices and student learning outcomes in the following chapters. According to Guskey, teacher professional development changes teachers' classroom practices. The review of the literature on teacher professional development and models and ways of teacher professional development elsewhere in this chapter supported this idea that teachers learn better ways of teaching through professional development. This may be the immediate impact of professional development on teachers. According to Fullan and Miles (1992) teachers look for practical ideas from professional development activities that support them in their day to day teaching (as cited in Guskey, 2002). It signifies that teachers expect to change their classroom practices through professional development activities. The change in their practices may lead to improvements in students' learning outcomes. In the previous section of this chapter, while discussing Adult Learning Theory, I re-stated Knowles (1980) that motivation affects teacher



development, and, if adults are motivated, they learn better. This idea supports Guskey's idea that teachers who believe that their engagement in professional development activities broadens their knowledge, skills and hence, contributes to enhancement in students' learning guide them towards making attempts for their professional development. Professional development programmes are designed to address the need for changes in teachers attitude and beliefs in one way or the others. I studied the beliefs that EFL teachers shared in their narratives that led them towards their professional development.

### **Policy Review**

Teachers professional development has been a major concern among the stakeholders of education in Nepal. Although teachers are encouraged to attend professional development activities, the transfer of their learning from the activities into their classroom has been a challenge in Nepalese context (Pokhrel & Behera, 2016). There are policies for teacher professional development for Nepalese EFL teachers as well. It has been challenging to make one to one achievements in teachers as it is mentioned in the policies in the past (My Translation, NCED, 2016). Despite the situation, there are policies with amendments in action to make them effective in Nepalese national context. In this section, I discuss the policy provisions for teacher professional development in Nepal.

One of the approaches to teacher professional development is teacher training. According to NCED website, NCED had the provision of two kinds of teacher training; teacher training programme and management training programme. Likewise, it also had a special training package for in-service Lower secondary and Secondary school teachers. A sum of 1320 hours training was divided into three phases; In-service Lower- secondary and Secondary Teacher Training- Module I (330 Hours),

In-service Lower-secondary and Secondary Teacher Training- Module II (660 Hours- Distance Mode) and, In-service Lower- Secondary and Secondary Teacher Training Module III (330 Hours) (National Centre for Educational Development [NCED], 2016) The teachers in public schools used to be provided with these training, however, this package has been replaced by another package at present.

Recently, NCED has revised its framework for teacher professional development and launched it as ‘Teachers Professional Development Framework, 2072’. According to the revised framework for teachers’ professional development, teachers are provided with varieties of training. Teachers’ practices in the school, teachers’ self-study, professional networking and exchange of experiences among teachers are the major modes of professional development. Likewise, the revised framework emphasizes the use of information technology for delivery.

According to NCED (2016), teachers’ professional development program consists of three major activities; teacher training, self-study based learning and exchange of experiences. Teacher training is divided into three different types; certification training, refreshment training and need-based modular training. The teachers with certification training are provided with refreshment training upon their demand. Likewise, need-based modular training is given for the teachers to develop some special skills at Resource Centre (RC). There is also the provision of follow up of the teachers who have gone through professional development activities for the effectiveness of teacher development programmes.

### **Previous Research Studies**

I was puzzled about what, to begin with when I started to write. I decided with teachers’ professional development because I had some bitter experiences as an EFL teacher. I was in search of the literature that would help me to widen my

understanding of professional development as a whole and the way through which I reach there. Moreover, the study supported me with the ideas to grow up with the dissertation.

Rijal (2011) carried out a qualitative descriptive study entitled 'Opportunities and practices of teacher professional development in the school setting' in Brunei. From the study, she unwrapped that professional development is a continuous process. She also found out that teachers use various strategies like attending seminars, conferences and training, keeping notes, sharing the experiences with colleagues, observing other teachers and creating professional networks. She also discussed the professional development opportunities that an institution may provide for its teachers. However, the advantages teachers take from the available opportunities vary as professional development is a self-oriented process.

Orchard (2007) carried out a study entitled 'An examination of learner-centred professional development for reluctant teachers' with the purpose of providing professional development for sustained implementation of new practices for reluctant teachers. It used a mixed (quantitative and qualitative) research design; so that researcher recognizes the limitations with all methods and biases within one method might offset biases of the other (Patton, 1997, as cited by Orchard, 2007, p. 58). According to the study, the teachers were significantly reluctant; reluctant towards new practices and towards change significantly. However, the teachers were less reluctant when they were provided with information on why the initiative was important followed by direct and sustained support while implementing.

Mukeredzi (2013) studied what Professionally Unqualified Practicing Teachers (PUPT) learn and how they develop professionally through their teaching roles. From the study found that professional development in PUPT originates from

their active involvement in school i.e. teaching and regular interaction with other teachers, students and parents. Professionally unqualified practising teachers are found to develop their professionalism through general knowledge of teaching-learning and that of the content of a particular subject, understanding of their classroom situation and teachers' meeting that are held inside the school along with those held outside the school. Although the researcher agreed the fact that teachers learn from continuous interaction in school and with parents, general school meetings, parent-teacher interaction and guidance are not fruitful for such teachers. Modern student-friendly ways of teaching are difficult for such teachers to handle when they have to teach in bigger mass and when the students are disruptive. Instead, in such situations, the teachers rely on teacher-centered teaching-learning process.

Gnawali (2016) carried out a qualitative study entitled, 'English language teacher development through teacher association: The case of NELTA' with the purpose of finding out the ways in which Nepal English Language Teachers Association (NELTA) contributed to professional development of ELT teachers and the ways NELTA is benefited from its member EFL teachers. From the study, he found out that NELTA contributed its members by creating opportunities for professional exchange and updates. Likewise, it also helped its members to build international links through its collaboration mechanism with other international institutes and associations. It motivated its members through its events. It also contributed to their professional growth. Similarly, the members volunteered their time for the association for and during the events. They also helped the association in its promotion by expanding its networks, developing the resources and representing the association with other agencies and in other countries. This way, the members and

NELTA hold a reciprocal relation regarding their contribution to one another in their betterment.

Rijal (2013) carried out a mixed method study entitled 'Professional development of English language teachers in Nepal' with the purpose of assessing the current professional development status of English language teachers. From the study, he found out that the status of teachers' professional development is poor. He found out that professional development through action research and collaboration, mentoring, distance learning and language training course, peer coaching, readings and comments from students were weak. However, professional development through direct experiences i.e. via apprenticeship of observation, guidelines in textbooks, and through classroom experiences was found to be firm. Likewise, he also found out that teachers do not experience democratic culture in the school where they can take part in decision making and their professional development. In the same way, it was found that teachers do not get opportunities for exchange of experience, and opportunities for their development in training and management, however, sometimes teachers are appraised for their performance. Moreover, he found out that there is the necessity of balance between the content and pedagogical aspect in teachers' preparation courses. Also, the teachers' preparation courses need to be made practical. Similarly, the well-prepared training that matches classroom context was necessary. He found out that students' achievement motivated teachers for their betterment. Praises and recognition, job security, promotion and responsibilities, salary and benefits, the image of the school, encouragement from the administration motivate teachers for their development. He found out that English language teachers expect a clear policy regarding teacher training, teachers' education and professional development. They also expect the head teachers of their school to be responsible for teachers'

professional development and mentoring after induction. In the same way, it was found that they expect to follow up after implementing teacher education.

Mehrani (2017) carried out a study entitled 'A narrative study of Iranian teachers' experiences of doing action research'. Despite the recognition of action research as a mode of professional development of EFL teachers in the report, this narrative study was carried out with the aim to get an insight of Iranian EFL teachers' purposes of carrying out AR along with their perceived opportunities and challenges while doing AR. From the study, it was found that EFL teachers carry out action research for their personal pedagogical concerns, to solve their pedagogical problems and to learn about their students' educational needs. The researcher found that AR provided EFL teachers with the opportunities for reflection of their professional activities; it helped EFL teachers in finding out alternative ways of teaching and classroom management. Likewise, AR allowed EFL teachers' empowerment and it also helped them to develop an overall understanding of language education. Regarding the perceived challenges of AR, it was found that there is the burden of workload and time limitation on teachers. Similarly, lack of collaboration among colleagues, lack of specialized knowledge on research, and administrative restrictions like lack of freedom for teachers was found to be additional perceived challenges of EFL teachers.

Simegn (2014) carried out a quantitative study entitled 'EFL teachers' self-initiated professional development: Perceptions and practices' with the aim of examining high school EFL teachers' understanding about the self-initiated professional development and assessing whether the teachers are employing the self-initiated professional development activities in their career. The study revealed that EFL teachers were aware of the need for self-initiated professional development

activities and opportunities. It was also found that it is necessary to encourage EFL teachers through incentives for the successful implementation of such endeavours. The study further revealed that EFL teachers practice the strategies like speaking in the classroom, reading school textbooks, managing classrooms and planning their lessons on daily basis. However, a contradiction was found through the responses of EFL teachers that teachers did not follow the approaches that they said to follow frequently. Lack of access to required resources and lack of encouragement affected implementation of professional development approaches among EFL teachers.

Mohammadi and Moradi (2017) carried out a mixed method study entitled 'Exploring change in EFL teachers' perception of professional development' with an aim to investigate the attitudes of Iranian EFL teachers towards professional development activities as well as their perception of possible barriers to the implementation and evaluation of Continuous Professional Development (CPD). From the study, it was found that EFL teachers have a positive attitude towards their professional development, however, barriers existed on their ways towards professional development. They found that customized CPD programmes benefitted EFL teachers. They also found that effective professional development and change started with teachers themselves. They revealed that acknowledgement of teachers' need and their socio-cultural background was necessary for their professional development. Likewise, the helpful institutional climate was another key ingredient for the professional development of EFL teachers. Similarly, they found out that EFL teachers' beliefs and reasoning affect their understanding and practices in the school. Furthermore, it was found that EFL teachers were aware of the advantages of CPD, however, they also perceived CPD optional for them. Similarly, EFL teachers

revealed that all the CPD programmes do not have equal impact on their practices, some programmes have more impact on teachers than others.

Roux and Valladares (2014) carried out a quantitative study entitled ‘Professional development of Mexican secondary EFL teachers: Views and willingness to engage in classroom research’ with an aim to analyze secondary EFL teachers’ previous professional development experiences, their views on professional development contents and formats and their willingness to learn about and engage in research-based professional development. From the study, it was found that university degrees and stand-alone courses were the most followed professional development approaches, by EFL teachers. However, other professional development approaches; mentoring, peer observation, conferences, networking with other teachers and conducting action research were not used by the participant EFL teachers of this study. It was also found that most of the teachers were unknown about the impact of the different strategies of professional development on teaching, except the impact of stand-alone courses, which was moderate. The other finding of the study was that classroom research led towards high professional development if EFL teachers are supported and guided properly. It was also recommended that it was necessary to design a planned strategy that makes use of technology and techniques to identify and meet students’ EFL learning needs.

### **Research Gap**

The review of the literature on EFL teachers’ professional development in the previous sections of this chapter and scholars’ ideas elsewhere indicate that professional development of EFL teachers is an important area of study. The exploration of such issues provides teachers with ideas about their development in order to bring about positive changes in teaching and reap effective learning

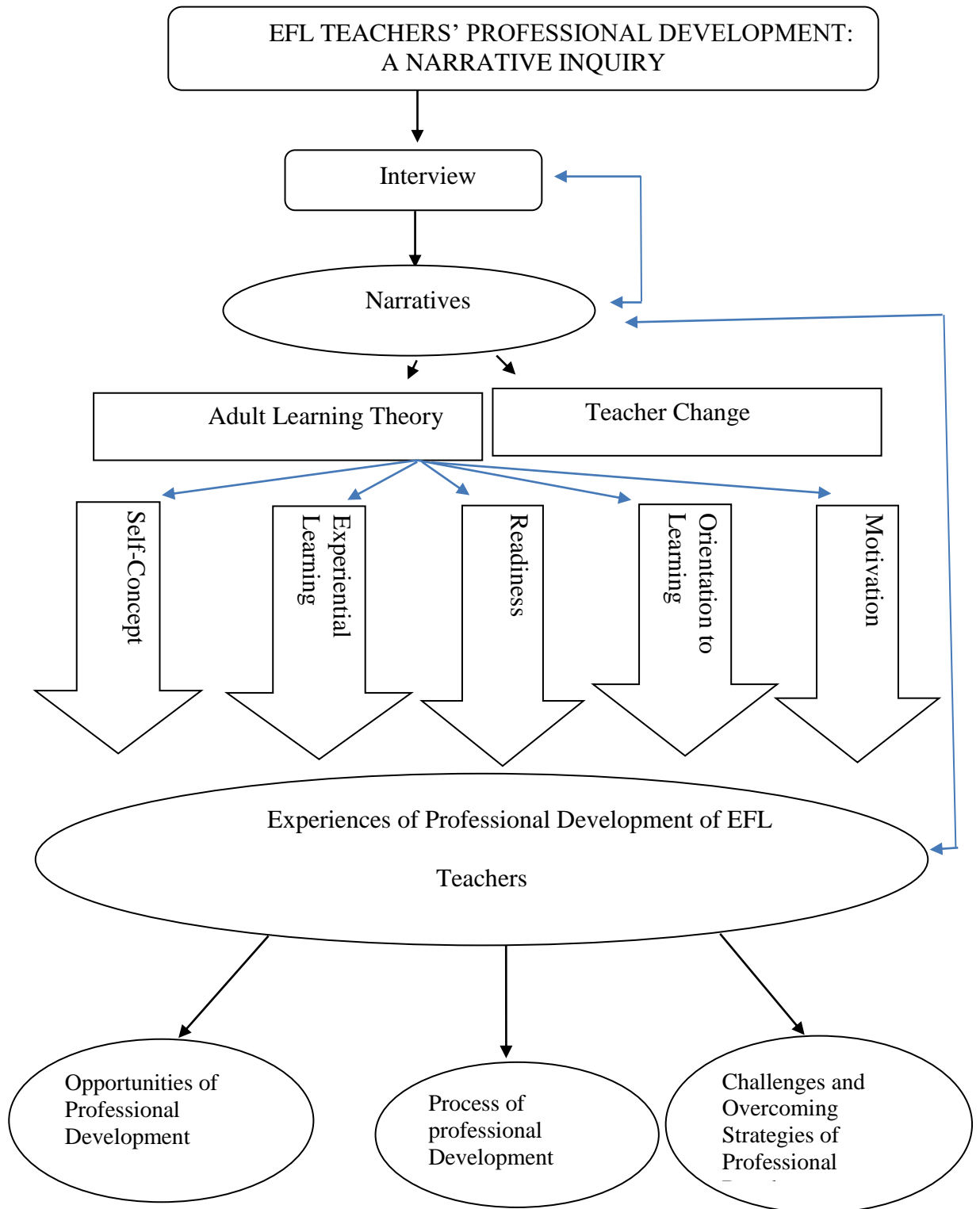


achievement in their students. Although there have been studies on EFL teachers' professional development, the review of related literature illustrates the need for additional studies in the arena. Next, a gap that I perceived was the need for an extensive study at a personal level. This is a qualitative study focused on the experiences of professional development of the EFL teachers in Kathmandu who have teaching experience of more than six years. I based the study on five participants and explicated their experiences as thoroughly as possible in the Nepalese context. This study, in addition, includes the obstacles that teachers face during the process of their professional development and the strategies and activities that the teachers follow to overcome them. I include all the models that the participant teachers followed for their professional development rather than focusing on a particular model merely that is proposed by scholars.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The Conceptual Framework I have presented on the next page is the frame of the study at a glance. It shows different aspects, like the data collection technique, theoretical base of the study, the research method I based on for the study, and the concepts that I used from the theories in the study. I carried out a narrative inquiry on EFL teachers' experiences of professional development. I interviewed EFL teachers to get their narratives. Then I studied the narrative from five different lenses of adult learning. The experiences of EFL teachers I collected from the narratives enlightened me with the answers to the research questions I had set for the study. The conceptual framework also shows the process I followed for the study.

## Conceptual Framework



## Chapter Summary

Professional development activities enrich EFL teachers with knowledge and skills of effective teaching which in turn results in better learning achievements in students. There are different models for EFL teachers' professional development proposed by different scholars and teacher educators. EFL teachers, as adult learners, may choose any model(s) and approach(es) that suit their context since a single approach or model may not have the same benefit for all teachers. The studies carried out in different parts of the world also explicate the similar insights. Realizing the significances of EFL teachers' professional development, and context-specific needs, different policies for EFL teachers' development are in action in different places.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I present the detailed plan for the study. The chapter begins with the discussion of the research paradigm that I stood for the study. After that, I discuss my ontological, epistemological and axiological considerations of the study. Then I explain the research design for the study in detail. After that, I discuss the quality standards of the study. At last, I discuss the ethical issues I considered during the study.

#### **Research Paradigm**

I chose interpretive paradigm because I wanted to construct the meanings that are explicitly and implicitly presented in the narratives of EFL teachers “standing on their shoes, to look through their eyes and feel their pain and pleasure” (Taylor & Medina, 2011, p. 4). In other words, as an interpretive researcher, I generated meaning of professional development, their experiences of opportunities and challenges, and their ways of overcoming the challenges from the teachers’ stories in their context. Similarly, I also referred the experiences to my context whenever possible, during the meaning-making process. In doing so, I kept their experiences alive. The repeated meetings and sharing helped me to develop a rich understanding of professional development. In addition, the paradigm allowed me to understand participants’ beliefs of professional development and the ways they shaped their professional development (Taylor, Settelmair & Luitel, 2012).

### **Philosophical Considerations**

The term ‘philosophy’ has always scared me for several reasons, one of which is the area it covers and the next the depth it digs, therefore, I could never delimit my philosophy. However, the research carried out previously widened my space of understanding of my own philosophy that I am growing up with. As my tutor says at the university, philosophy is the totality of knowledge I have within myself. It is the belief system I have developed in myself, the origination of the belief and the way I value my understanding.

### **Ontology**

When I was panicking to understand the meaning of the word ‘ontology’ in the first year of the study, I was told to understand what it signified rather than its meaning particularly. In other words, I was told to contextualize its meaning rather than allocating the meaning to the word. The contextualization was so simple as it was summarized in a single word, ‘belief’! My belief regarding developing EFL teachers’ professionalism includes variations.

There were multiple journeys I had to make in course of developing myself in an institutional setting, some of which are smoother, integrative, easy and beautiful whereas some other might be oppressive. I believe, there are multiple ways in which teachers can develop their professionalism. Understanding and acting through the vignettes and self-reflection of similar situations leads to “emancipation” (Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992, p. 8) in professional life so that I and the strugglers like me do not pull them out of the organization but keep “giving voices” (Chase, 2011, p. 428) against the oppressors. Had I not stuck to a way of being, perhaps, I would have had a better time!

There were so many things that influenced me, so did others. Thus, when there are multiple stimuli, the responses and the stamina also need to be multiple. I feel I lacked them at the moment. Reading other's stories, creating own stories in or after the suffering led to clarification of "problem of repression and exploitation" (Beverly, 2005) hence, enlightened the need of "speaking and being heard" (Chase, 2011, p. 428). In addition, the portrays of revisits of the professional journey in colour pencils or in stories (Finley, 2011) or in ink or in poems or in diaries explicate not only the bygone past but also sets futuristic plans. In other words, there were multiple ways in which I could help myself groom better to be a better professional.

As a qualitative researcher, I believe in subjective understanding of the individuals that differ with context and multiple dimensions for professional development as a result of generating narratives from the EFL teachers. The vignettes, I believed, were the stands for my ontological understanding of multiple realities. In addition, my major concern of the study of their personal, professional, cultural accounts that made them the way they are now is the multiple pillars supporting the multiple factors behind their professional development.

### **Epistemology**

I inquired, read and interpreted the narratives that were produced by the EFL teachers. They widened the area of our existence in a limited narrow tyrannical situation to a free horizon redefining our existence (Meretoja, 2014) which in my context was liberating the struggling EFL teachers for their professional development. The epistemology of my research was to be closer with EFL teachers in order to gain as much information as possible regarding their professional development. The stories were the modes through which I as a researcher and that novice to the profession built the professional crafts; without the explicit 'interactive stories' both the in-group or

the out-group may remain unknown about the experience (Clandinin, 2007). The presence of hegemony and the state of confusions in the profession; the dilemmas, challenges and the opportunities (McNiff, 2007) were the next episteme for the research. It enriched my understanding of professional development from their position. It also raised the possibility of implementation of the generated knowledge.

The next important epistemological stand for the study like any others was the relationship I established with the EFL teachers to perceive and express their understanding of what they have to say about their professional development. The bond set up enhanced the possibility of re-storying the multiple realities that are the knowledge of my research. It was a collaborative process where I, as a researcher and an EFL teacher co-constructed the knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012) of professional development. The conventional role and action of myself as the researcher and the EFL teachers as the research participants during interviewing and being interviewed was that of a listener and narrators respectively (Chase, 2012) of their stories. The experiences and information shared by the EFL teachers unfolded the realities behind their professional development. The unfolded realities of professional development in the form of narratives were the knowledge that creates a theory and that arises from a particular situation of narration (Mack, 2010) to which I was supposed to reach excavating the knowledge from the inner voices of the EFL teachers.

As a narrative researcher, I studied the lives of the individual EFL teachers and asked them to provide the stories of their professional lives (Creswell, 2009, p.13) which became the source of knowledge for me to get on with the research making meanings, because, narratives were series of events bound onto a whole and the study of the events and experiences of professional development, and their

relatedness and significance was understood through their relation to the EFL teachers (Elliott, 2005).

### **Axiology**

It's very difficult for me to put my definition of axiology, i.e. valuing. Had there been the score, that might have been easier. However, valuing is a very strong philosophical drive. I believed, it as an implicit framework, with which I was guided by. According to my understanding, I work according to the value I have on the particular subject matter. During the study, my axiological scope covered all the stories that came from the EFL teachers. The stories, told and retold, written and re-written were the invaluable asset of my study. As a narrative researcher, I tried to cover the wider experience of professional development that shaped the narrative (Creswell, 2007). Every account of the narrative inquiry and the written pieces were interpreted in the meaning-making process. I, as a researcher, purposefully included the realities expressed by the EFL teachers. The study deepened my understanding through a reflective process that brought me closer to the actual practices of professional development.

### **Rhetorical Assumptions**

The research that I carried out reads both first person and third person from the fourth chapter onwards. I presented the ideas of the research participants and my personal experiences through the narrative and descriptive writing. When I wrote my reflection and that of the EFL teachers through their narratives, both professional and critical, I used first person and third person interpretive expressions and narrations.



## **Research Design**

The research design provides the detail for the study. I discuss the research method, research site and participants, participants' selection for the study, narrative collection technique and approaches for narrative analysis in research design.

### **Research Method: Narrative Inquiry**

Often, I am told that I use my heart more than my mind, and, the one who uses heart is difficult to deal with. I have no idea about how difficult I am to be dealt with because of my heart. Therefore, this time, in full consciousness, I chose Narrative Inquiry as the method of my study because my heart wanted to narrate the pain I had in schools and heal them with the ideas and experience that the EFL teachers explicitly and implicitly shared in their narratives.

My understanding of narrative study is studying the experiences and the ideas lived by the research participants, i.e. EFL teachers, in recorded or written form, in order to draw a meaningful conclusion. Narrating is not narrative inquiry specific but all social researchers carry out narrative research in one way or the other (Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2008). One of the reasons behind this view regarding narrative research is the use of vignettes produced by interviewees as the form of data as an alternative to semi-structured interviews (Flick, 2006). Narrative interviews, this way have been a means of data collection for a research study. A narrative research usually is the study of an individual, accumulating information through stories, stating the experiences and constructing the meaning of those experiences (Creswell, 2007) however, I included more than one participant as per the need of the study.

I came across many English teachers, the professional teachers who left varieties of imprints upon me, some being very helpful for learners like me and some other earning their daily bread. In addition, I, myself, had stood in the shoes of

English language teacher and felt both pleasant and bitter experiences though bitter being dominating. Such experiences, thus, were the drives for the study, yet, there is a lot more to be written down. I chose narrative study as the method of my research for three major reasons. First, for a detailed understanding of how some EFL teachers succeed in developing themselves successful in the profession. I believed that other teachers could learn the ways for developing themselves as efficient teachers reading their experiences. The second reason is clarified by Hermann (1995), the individual who is familiar and capable of displaying their experiences are more explicit in their narratives rather than in the explanation of their principles (as cited by Flick, 2006). I also found the idea of Leithch (2006) relevant to clarify the reasons I chose narrative as the research method, that they support me in comprehension of teachers lives, their actions, reflections and development more insightfully. I believe the lived experiences and thus formed ideas in identical contexts are more applicable than the theories tested somewhere else. Third, I was able to bring about the understanding of various aspects, both definite and contradictory meanings, of teacher professional development through live narratives of the teacher-participants because as I mentioned earlier, the goal of this approach was to work with the teacher- participants to increase my understanding of professional development from their lenses (Chase, 2011) along with mine as an EFL teacher.

The positions I took for 'Narrative inquiry' was that of an interpretivist because I needed to construct the meanings that are explicitly and implicitly present in the narratives of the EFL teachers. In other words, as an interpretive researcher, I felt the narratives referring them to my context as well whenever possible, during the meaning-making process. In doing so, I kept their experiences alive. The repeated sharing helped me to enrich my understanding of professional development and the

various ways for professional development. In addition, the paradigm allowed me to comprehend the teacher-participants' credence and the way they developed them in course of living (Taylor, Settelmair & Luitel, 2012) which was developed professionalism in English language teaching in my research.

While I was guided by such principles and practices of interpretivism, I was also accompanied by the criticalist perspective of reflective practice of understanding/ practices own hegemonic practices and that of the others during professional development. This is the other area covered by the study. It is a "risky attempt" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994, as cited in Locke, 2004, p. 25) however, important to bring about balance in unbalanced institutional culture.

Similarly, the research I carried out was also the blend of the postmodern principles. Both creating stories and drawing stories from others are arts. More useful art was their meaning, creating the meaning and helping others to change their practices (Luitel & Taylor, 2007, as cited in Taylor, Settelmaier & Luitel, 2012) which was a critical postmodern thought and this is the other support for this Narrative Inquiry.

The whole process of narrative research required me, to collect a wide range of information about the participants, their experience of professional development. I also needed to have a clear understanding of the context to draw their individual story. I collaborated with the EFL teachers which were building a relationship with the teacher participants to narrow down the gap between the narratives shared and the narratives I comprehended (Creswell, 2012). One of the epistemological implications of carrying out such research was my collaboration with the research participants as a researcher for a deeper understanding of their professional development.

### Research Site and Participants Selection

The research site for the narrative study was schools in Kathmandu Valley. I chose Kathmandu as my research site because I found that there is a belief that there are good schools, abundant professional development opportunities and competent and professionally developed teachers. The research participants for the study were the experienced English language teachers who I approached purposively. The participants were the EFL teachers who had teaching experience of more than six years. The reason behind looking for the particular group of teachers was because I believed the teachers might have gone through several professional development activities.

The participants of the study were the EFL teachers in high school. Among five participants, two of them were male and three were female. Four of the participants belonged to the age group of 25 – 30 years and a participant belonged to the age group of 40-45 years. One of the participant teachers had the academic qualification of M Phil, two others were M Phil students when I was carrying out this study, while two others had a master degree. Their experience in teaching ranges from six years to 15 years. The following table introduces the participants' briefly.

Table 1: Participants' Introduction

Participants' Name	Gender	Age group	Academic qualification	Teaching experience
Jay	Male	25-30	M. Ed.	7 years
Sandhya	Female	25-30	M.Ed.	8 years
Dil	Male	40-45	M. Ed.	15 years
Udaya	Female	25-30	M. Phil.	6 years
Srijana	Female	25-30	M. Ed.	8 years

### **Narrative Generation: Interview**

During the study, I collected the narratives from the research participants through interviews. Interviews are the major data collection tools for my study. I interviewed the participants using the guidelines I had prepared beforehand. However, I made the changes in the guidelines if it was necessary during the interviews. I kept audio records of the interviews. The audio records helped me to save their stories the way they are. It was because I was not sure if I missed the points when I tried to write everything during the interview. Likewise, the teachers might not be comfortable with the interview when they see me writing each and every word they utter. As Connelly and Clandinin (1990) assert I interviewed the participants repeatedly unless they shared sufficient experience for the study and transcribed them because they were the part of the whole research process. I also followed the guidelines of Bryman (2012) regarding the qualitative interview and the number of interviews with participants, who argues that qualitative researchers may have repeated interviews with the participants to excavate their views and experience of their own professional development. I had online interviews with the participants. It was also one of the reasons behind the repeated conversations since I could not get a rich description of their experience in a single sitting.

In addition to oral conversation, I also emailed them some questions that needed rich illustrations that they could not include in the online conversation so that they had time for reflection of their past experiences. They sent me the written answers to those question. I included their written response to the narratives. The narratives are illustrated in Chapter IV. However, the dependence on online telephone interview made it difficult for me to incorporate “the three commonplaces of narratives i.e. temporality, sociality and place” (Clandinin & Huber, n.d., p. 3-4). It

was because we had to decide on the time for the interview. The geography we lived in and the time difference in the places also made it difficult for us to make instant conversations. Moreover, all the participants were in-service teachers, hence, it was difficult to speak to the teachers during the day. Most of the interviews with the teachers were organized in the evenings after dinner.

### **Broadening the Narratives and Illuminating Sense: Generating Meaning of the Narratives**

No matter how firm narratives I drew from the professionals, it made no meaning unless I studied them appropriately. The meaning-making of the narratives in my study was making the meaning of the narratives collected from the interview. To generate the meaning, I transcribed the stories shared by the teachers first. I read and re-read them to explore their experiences of professional development. Then, I made themes to entitle them so that I could illuminate their meaning as the study proceeded.

I blended two different ways for the illuminating sense of the narratives as suggested by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), first, by the issue of professional development and second, by the research questions. One of the major reasons behind blending the different ways of generating the meaning, especially, in this narrative study was to blend interaction and action together to construct the meanings from them (Webster & Mertova, 2007). I studied the narratives as carefully as possible and from as many angles as possible. Then I grouped the similar experiences. I looked at the issues and the experiences that the research questions raised. Likewise, I also studied the participant's experiences through the lens of interview guides that I had prepared to address the requirements of the research questions. Generating the meaning of the narratives by issue was more economical when I made comparison and contrast of the experiences of professional development of the research

participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The study of the different narratives of the EFL teachers helped to draw a conclusion of their professional development as in-service EFL teachers. The experiences of professional development of EFL teachers that were shared during the interview and knitted in the narratives had the insights I sought from the study. I studied the experiences and organized them according to the research questions since I had organized the interview guidelines as per the research questions. The analysis of the experiences that the EFL teachers shared reaped the insights that I discuss in Chapter VII. Likewise, analysis by research questions made the analysis of the narratives coherent since I explored the answers to the questions in order to make them complement each other. Besides, the relevant experiences of professional development of the teachers did not get messed up with the other experiences shared during the interview.

### **Quality Standards**

A personal and a very general understanding of quality standards of the research I carried out were the ways I took my position, the place and the way I located the EFL teachers and the way I presented the vignettes in order to meet the set purposes and made the study believable. I stepped on Interpretivism as the paradigmatic base explicitly for the study. At some instances, I was sensed to be a critical and a postmodern researcher in terms of the angles of expression. However, I did not blend the paradigmatic understanding to draw a common conclusion (Taylor, Settlemaier & Luitel, 2012), but rather I tried to look at the vignettes from different angles. It enriched my understanding of professional development and its implication. Furthermore, it added wider perspective to the conclusion of the research. Moreover, the study was about gaining the stories of the profession from the EFL teachers and adding to my reflective and relational understanding of professional development

rather than bringing out the summaries of teachers' experiences (Josselson, 2007).

Therefore, I legitimated the study through trustworthiness, authenticity, verisimilitude and pedagogical thoughtfulness.

### **Trustworthiness and Authenticity**

According to the developers of the quality standards 'trustworthiness and authenticity', Guba and Lincoln (1989) trustworthiness and authenticity are different but they are parallel to validity, reliability and objectivity of positivist research. The quality standards of my study were trustworthiness and authenticity as the dominant paradigmatic base of my research was interpretivist and the quality standards of an interpretive research include these quality standards (Taylor & Medina, 2011).

**Trustworthiness.** During the study, I spent long periods of time for prolonged immersion with the participants making them tell and retell their stories. Doing so, I was able to make the study credible. The repeated interaction with the participants and storytelling through informational conversation, open-ended interviews helped me to draw a rich description of their experiences of professional development. It also led me towards the emergence of new knowledge from the study. In addition, it also enabled me as a reader to compare my context of teacher development with the participant teachers' context.

**Authenticity.** In order to make the study authentic, I presented the stories told by the teacher-participants fairly. When the stories were told and retold by the teacher-participants, I retold the stories in the study by building them in past and present and also wrote the future visions when they shared. I presented the narrative according to the perspectives and the context they shared rather than what I thought. I described the place and setting, added descriptions to the stories fairly to make the analysis.



### **Verisimilitude**

I wrote a narrative inquiry implied I wrote them close to what had been shared with me. It was “an active process of photographing” (Bach, 2007) the lives of the characters and that of my own while writing the research. The closer I was to the shared stories, the clearer was the picture. Therefore, during the study, I closely studied the narratives of the professionals. Both explicitly mentioned and implicitly embedded lives were conceptualized and put into the research words only after extensive understanding without altering the message they convey along with the emotional touch they carry. The reading of the study, therefore, was a “retrace” (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007, p. 557) of the professional life of the EFL teachers rather than a mere research report.

### **Pedagogical Thoughtfulness**

Along with my personal reflection of the professional practices, while relating myself to the narratives of the EFL teachers, the other important facet of the research created space and reasons for the readers to make their personal reflection.

Pedagogical thoughtfulness implies engaging the readers in critical reflection of their own practices when they read (van Manen, 1991, as cited in Taylor, Settelmaier & Luitel, 2012). It is about making the readers get into the study along with their understanding and experiences. It is a deliberate “invitation” for the readers to participate (Crites, n.d., as cited in Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) in the study when they read. This was not only revisiting the personal professional experiences but also evaluating both perception and practices in the light of the narratives.

### **Ethical Considerations**

When I was a little girl, my grandmother told the stories of ‘Sunkesri Maiya’, ‘Nariwal Maiya’ and ‘Rajkumar Babu’ in a dense forest, in an old lady’s house and in

a 'Witch land' respectively. I used to ask if anyone existed with such names and in such places. She used to tell that they did and explained the beauty of 'Sunkesri Maiya', the honesty of 'Nariwal Maiya', the bravery of 'Rajkumar Babu' and the brutality of the 'Witches' in the stories with so many clear attributes. As she used to proceed with the stories, I used to fear about the witches so much that I imagined them in my bed like they were there in the stories. She told nothing more than their roles in the stories. Yet, I feared if they harmed my old grandmother. I did not know anything about ethics then, now I understood that she was being ethical; ethical for both the characters and their "dignity, privacy and well-being" (Josselson, 2007, p.538). Had she not opened everything in the story, they would not be interesting enough to listen. And had she mentioned their true identity, their living and being, she would not have been ethical. She did it so cleverly that neither the stories were boring nor it harmed the characters of the story.

My grandmother's storytelling has added a very important note of "rightness or wrongness" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 288) of my ethics before/during/after storytelling as a narrative researcher. When I was ethical I respected the research participants and site (Creswell, 2007). The respect, care and the thoughts of/for the characters added confidentiality on the part of the research participants. I maintained a very high level of confidentiality of the EFL teachers of the study.

I was told in the university classes that it is very difficult to address the ethical standards in a narrative research. However, I followed the three, "procedural, situational and relational ethics" (Tracy, 2010, p. 847) in order to make the research ethical.

**Procedural Ethics**

Though I am concerned with the experiences of professional development of EFL teachers, I presented them with a pseudo-identification both regarding their names, situations and personal backgrounds. I was required to do so because the change of names and other related identifying factors was a primary procedural and moral convention (Hyden, 2008). However, I did not present anything false or overlook their ideas so that the stories read accurate (Tracy, 2010). Similarly, they were informed in advance about the purpose of having them selected the characters for the study.

**Situational Ethics**

The stories did not come from a vacuum, nor did they exist in isolation. My understanding of stories was that they were relational and each story had some connections with the ways we lived every day. However, in making the attempts to make their stories relational I did not force them to present their personal living unless it had connections with their professional lives. Rather I chose the professional experiences to be put in the study that I was concerned with (Tracy, 2010). When I did so, I not only cared the EFL teachers but also the specific areas that I needed to be concerned with.

**Relational Ethics**

I chose the particular area of professional development so that the narratives and the study of the narratives help the struggling novice practitioners and they know the ways and get hopeful with the profession. To draw the narratives, it was necessary to have commonality between explorer and exploree (Ellis, 2007). However, the connectedness was not only to get the “great story” (Tracy, 2010, p. 848) but also to

expose the stories to the readers morally so that they are not misread and misunderstood.

### **Chapter Summary**

This is a narrative inquiry of Nepalese EFL teachers' professional development. There are various ways in which teachers develop. Interviewing teachers about their experiences of their professional development is one of the ways of withdrawing their experiences. I interviewed five EFL teachers about their experiences of their professional development. The in-depth interviews with the EFL teachers provided the experiences which were required for the study. While doing so, no teacher had been harmed. Their identity has been kept anonymous while referring their experiences in the study. Likewise, their experiences have been used for the purpose of the study only.

## CHAPTER IV

### NARRATING THE EXPERIENCES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In this chapter, I present the narratives of the EFL teachers. I re-tell their experiences they shared during the interview. I break the experiences into different sub-titles to narrate the experiences accordingly. I also include the EFL teachers' actual voices wherever it contextual.

#### **EFL Teachers' Narratives**

The qualitative interview with the EFL teachers gathered a lot of experiences in chunks. The experiences that the EFL teachers shared needed to be organized into narratives so that they read coherent. After the interview sessions, I transcribed them. Then, I developed the responses in form of the interview answers, into narratives. The sections that follow this paragraph present the narratives of the EFL teachers. Each narrative has been divided into subcategories. All the narratives of all of the participants have the same subcategories and experiences that correspond to them.

#### **Jay**

Jay had never thought that he would be a teacher of English until he started teaching, nor did he choose to be a teacher purposefully. He said, "Actually I happen to choose it, I did not have that intention. Er..r. by the time I thought about this or that thing somebody suggested and I came in this field. I just happen to choose it". Now it is already seven years that he has been teaching English!

His career of teaching English started after he finished his high school exam. In those days, he used to give extra coaching classes to some children after their school was over. Fortunately, it happened at his teacher's place. The same teacher

referred him to a school in his hometown. There he became a primary level English teacher professionally. He taught to the students of the third and fourth grade. Those early days of teaching were fun since he loved children a lot. However, he did not stick to the same place for a long time. He left his first job of teaching after six months. Maybe because he loved teaching or maybe the people around learnt about his calibre, he got enrolled into one of the most reputed schools of his locality. He became a full-time teacher there where he taught from 9:30 in the morning to 4:00 in the afternoon. In the meantime, he also got enrolled in a community college to pursue an undergraduate degree. His classes ran from 4:30 to 8:30 in the evening. He used to teach in the morning and attend the classes in the college in the evening. Life was difficult but he managed!

He remembers himself as not a good student when he was in school, not an average too! He said, “In grade four I was first from the last!” However, he worked hard at the college. His life as a student changed after he met one of his teachers in the college. His teacher mentored him from how to learn well as a learner to how to teach well as a teacher. He has been grown up in his teacher’s mentoring since then.

### **Jay’s Early Days as a School Teacher**

It was not easy for him to get used to teaching in the early days. In those days, all he did was replicated his teacher’s ways in his class. He said, “During school days I was not a good student, not even average. But in college, I worked hard. I happened to be in contact with one of my mentors. I have grown up in his mentoring. I feel like that I was growing up under his guidance. I was very inspired by his teaching and I was copying his style. And it worked wonderfully.” He knew that it would be difficult for him to teach the kids if they are not ready to learn, hence, every day he spent some time of his class to implant readiness in them to learn. He used to tell

stories to the children to get their attention. Sometimes he told stories, some other time he shared some interesting incidents that happened with him, and some other time he made them engage in fun activities like games.

He thinks his jolly nature made him affable among his students. They liked his presence in their class. Not only they participated actively in his class, they also cared him and tried to please him. It is quite amazing but he claims that he did not have a difficult time in dealing with students. When he has to remember the most memorable moment with those little students, he remembers a surprise celebration of his birthday. He remembers, “It was my birthday. I presumed that nobody knows my birthday. When I entered the classroom, a secret plan was going on in the class. They had made arrangements for that. One particular incident was they had kept flowers on the fan. It was a very hot month of June. They had switched off the fan. When I entered they switched on the fan and the flowers fell on my whole body. It was interesting how could the students in class 3 or 4 imagine manage that much”. It never happened in his life earlier. The love and care from his students overwhelmed him. He also remembers the sadness expressed in the words and on their faces when he had to leave the school for his higher studies.

### **Professional Steps in Jay’s Life**

Although Jay did not enter into the profession with a plan, he enjoyed teaching since his early days. In fact, the act of teaching kept guiding and shaping his further endeavours; both, his studies and profession.

When he began teaching he taught in the ways his teachers taught him. It was the easiest way for him to begin with. He also joined the college for formal studies on English education. His undergraduate study is in English education and his masters is in English Language teaching. He learnt and applied his learning from his formal

classes of the university while teaching his students. Then, in the recommendation of one of his teachers he joined Nepal English Language Teachers Association (NELTA). His enrollment into the teachers' association was another step that he took to make himself a better teacher. The association not only gave him a platform to meet with other teachers and experts on teaching English but also developed him as a proactive teacher. He has been continuously participating in the international conference on teaching English organized by the teachers' association. He also carries out research and presents at the conference. Next, he has been reading the recent publications on teaching English. Most importantly, he has been transferring his learning from the conferences, training, workshops and readings into his classroom. He says he is aware of the changes and need of his students. It has made him a different teacher among other teachers in his school. It is not something that he feels alone but it is something that other teaching staffs and school administration state. He has a different image among his students as a teacher. However, he calls himself a learner teacher.

### **Jay's Disappointments in Teaching!**

Teaching has been the profession of his type since he has a profound affinity towards the profession. However, there are some aspects and occasions that make him upset. He thinks he works hard in the school as a teacher. He not only works hard for himself but also for other teachers since he is helping other teachers too. Besides teaching the syllabus, he also does other activities in the school for the students to promote their learning like organizing co-curricular activities for them. He has also been playing a significant role as an advisor in the school. However, despite his hard work and additional effort, he is treated normally like a normal teacher who comes, teaches and goes. The disappointment is in the services and privileges he gets from



the school. He said, “I do not have a very good relationship with the administration. I always say them if I make difference anywhere I want to have the same kind of treatment in return. I want to be treated differently. This focus was basically on salary and privileges. The disappointments do not end here. A few years ago, Jay moved to Kathmandu for his higher studies. Since then he has been teaching in one of the schools in Kathmandu. The school context in Kathmandu is different from that of his place. There are students from different cultural backgrounds. The cultural differences have become another disappointment for him. He remembers that the teacher had a different position and they deserved respect like that of parents in the previous schools. But it is not the same in Kathmandu. He said, “Two of my students, whose names I do not remember, visited me when they knew that I was at home. They touched my feet as a greeting. I was amazed”.

### **Professional Turns into Jay’s Life**

He thinks he has come along quite a long way in the profession with many twists and turns. The journey has brought about changes in him. He feels that he has changed in the way he looks at the things. He also senses the changes in the way he acts. For him, at present teaching is not only replicating that his teacher did in his classes, nor is it teaching the textbooks and starting the class with textbooks open at a particular page. This is how he has been trying to make himself a different teacher. Not only he learns new ways of teaching and making his teaching effective for the learners but also applies them in his classroom. He also shares the innovation with other colleagues so that they can make the difference. His classrooms are equipped with the materials that he learnt in the university and his students reflect their learning in their practices.

The changes in him as a teacher are the results of the effort that he kept in shaping himself. He is still a university student. He also participates in the conferences and workshops organized by the teacher association that he is in. Furthermore, he attends the training and workshops in the university. He has been a passionate reader of literature on teacher education and teaching English. Besides, he writes and publishes his studies and reflective journals in magazines.

Although he thinks that training and discussion in the school are helpful for teachers to develop their professionalism, he is quite dissatisfied with what his school is investing in such opportunities. He attends the training in the schools but they do not address the need for the teachers of the school. They are too general and difficult to apply in the school setting. He thinks the training is delivered without finding out what the teachers require in the school. He said, “I learn from my teachers more than the trainers who come in my school. My teachers are my mentors”.

### **Obstacles on Jay’s Professional Journey**

He went to a public school in his hometown in the eastern part of Nepal. He remained a below average student at the primary level of his schooling. Later he made himself one among average students in his class. Thus, his learning during the school days did not help him much. He had to struggle to speak few sentences in English. He could hardly write a paragraph in English although he finished his secondary school. Therefore, the first obstacle for him was English itself; he had to learn English to teach the kids. He stayed late nights learning the lesson before he went to teach in the classroom.

He also went through the problems that perhaps, most of the responsible offspring in lower/middle-class families in Nepal go through i.e. supporting self and supporting the family with some earning. However, working and studying at the same

time was not easy. It was harder in the school he was working where he had to teach as a full-time teacher. Neither the job nor the study was optional for him. It was difficult but it continued.

The story of struggle does not end in finding time for self, study and family. He moved to Kathmandu for higher education. Kathmandu became a completely different place for him. He came from a different culture. He had a different language. The battle had to be fought almost every day. He had to understand the other culture and change himself in their ways.

He worked hard in the school. He spent additional time in the school and with the students. He helped the administration with his advises. He helped other teachers to solve their problems in whatever ways he could. However, his hard work was overlooked.

### **Jay's Adjustment**

Since he has always been a proactive teacher, he is not afraid of the difficulties. Although cultural barriers are sometimes difficult to deal with he keeps effort in minimizing their effects upon his profession and learning. He tries to understand the students and their needs. In the beginning of every academic year, he speaks to the students individually. He keeps their records and tries to deal with the students accordingly. Similarly, at the end of the academic year too, he speaks to them. The students share their experiences of learning with him that year. All the time the students do not tell what they disliked but they tell the positive aspects explicitly. Sometimes, they also inform what he could have done to make their learning more effective. The one to one conversation with the students has helped him to modify his lessons. Regarding the disappointments with the administration, although he cannot change the things in his favour, he tries to convince them.

Although he faced problems and he is still facing the problems he thinks that there is nothing unusual about it. He is stronger than he was in the past years. He is ready to take the challenges since he overcame many others in the past. He is not afraid of losing the job or finishing his savings. He accepts himself as a learner hence, the changes are possible in him in every possible different manner unless they are for betterment.

### **Sandhya**

Sandhya was desperately looking for a job after she finished her high school. She got an offer from a school to teach English. She did not have any other choice so she joined it. Now it is her 8<sup>th</sup> year of teaching English. She is happy being a teacher of English.

### **Sandhya's Early Days as a School Teacher**

She started teaching English at primary level. She was an unskilled teacher then. She did not get into the profession at that moment because she was a competent teacher, but she needed it desperately to support herself. She said, "Actually, that time when I passed plus 2 I was doing bachelors. I got an offer from a teacher so I did it. There was no other choice, I didn't see other jobs. So, I started it. Now I am happy in this field (laughs)". So, she had to work quite hard to teach the students. Although she was the student of pedagogy, it was difficult for her to transfer the learning from her high school to the actual classroom situation where she taught. She said, "The classroom situation was completely different". So, in such difficult time, she did the things in the similar ways her teacher used to do. She replicated the activities and the process in the classroom. She made her students listen to what she said and do what she wanted them to do. She said, "I think I was a very traditional teacher. I was so

authoritative”. When she found the students doing something else against her instructions, she beat them. The punishment was a part of her class then.

Despite the punishments and teacher-centred class, the students liked her. She could read their faces. They smiled at her. They showed excitement when she entered the classroom. When the students did well in the class and their learning, she encouraged them with kind words, she gave them stickers and announced the name of the best learner in the class. It encouraged them a lot.

It was true that she entered the profession having no other choices. But after she got into the profession, she started to find joy in teaching. She enjoyed going to school and being with the kids. She was always prepared for the class in advanced. She had to do some additional works to be prepared beforehand but she managed to do so. She said, “I was not experienced teacher but I was not an irresponsible teacher”. The love and respect that she got from the students made the profession heartening for her. For her, the lessons on poetry and stories were very interesting. The students also liked such classes than others like grammar and writing.

### **Professional Steps in Sandhya’s Life**

Although getting into the profession was an obligation of the particular point of time, the profession of teaching was the thing that she had in her mind. So, she joined Education faculty in English Education as the major since her high school. Her undergraduate degree is in English Education. She also did her masters in English Education. During all these years of studies, she has been teaching in schools as a teacher of English language. She had opportunities to work in different schools in different places; both rural and urban. So, she is experienced in teaching students from different backgrounds.

She participates in training whenever she gets the opportunities. She is the regular reader of a teachers' magazine, 'Shikshak'. These days Facebook has been another source of learning for her. The posts on teaching on the Facebook wall are the matter of interest for her. She reads and uses the useful posts from Facebook for herself and for her students as well.

She attends the discussions with other staffs and administration in the school. Sometimes there are foreigners in her school for sharing their experiences. She participates in the sharing sessions as well. She listens to them and keeps the notes. Although she does not find everything they shared useful for her contexts, she tries to modify them and use them with her students. She shares her experiences with her colleagues. She asks for help with the administration and other staffs if anything gets difficult for her to deal with.

### **Sandhya's Disappointments in Teaching!**

She has been working hard to set herself as a teacher in the school. The process of making herself an effective teacher has not been an easy task. She has worked hard to continue her studies and the profession alongside smoothly. However, when it comes to what she earns for the efforts she keeps, it is minimal. The earning from teaching was barely enough for her to manage expenses in the early days. It is better at present. Yet, it is less in comparison to what and how much she invests in teaching. She says, "It was not always about the students. It is about the living you are earning. It is the salary. In early days, I didn't use to earn a lot. The salary I got was barely enough for me. So, it is the disappointing part of teaching field. Nowadays, most of the teachers do not get good pay. They do work hard. But when it is the day they get for what they did, it doesn't make them really happy".

### **Professional Turns in Sandhya's Life**

Teaching English, although, was an interesting profession to be in, it is not an easy task for her. The journey of eight years that she has made until now has been the journey with several changes, ups and downs. When she was new to the profession, she thought her teachers were right and whatever they did was the right thing to do in the class. So, she followed the same thing, she followed almost everything that she could follow about her teachers. She thought the students had to do whatever she wanted them to do. She made them listen to everything that she said even though they did not want to listen to her. She beat them with they were found against her instructions. But things have changed now. Her experience of teaching has brought about changes in her. Now, she does not believe that she is the most powerful person in the classroom, she accepts the say of her students as well. She listens to the students to learn about them so that she can teach them in their ways. She respects their wishes on their own learning.

She has changed her ways of teaching. These days she does not make the students listen to what she says only. She makes them speak. She makes them do. The lessons are more interesting these days. She takes their opinion but does not mark them right or wrong. For her, there is no any specific rightness and wrongness in learning English. This way she finds her students happier in the class.

It took quite a long time for her to realize these things about teaching and learning since many things were realized after she experienced, and the experiences were priceless. She had to spend months and years to gain them. However, the ups and downs that she went through all these years have implanted changes in her and she is growing up as a better teacher than herself a few years ago.

### **Obstacles on Sandhya's Professional Journey**

She received her school education from a public school in central Nepal. So, learning English started when she was in grade four only as per the then curriculum of Nepal. Although she completed her high school, her command of English was not strong. She had a difficult time in speaking and writing English. In the early days, she taught English to the students in Nepali medium. However, it was not merely because she was not very good at English, it was also because the students did not understand the lessons if she used English only as the medium of instruction in the classroom. She had experienced her teacher lecturing her and telling her what to do and what not to do in the classroom, so she followed the similar techniques in her class. She slapped the students who did not work as per her instructions.

Every day, before she entered any class, she had to make a rigorous preparation for the delivery of the lesson. She learnt the text for herself in advance. She also looked for the meanings in the dictionary every now and then to make sure that she knew meanings of every word of the texts. She used to make special preparation for the grammar lessons as well, she learnt every grammatical structure and examples for them. Things did not just happen for she had to make everything come true herself.

These days she does not have the similar problems as she has learnt a lot since she started teaching English. But there are other things that she has to deal with. These days she teaches the students with a wide difference at a time. The range of the students varies widely; there are the students with preschool competence to the students with the competence that matches the grade they are in, in a single grade. She has to make separate plans for the students to teach in the way that matches their level at a time! She wishes she had more time for preparation of the class.



### **Sandhya's Adjustments!**

Despite the difficulties in the profession, she has been striving to shape herself as a better teacher. When there are problems, she gets upset but she does not give up. When something gets difficult in the classroom and she feels she needs someone else's help, she talks to her colleague. Sometimes they go to the administrations to find out solutions to the problems. She says that she has a good team where they work for a common goal. When some particular students get troublesome, all the related teachers teaching take actions to solve the problem with the students.

When her school organizes training and discussions in the school, she participates. However, all of such meetings are not fruitful for her. They are sometimes too general for her. Sometimes the things get repeated that she has already learnt from them. During such sessions, she shares her learning. She also tries to apply others' experiences to her classes.

She thinks that the payments she gets from the school are less in comparison to the efforts she keeps in teaching the students. She talks to the administration about it sometimes, however, the decisions are made by the administration. She cannot change anything. Sometimes they listen and increase the payment by a small amount.

There are some instances that she has to deal with the parents of her students individually. Some parents come to complain that their expectations are not met by the school. It is a difficult situation for her, but she convinces them. She even shows the plans that she had made and implemented on the child for the whole term. Sometimes if the issues get unruly, she asks help with the school administration to convince them how the things work in the school and how they have been caring the individual students in the school.

**Dil**

15 years ago, until Dil had to teach English as a part of his course, he did not know that he would turn up a teacher. He remembered, “Honestly, I had never imagined being a teacher but when I had to face a practicum that was teaching as a part of the course fulfilment, I was fascinated by the response and respect the students displayed towards me. Then, I took up teaching”. The responses he got from the students and the teachers during the practicum sow the seed of his career as an English teacher. Since then, he has been teaching English to the students of different parts of the country. The hard work that he kept for better learning of the students led him towards his development from an English teacher merely to an administrator of the school. Though he works as an administrator, he is also a teacher of English since he has not left teaching English yet!

**Dill’s Early Days as a School Teacher**

The early days in the profession were exuberant. The youthful energy and encouragement from the school and the students made him an active teacher. He tried to control everything in the class regarding the learning of the students. He always focused on the content he had to teach so, his classes used to be heavier for the students. This trend continued until he realized the importance of other aspects of English. The training and workshops on teaching English broadened his understanding of learning English. Teaching English to him no longer remained teaching the content in the textbooks but it is all about developing skills of the language use. He said, “Obviously, the early days were full of exuberance. It used to be more teacher controlled and dominating. I used to rather focus on the contents. On the later days, I had opportunities to attend teacher training workshops and training and that brought a radical change in my approach. Then I was more focused on skills,

vocabulary and then on language aspects”. Then he used various learning activities in the classroom. It not only made him popular among the school staffs and students but also helped him to develop himself as a teacher since the search for effective teaching continued.

The students liked learning English with him. He was a friendly teacher. He supported students with their learning. The achievements of his students in learning English encouraged him a lot. In fact, it was the response from the students and the progress they made in their learning that sustained him in the profession. However, there were occasions that he punished his students in hand. It was not unusual in those days but these days, he recalls them as the dark days!

### **Professional Steps in Dil’s Life**

He used to teach in a private school in western Nepal in the beginning of his career. After teaching for some years in the school he moved to Kathmandu and continued teaching English. Since the beginning of his teacher-days, he has always been conscious about his development. He was a responsible teacher. He has always been serious about teaching. During the hectic early days in the profession as well, he managed to do everything in a better way. He used to take the exercise books of the students at home if he did not finish them in the school. He used to make plans for the class. It added extra load to him but he managed.

He used to read English newspapers and books whenever he had time. It helped him to improve his English. It also helped him to find interesting activities for his class. Sometimes he borrowed test papers from other colleagues to see. He also discussed with his colleagues if he had any issues regarding the students’ learning.

Along with his personal efforts in building an effective teacher in him, he attended training wherever he got opportunities. NELTA has been helpful for him. He

has participated in the training and workshops organized by NELTA. Similarly, he also took a month-long teacher training at SEDU. He said, “I wanted to be teachers like in England” after the training.

The schools that he worked in the past and the school that he works at present also sent him for the professional development training. When he participates in such training the school pays 50% of the expenses for him. His organizes teacher trainings sometimes. The school organizes professional development activities at least once a year. All the staffs participate in such programmes. He, along with the other teachers, gets the opportunity to participate in refreshment training for teachers.

### **Dil’s Disappointments in Teaching!**

He has always worked hard as a teacher since he started teaching. He spent whole days in the school. He took some stuff of the school home to complete them since the school hours were not sufficient for all the works he had to do. Despite the hard work, his payment is not so satisfactory. He had to look for some other jobs by the side to earn enough for his living. The heavy workload sometimes affected his creativity as well since he did not have enough time to think alternative ways of doing things.

Sometimes, the dos and don’ts for the teachers in the Nepalese society disappoint him. He said, “Teachers are also individuals. They have their own personal interests and desires. But teachers and teachings in our society are often idolized. There are so many things that teachers are expected to do and not to do. Many things are considered decent or indecent, particularly for a teacher! This cuts off the teachers from exercising their personal freedom. In the same time, many parents these days can't spare time with their children for their academic, emotional and behavioural support for many reasons and they expect that the teachers can do all the cure. The

school management and the administration have the similar expectation from teachers. And when the teachers are overwhelmed by such floods of expectations, they won't be able to be of any help until and unless they are equipped with the resources and the knowledge and open innovations”.

### **Professional Turns in Dil's Life**

It took a long time for him to be the teacher that he is today. It happened slowly but the progress continued. Whenever he saw his students improving their language skills, it motivated him a lot. He felt he could do more and help those students who were left to improve their language skills. He does not remember any incident that brought a sudden change in his profession. He was motivated from the beginning of his career. In fact, he came into the profession because he was appreciated for everything that he did to make his students learn. Therefore, the motivation that originated and grew within himself has sustained him in the professions and also helped him to change for betterment. He said, “It is a gradual process. I am still learning and I try my best to improve my delivery. One thing is quite certain that I consider that the beginning of my teaching career was my second birth. So, I have always tried my best to implement the knowledge I have learnt by self-study, from training and workshops in my day to day undertakings. I do not want to blame or criticize teachers who misuse the training and workshop opportunities. However, my belief is that the training and workshops bring changes to the classrooms. The difference is the degree of change”.

### **Obstacles on Dil's Professional Journey**

The appreciation from the students and teachers of the school where he taught as a practitioner teacher led him to the profession of teaching. However, the society was standing in front of him with a big question mark. The ironical concept that

teaching is a decent job haunted him a lot. He repeatedly questioned himself, “Is it good to be a teacher?”. The battle he had with this question was quite difficult to overcome for him in those days. If he lost he would lose the essence of being a teacher if he won he would win the profession.

The next problem with him and his profession was the culture of the context he was working in. He had to fight with the culture of where he was in. Next, he had to bear a heavy workload every day. He did not have enough time in the school to check the exercise books of students in the school. He used to take them to his home to correct them.

### **Dil's Adjustment**

The battle he had to fight was more with himself than with the others. He tried to convince himself that he was in the right profession. Others' opinion influenced him but they were not decisive. He always listened to anybody but he took his own decision. Meantime, when there were different thoughts like changing his ways, and the profession he would always reconcile that it is always impossible to get hundred percent satisfaction. Likewise, he would always think that anyone around could be a teacher in our context but he wanted to make himself a different one.

### **Udaya**

Udaya has been teaching English for 6 years. She was prepared for the profession. She had a complete support from her family. Her father advised her to study English Education for her higher education. Later, her engagement in learning about teaching English and the actual act of teaching in schools fascinated her towards the profession. The more she learnt about teaching English, the more she got interested in. She said, “The story begins with what made me choose Language education as my area of study. My dad encouraged me to select this area. The more I

engaged in understanding the nuances of teaching the more I started enjoying it”. The classes she delivered in the school brought joy in her.

### **Udaya’s Early Days as a School Teacher**

When she was doing her bachelors studies, she got an opportunity to teach in a school of her village. She did not feel like being a professional teacher in her village. “They called me sister in those days”, she said. But when she moved to Kathmandu, things changed. For the first time, she got the job of teaching as a substitute teacher in one of the reputed schools. She felt she did not know much about teaching then. She used to try new ways in the classroom to make her lessons interesting. All of her trials did not turn out to be useful in the class. Although she thought they were not fruitful, the students liked the lessons she delivered.

In the early days of teaching, she was very conscious about the completion of the course she was assigned to teach. For her teaching English was completing the course of study of English. Despite the pressure she felt about completing the course, she used to try new ways while teaching. However, there were many instances that she felt she could not do well because she was incompetent in teaching. She said, “I was the one who always tried to introduce the new ways of teaching but always failed due to the limited ideas that I had regarding teaching”. Yet, the students liked her as a teacher. She happily remembers the days that the students went to check if she was absent in the staff room when she was late for the class. She used to engage her students directly in the classroom rather than making them listen to her merely. The games that she modified to fit in the lesson made her favourite among her students.

### **Professional Steps in Udaya’s Life**

She was a student of bachelor degree when she started teaching in her village. She did not have a teacher like the feeling when she was teaching in the school then.

After the undergraduate study, her father suggested her to study English Language Teaching. She did according to her father. She said, “I saw people were professionally more successful than me. I felt that if I learnt I may also be like them. I had the feeling that my experience and knowledge towards my profession is not sufficient to be like them”. While she was doing her postgraduate studies, she learned a lot about teaching English. In the meantime, she joined a reputed school in Kathmandu. She learnt about teaching better when she started to teach in Kathmandu. In the meantime, she attended teacher training given by NELTA. She used to participate in workshops at Kathmandu University. She has been attending an international conference of English teachers every year since 2010. In the conference, she made presentations as well. Interestingly, she has got the opportunity to participate in IATEFL conferences too. She is involved in the professional network, NELTA. She said, “I am actively involved in NELTA, a teachers’ association of English language teachers. This network is helping me build my confidence towards language teaching itself by providing me hundreds of teaching tips and information on ELT scenario across the globe. This all happens through its blogs, social networking pages, publications, national/international conferences or the training sessions it provided.”

### **Udaya’s Disappointments in Teaching!**

She is happy with her profession. When she has to remember the difficulties and disappointments in teaching, she remembers the days she was still learning to teach. In the beginning of her career, she had difficulties. She wanted to make everything smooth in her classroom but the things used to go opposite. She presented herself as a very strict teacher among her students but could not control the class. The classes used to be a mess. She tried new ways of teaching, but they too failed in her



classroom. She kept questioning herself and her being in the profession. She said, “The fault was mine. I tried to be as rude as possible and scolded all those who were playing paper ball. I couldn’t spare my time to understand my students, as a result, they ended up ignoring my lectures. I slowly started myself as a friendly teacher. It was not possible overnight. I required almost a year to understand the way that worked”.

### **Professional Turns in Udaya’s Life**

When she began teaching English she knew that her students needed to be able to learn all four skills of language. She used to take the lead in her classroom. For her, the student had to listen to what she said and do what she asked them to do. She did not like the students who ran around the class or did not like her. After being in English Language Teaching programme, she feels changes in herself. Now, she does not think that students need to listen to her every word, memorize them and follow that she asks them to do. These days she does not scold the students who sometimes roam around the classroom during exercises.

### **Obstacles on Udaya’s Professional Journey**

She did her schooling at a public school. It was difficult for her to make a strong command over the language. She said, “Generally, assuming a master’s level student should be able to put forward the ideas that they have in front of the mass. But in my case, I was not able to do that due to insufficient English-speaking exposure”. Her notebooks were full of red marks. It was difficult for her to speak English. She had to keep heavy effort to learn English before she entered the school to teach. She had to make time herself when she wanted to go for training and conferences. Although she attended training all of them were not useful for her.

### **Udaya's Adjustments!**

She realized that if she wanted to be a successful teacher she had to learn English. She kept heavy effort in learning English. Although she had to go to teach every day, she made time for her learning as well. She used to attend as many pieces of training as possible. She did not miss any opportunity to attend conferences. She shared her learning in the conferences rather than sitting silently and listening to others. She also took part in discussions with her seniors where she learnt about classroom management.

### **Srijana**

In those days, Srijana was in college when she realized that she needed a job to support herself in her studies and meet other daily expenses. She was a student of Education. While hunting a job, she was offered a place as an English teacher in one of the schools in her hometown. She said, "At the beginning, I wanted to have a job and being a student of education, I got this job". Since then she has been teaching English. It is more than eight years now. In the period of eight years, she has taught in different schools from her hometown (since she does not belong to the capital originally) to Kathmandu, the city of her current residence, in different positions. She has gone through many ups and downs during this period. She got opportunities for her own professional development. She kept effort from her place to bring about changes in herself. She went through many challenges as well.

### **Srijana's Early Days as a School Teacher**

Although she was in Education faculty and had known something about teaching, she was not prepared for it. The knowledge she had was enough for her to begin her career but it did not turn to be enough for her to sustain in the profession. She did not have any training in how to teach English. She remembered, "I was an

untrained teacher in the beginning”. Yet, she continued. She liked children a lot. She loved to work with them. The children also loved her back as a good teacher.

Although she worked with children, she did not use to get irritated. She had a good sense of humour. She remembers that she was liked by the students in those days. The students would hover around her when she was in the class. They looked for her and asked other teachers if she was absent if she was late for the class or was not seen around for some time. They participated in learning activities actively during the lessons.

### **Professional Steps in Srijana’s Life**

When she realized that she needed to improve her teaching skills and expand knowledge about teaching, she decided to join university for her graduate study. She said, “I got many opportunities such as many pieces of training by NELTA in teaching English and master degree of Kathmandu University”. She left a good job in her hometown that paid her well and came to Kathmandu for the higher studies. She recalled, “I realized that I need to learn more. I wanted to make a remarkable contribution to the profession. I wanted to do something more in teaching”. She got admission for the course of master degree in ELT. She continued teaching while she was studying. She used to apply her learning in the university into her classroom while teaching.

In the meantime, she also got enrolled into NELTA. She met many other teachers like her, writers, scholars, school heads, and teacher educators through the professional network of NELTA. She used to attend as many meetings at NELTA as possible. She was given responsibilities which she carried out very well. She attended training sessions given for English language teachers and the one given for English language educators (training for trainers) by NELTA. She has been attending

international conferences organized by NELTA since 2010. She is a member of IATEFL. Along with training within the nation, she has got training in foreign. She said, “I attended more than 20 training in the home and abroad. The most important was a one- month training in the USA”.

She reads publications on ELT. Sometimes she goes to train other English language teachers. She works closely with the administration and other teachers in the school where she teaches. She has carried out some action research in her classroom but she could not continue them because of the heavy workload in the school and number of students in her classroom. She used to write reflective journals in the past, in the earlier days of her arrival in Kathmandu but she could not continue it as well because she did not have enough time.

### **Srijana’s Disappointments in Teaching!**

She has been an optimistic teacher since the beginning of her career. Despite limited knowledge and skills in teaching, she could teach well and make her students understand her lessons. She loves her profession. She has gone through many difficulties while making efforts for her development. She has sacrificed her personal life for her profession. However, it is not free from disappointments. She pays a lot of attention to the profession. She also invests a lot of her time for betterment in teaching and her students’ achievement. Despite her dedication to the school and students, she is paid less. The payments she gets is too little in comparison to the efforts she keeps. She said, “Teachers work very hard but they are not paid enough and they always need to think about their student’s progress and performance”. She is not happy with the provision of teacher development activities in her school. She is even not provided with a leave when she needs to attend training. She has to make the arrangements herself to go for training.

### **Professional Turns in Srijana's Life**

When she looks back to herself, she sees many changes in her as a professional teacher. She said, "I have changed myself. I changed my way of teaching, a way of talking and my knowledge and skill that is needed in teaching". She is not only a successful teacher but also a proud teacher trainer of ELT. The first change in her as a teacher is in her perspective. Her perspective towards teaching and learning has changed. She does not think teaching is all about teaching a textbook. She does not think that learning is all about passing examinations. For her, learning English is learning to use the language. These days, she does not preach in the classroom but involves students in the learning activities.

### **Obstacles on Srijana's Professional Journey**

She had to come across many obstacles to make herself the teacher she is now. The first problem was her struggle with her Self. She had to change herself professionally. She joined the school as a teacher without learning much about teaching. It became her profession without much knowledge and skills for the work. In the school, she did not have other teachers to help her as a mentor. She had to try for the new ways herself and find out if they really worked in her context. She also had to learn English before going to teach in the class. Sometimes, she taught wrong things because she did not know about it. She had to spend a lot of time to learn English sometimes. She remembered, "Sometimes, I had to stay awake whole night to learn tense and structures. I used to make the example to be presented in the class next day."

She did not have any problem with school administration or other teachers in the schools she taught. But when there were training opportunities in the school days,

she did not get any leave. She used to make arrangements for the classes to attend training sessions.

### **Srijana's Adjustments!**

Whenever she realized that there were problems, she took steps to overcome them. It was quite easier for her that she had to deal with herself when there were problems since most of the problems were about herself. When she realized that her command over English was not yet good enough to be a teacher, she learnt the language. There were many sleepless nights she spent to learn English. When she realized that her learning about teaching- learning English was not enough, she joined university for her higher studies. She attended training sessions to widen her knowledge and skills about teaching. This is how she grew up in the profession.

### **Chapter Summary**

EFL teacher might have entered the profession for different purposes, however, when the teachers realized that they can make difference in their students learning achievements, they keep their effort for their professional development. EFL teachers follow different approaches for their development. Professional development approaches and their benefits on EFL teachers vary since the level of engagement in the activities varies among teachers.

## CHAPTER V

### PROCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EFL TEACHERS

This chapter is guided by the first and the second research questions of the study, ‘Why and how do EFL teachers utilize/not utilize professional development opportunities’ and ‘How do EFL teachers experience their own professional development? What opportunities do EFL teachers experience with their professional development’ respectively? I present the analysis of the experiences of process and opportunities for professional development that had been narrated by the EFL teachers during the interviews. While doing so, I not only rewrite the voices of the teachers as they narrated but also narrate my experiences on teaching wherever our experience matched.

#### **Locating Myself**

It was a shock that morning when I was sent to a community college with a family member, younger than me, for my admission in high school, in the program that I had never imagined I would get enrolled into. Having no choice, I continued. I was trying to convince myself but every time I consoled myself about something about my studies and profession, something else would break and I was again scattered. I had not completed a year of my high school education when I felt that perhaps I had to start working. I got offers too but I was not allowed to work. Had I not got permission because they were worried about my studies I would have been a proud daughter; however, it was not the study fact that stopped me from the working.

It was their narrow family prestige that stopped. It was suffocating but there was no way. I felt was too young to decide for myself. Moreover, I feared to take a risk.

The fear did not last long. I started teaching. The profession fascinated me. I liked spending time with students. I was not paid a lot, but I continued teaching since I thought I was learning. It was not easy to manage time for work and study at a time, but that difficulty was better than the suffocation. I spent a lot of time in the school even after the school hours. I used to talk to other teachers and listen to their experience. When I had problems, they helped me to solve them. At times, I was ashamed of having issues frequently, but I faced them. I continued my university education. Whenever there were training I attended them. I talked to my teachers when I had problems.

The training was not always interesting. All of them were not useful in my context either, nevertheless, I attended them. I had a hope that I might reap some learning from the sessions. I did not know the term professional development then. I only knew that I had to be a better teacher. I got opportunities to work with my tutors in the university in the projects they were working in. It encouraged me a lot. I used to imagine myself among them sometimes. I hoped that I might get a better position if I made myself better at the profession. The drive was quite strong that I could not leave the profession despite difficulties.

I had already taught in schools for some years when I came to know about teachers' professional development. It signifies that teaching became my profession before I knew what getting into the word profession mean and what I am supposed to as a teacher. The early days were fun since teaching was not an obligation to me, nor was I expected to do a lot works in the classroom. The nightmare began after two years of my recognition as a teacher when I had actually started to teach with full



responsibility. It was then I realized that getting grades in the exams, memorizing the theories and replicating the writers' words was not my learning to teach. I had a different task to do as a teacher in the classroom, i.e. make students understand and apply the learning I delivered and lectured in the classroom. After that, I started thinking about the different ways that I could use in the classroom to teach the students and make them understand the point I made. Then, it was not as simple as I stated in this single sentence, however it happened. Now I have the realization that the transformations of the self and my conducts as an EFL teacher was a part of professional development in me. The changes in the students, their learning and attitude were the consequences of the degree of effort I kept on them. It might not be as accurate as a mathematical calculation but the improvement in their learning was an important aspect of the improvement in my teaching, at least, to some extent.

### **Entry into the Profession**

When teachers remember their entry to the profession, in Nepalese context, many of them may not remember their early years as the beginning of their profession. Although they belong to teacher education program for formal academic study, it might have been an opportunity for them to earn their living in their early adult life. The teachers may be expected to show their command over the profession according to their previous learning however, the teachers may not be able to perform as per the expectations. The reason behind is clear in the lines of Office of Curriculum and Educational Development (OCED) (2005) which states that career-based teacher education may not be related to teachers needs in their school and teaching and that teachers may not be placed in the position with a rigorous selection procedure and entry terms and conditions. The participants EFL teachers share similar experiences while remembering their early days in the profession. Dil said, "*Honestly, I had never*

*imagined being a teacher.*” There are occasions where the school does not look for an experienced teacher but hires teachers if they sense that the person can take the place. Regarding the entry to the profession of teaching English, next teacher expressed it in different words but it hinted the similar meaning; Srijana uttered,

*At the beginning, I wanted to have a job and being a student of education, I got this job.*

It reads a coincidence but Sandhya had a similar experience but in a quite different way,

*Actually, that time when I passed plus 2, I was doing bachelors. I got an offer from a teacher so I did it. There was no other choice, I didn't see other jobs. So I started it.*

The experiences these teachers shared implicitly depicts the socio-economic background they come from. It is in the line of what Kassahun (2014) found in a study that cultural background and socio-economic condition pull female teachers towards the profession. Sometimes, female EFL teacher might be motivated by their parents. Udaya shared a similar experience, “*My dad encouraged me to select this area.*” Sometimes, teachers may enter the profession without giving much thought about what they want to do. It might be like finding the job while hunting for jobs. It was similar to Jay’s experience, he told,

*Actually, I happen to choose it, I did not have that intention. Er..r.. by the time I thought about this or that thing somebody suggested and I came in this field. I just happen to choose it.*

Once teachers are in the profession, the teachers who are attached to it gradually change their thoughts and practices. The teachers may also look for the opportunities for development of their professional practices. The changes in the

teachers may promote them to a high position in their profession. Sometimes teachers may also find a place in a different area of the field.

### **Professional Development Needs of EFL Teachers**

After entering the profession of teaching the English language, whether a teacher sustains in the profession or leaves it or finds opportunities in the adjacent areas may depend on the efforts the teacher keeps in grooming his/her Self. Likewise, the effort a teacher keeps on shaping and grooming the Self may depend on the level of motivation that the teacher has towards the profession since motivation is one of the strong drives that encourage teachers towards learning. I discussed the role motivation plays in teacher professional development as an assumption of adult learning in Chapter II. When the teachers feel they are motivated towards the profession and are ready to make the difference, they may invest their resources to develop themselves as (Knowles, 1980, cited in Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2006).

I discuss the different approaches that the teachers may take to transform their beliefs and skills in the following section of this chapter. The transformation met through such practices and more in their understanding and skills keep them closer to their learners and their learning (Mizell, 2010) which is one of the most important agenda of teachers' professional development. Emphasizing the importance of professional development for EFL teacher Davidson, Dunlop, Sorlano, Kennedy and Philips (2012) mention that professional development process helps teachers to build networks of teachers with similar interest for discussion, sharing and learning from each other and explore the best teacher they have within themselves. Sometimes, teachers may also feel that they need to learn more. The participant EFL teachers also

shared their experiences on the need they felt for their own development. Udaya disclosed,

*I saw people were professionally more successful than me. I felt that if I learnt I may also be like them. I also had the feeling that my experience and knowledge towards my profession is not sufficient to be like them.*

Srijana shared similar experience,

*I realized that I need to learn more. I wanted to make a remarkable contribution to the profession. I wanted to do something more in teaching.*

There may be some instances where EFL teachers are highly influenced by their seniors and their teachers who may also be their mentors. The suggestions may also motivate teachers to learn about the profession; hence transform the professional Self of the teachers. Regarding the influence of his mentor in his professional development, Jay remembered,

*I happened to be in contact with one of my mentors. I have grown up in his mentoring. I feel like that I was growing up under his guidance.*

Some teachers may be motivated towards their professional development because they know that their institution expects from them and they are liked for their professional activities they are doing in the school. Moreover, their curiosity to learn may keep them learning more about teaching the English language. Regarding his drive towards the profession, Dil said,

*I was always a keen learner trying to introduce variety in my methods and strategies in the classrooms.*

No matter what pushes teachers to transform their professional behaviour, it reaps benefits on the part of teachers and on the part of the students. Garet, Yoon, and Birman (2002) Professional development bring positive changes in teacher's

classroom teaching, it is more effective when teachers make a collective participation, for example, same school, same department or same grade. It may help to sustain teachers towards their professional development.

### **High-Quality Professional Development of EFL Teachers**

A school hires an EFL teacher for teaching English. The teacher who is hired is supposed to know how to teach. It implies that the teachers need to know what s/he needs to teach, whom s/he needs to teach and how s/he needs to teach in the classroom. Barrera- Pedemonte (2016) argues that subject matters, pedagogical skills and curriculum are the areas of focus for teacher's knowledge of teacher professional development. Nevertheless, the focus of EFL teachers is on these aspects, they sometimes may be successful in making their position in other areas of teaching and learning such as material production, teacher training and school administration. The teachers who have an approach to other areas of education in addition to classroom teaching may be called to have high professional development (Garet, Yoon & Birman, 2002). I discuss the similar experiences of high professional development of the participant EFL teachers under this theme.

Some EFL teachers are very interested to learn. Their interest is not only in learning to teach English but also learning to teach other teachers how to teach. Their interest and hard work sometimes may endorse their skills towards training other teachers as well. It is not a night's effort, but it might be possible with some teachers. Regarding her involvement in other areas of education, Udaya said,

*Because of my professional growth, I was selected as a central committee member of NELTA. I was hired as a teacher trainer and curriculum developer for English in an organization. I was selected as a researcher by the university for a research project.*

Curriculum design, teacher training and educational research are other areas where EFL teacher may find a position for themselves. Regarding the similar involvement another participant teacher, Srijana stated,

*Recently I have been given a certificate of Certified Teacher Educator by British Council which is a great achievement for me. Now I can work as a teacher trainer for EFL teachers.*

Sometimes, teachers may also be promoted to school coordinator and administrator based on their expertise and performance in the school. Dil shared,

*I have been working as a teacher and school administrator for five years.*

The opportunities that some teachers in a school are getting could be a pushing factor for other teachers to keep learning. It is similar to the ideas that Knowles (1973) discusses while discussing the fourth assumption of adult learning, i.e. adult learning is influenced by their motivation towards learning. I discussed the fifth assumption of adult learning in Chapter II which is related to the experiences that EFL teachers shared while discussing their motivation for their professional development. As Mizell (2010) argues, the continuous learning assists teachers to make their instructions more effective since an instance of the process of learning of students and the problems that they are facing during the learning process is not adequate for teachers. These are changeable phenomena hence, teachers need to keep their eyes and ears open towards all the activities that their students are doing and learning in the school. It helps teachers to reduce the number of problems that teachers may be having in their classroom. Likewise, it may also widen the understanding and skills of the teachers so they will be able to make their place in other aspects of education.

### **Professional Development: Strategies and Opportunities Vs Obligation or Choice**

Professional development of EFL teachers is a common interest among the scholars of English language teaching around the globe. The widespread use of English language around the world in various aspects of everyday living and demand of English language teaching seems to have kept more focus on professional development of EFL teachers. There is explicit evidence of interest in the professional development of EFL teachers both from institutional and individual level. According to National Staffs Development Council (2001), professional development develops both insights and skills in teachers which make their efforts of teaching successfully in the classroom (as cited in Shoqair & Shabaan, 2013). It indicates that the teachers, who are serious about their own professional development, maybe better at teaching. Professional development is not only about teachers' teaching skills but it equally concentrates on learning on students. Garet, Poter, Desimone, Birman and Yoon (2001) state, "The success of ambitious education reforms initiatives hinges, in large part, on qualifications and effectiveness of teachers" (p. 916). The teachers believe that they can make difference in their students' learning.

The positive influence of teachers' professional development on learners seems to have been conceptualized by the participant EFL teachers of the study as well. The participant EFL teachers narrated how they have been able to bring about changes in their student's learning. However, it took quite a long time for them to get used to with the profession of teaching and professional duties in schools. Until they could operationalize their understanding and their skills of teaching in their classroom, the EFL teachers followed the similar process in which they were taught, discussed with teachers with longer experiences, read about teaching and took formal courses in university as their higher education.

The professional development strategies followed by the participant EFL teachers and their experiences on the use is discussed in the following sub-themes.

### **Ghost of the Former Teacher**

Getting into the profession of teaching might not be guided by a single reason. The studies on reasons behind getting into the profession around the world have come up with several pulling factors. In one of the studies, Sinclair (2008) found out ten different motivating factors for the entry into the profession, one of which is perceived ease of entry into the profession (as cited in Hellsten & Prytula, 2011). Similarly, getting into the profession does not always imply experiences and knowledge about teaching in all parts of the world. During the earlier days in the profession, teachers get adjusted to their classroom situations in any way which may be comfortable for them.

The easiest thing for the participant EFL teachers to begin teaching was to follow their teachers' practices with which they were taught. It made them familiar with the profession without letting other teachers and students know that they knew very little about the profession or they were completely new. Remembering the early days of teaching Jay disclosed,

*I happened to be in contact with one of my mentors. I have grown up in his mentoring. I feel like that I was growing up under his guidance. I was very inspired by his teaching and I was copying his style. And it worked wonderfully.*

It was not only his effort in building teacher personality in him. Another participant teacher of the study, Sandhya also echoed,

*That time I had already started studying education. But I really didn't have any practical skills. Actual practical skills what happens in the practice*



*teaching and what happens inside the real classroom were different. That time most of the time I followed what my teachers used to do, like being a traditional teacher (laughs). I used to use lecture method most of the time.*

The imitation of the teachers' practices helps the beginner teachers to sustain their profession. It helps them to engage their students so that they reap some learning in students if not the most. It might also help novice teachers to experiment different techniques of teaching. Teachers learn if the so-called traditional strategies are helpful in the changed context as well.

### **University Courses**

A university course prepares an individual for the specific field. Later it becomes the profession of the person. However, the sequence of university education followed by the profession of the same field may not always be the reality. There are instances where people get enrolled in a particular area of study in university when people experience the need since they have already started working in the field. Teaching, in the developing context like Nepal, has many such cases. Teaching English is, even more, a potential area where teachers with the background study of the different field get in making it their profession. When people realize that they like the profession, they get into university course for specialization. In one of the studies, Roux and Valledares (2014) found out that degree courses were one of the most influential professional development activities used by the teachers.

There are also the instances that teachers get enrolled in Education and teaching English to develop themselves professionally and establish themselves in the profession. The reason behind their involvement may be clearer in the words of Richards and Farrell (2005) who state that professional development of teachers is not limited within teachers' personal efforts, there are other things that teachers need to

learn from others in a systematic manner for their development. During the study, when the participant EFL teachers were asked if they were doing anything to make themselves better teachers, all of them told that they continued learning about teaching English in university as their higher education. Regarding his personal initiatives, Jay communicated,

*When I started teaching I started with the small grade. The problem was more in managing time and content. I sometimes felt like quitting teaching. I followed it with my Bachelor's studies as well. I did my masters and I am doing my M Phil. so learning from there and the practical skills I gained from the college have equipped me with better skills."*

His response signifies that studies continue after teachers get into the profession as well. It also denotes that it is teachers' experiences that add to their knowledge and skills for their betterment in the profession. Sometimes teachers also take a break from teaching to continue the higher education of their profession.

Regarding the issue self-initiatives, Shrijana remembers,

*When I realized that I needed to develop myself as an EFL teacher, I started to look for formal and informal ways of professional development. When I felt the need of training, I took teacher training. However, first of all, I realized that I need to improve and I left my job and came to Kathmandu for master degree.*

Some teachers take the profession and higher education of their profession parallel to each other. This might be a better way for feeding the profession activities with learning from a university education. It also supports the teachers to manage expenses for the university. Sandhya shared the similar experience when I asked about the initiatives she took for her development,

*I was 19 years old and I had just joined bachelor's level when I started my teaching career. I was getting experience from teaching at the same time I was studying M Ed. Both my study and teaching played a vital role in my professional development.*

The EFL teacher may transfer their learning from their degree courses to their classroom. It also functions as an experiment if something practised and used in other parts of the world is also useful to the teachers' context.

### **Teacher Trainings**

The participant teachers shared that they participate in teacher training for their professional development. The fact that training helps teachers to make changes in the ways they teach and results better learning has been accepted by the scholars of teaching and learning as well, however, teachers' training is not the only determinant of better learning. Canh (2002) states that syllabus, methodology, teaching materials, evaluation process and teacher training affect learning in formal education system. Among these factors, teacher training affects the most. The emphasis on teacher training is quite heavy on both sides, i.e. individual teacher and school. Regarding attending teacher training Jay stated,

*I have attended many trainings conducted by NELTA, British Council, workshops organized in Kathmandu University. I have done these common things that teachers in Kathmandu do. So, I have been receiving the knowledge from others and sharing my knowledge to others as well.*

The number of training that EFL teachers attended varies but the teachers seem interested in training. While asked about her participation in teacher training Sandhya resonated,

*In the first institution, I worked I remember attending only one training. I worked in a government school for two years after that. There I do remember attending training from British council because I used to work with a teacher assistant from America. I also attended training given by American embassy. I also attended a training on language teaching in the school which was organized by DEO in coordination with an NGO. Another local NGO also organized training for English language teachers.*

The teachers also shared the experiences of benefits of training regardless of the stage they were in, in the profession. The teachers who did not know anything about teaching turned to be good teachers of English after attending such training. Remembering how he started the profession of teaching. Dil said,

*On the later days, I had opportunities to attend teacher training workshops and training and that brought a radical change in my approach. Then I was more focused on skills, vocabulary and then on language aspects.*

The trend of training the teachers may be one of the common features of present-day institutions. Schools organize training for their teachers at their own schools. Yurtsever (2013), in one of the studies, states that although institutes may be unknown about what their employees actually need, they tend to keep their teachers in in-service training sessions. Such training help teachers to build knowledge on how they can make teaching-learning meaningful and implement their understanding of meaningful teaching into their classroom. The teachers, individually, are also aware of the importance of such training which is a step in their professional development. Regarding training of in-service teachers for their professional development, Dil said,

*The school where I am working organizes annual professional development activity for all at school every year. It also sends teachers to refreshing training.*

However, all the institutions may not provide extensive opportunities for a teacher for their development. Regarding teacher training and opportunities for professional development at the workplace Sandhya mentioned,

*There were not a lot of provisions for teacher development. Mostly the private institutions are focused on students' development than teachers. They don't worry a lot about the teacher because teachers used to go into other schools. Changing job was high. Most of the teachers were also not very serious about their job. They were not a lot of opportunities for the teachers. But they did it sometimes.*

On contrary, all the institutions may not pay equal attention to their teachers' professional development. A similar experience was shared by Udaya, who claimed,

*The institution doesn't provide the opportunity for professional training.*

EFL teachers are not limited to the training opportunities that are available in their schools or other places around their workplaces. Some of the teachers get opportunities to go abroad for training. They attend numerous training sessions in search of betterment in themselves. Regarding training for self-professional development, Srijana said,

*I attended more than 20 training at home and abroad. The most important was a one-month training in the USA.*

However, all the training the teachers attend may not be useful for them, nor, all the teachers attending the same training reap benefits equally. During the conversation Jay mentioned,

*I think such general training in the schools are just for showing that they care about the teachers' development. It is very rare, they do it when the academic session begins. It is just for the sake of saying or doing only. It has not been very fruitful. It is like a part of the calendar. But I do not prefer going there.*

When there are training opportunities outside schools, the EFL teachers are quite thoughtful about the expenses. All of the training opportunities are not funded; hence the interested teachers may need to pay for the training themselves, however, sometimes the schools that they work in may pay on behalf of the teachers to support their professional development. Dil states,

*The institutions encourage teachers in taking part in the periodic workshops, seminars and conferences. The institutions bear more than 50% percent of the fees of such programmes.*

The partial coverage of fund from school could be one of the ways of encouraging teachers to participate in professional development activities. The partial payments may have two advantages; first, it covers at least some percentage of the total cost, second, it also makes teachers responsible for their own learning since they also invest some amount from their pockets.

### **Teachers' Professional Networks**

Although many teachers may not be familiar with the idea of teachers' professional networks, the informed ones may be interested to join them. Professional networks expand teachers' knowledge and skills for more effective teaching.

Bhattarai and Gautam (2005) opine that EFL teachers need to come out of the classroom situations and expand their professional connections with professional networks which may be the ones in their country or hometown or even in foreign. Salas (2016) states that the professional networks bring the people with common

interest together so they can share their ideas and experiences (p. 8) which leads to the professional development of the teachers. The teachers not only sit and listen to other member teachers of such networks but carry out other varieties of activities which benefit them. Regarding the role of professional networks in professional development, Jay noted,

*I am a member of NELTA. Then I have been presenting papers at the conference. So, have been attending NELTA conference as presenter, organizer, and rapporteur.*

Similarly, Udaya echoed,

*I am actively involved in NELTA, a teachers' association of English language teachers. This network is helping me build my confidence towards language teaching itself by providing me hundreds of teaching tips and information on ELT scenario across the globe. This all happens through its blogs, social networking pages, publications, national/international conferences or the training sessions it provided.*

Conferences and other events make a platform for teachers for building professional networks and learning (Gnawali, 2016). It is not always necessary that teacher need to find time to visit a particular place for interactions. Use of internet for such sharing may be helpful. Similarly, the teachers in the networks may also get some special facilities like magazines and books.

### **Conferences, Seminars/Workshops**

EFL teachers may attend conference and seminar/workshops to add knowledge and build skills for their professional development. Lee (2011) states that participation in conferences, seminars/workshops is one of the approaches to professional development others being short courses, degree upgrading courses,

school-classroom based research, and partnership with the university and external consultants. The teachers may bring new ideas and skills from such conference or get refreshed. The teachers not only receive others' ideas in such conferences but also share their knowledge. Jay stated,

*Besides the improvements in teaching in the classroom, I have been able to present at conferences. I have been presenting at NELTA conference continuously for last four years. In the first year, I came to the conference in Kathmandu as a participant. Next year we organized branch conference in our region. The third year I worked as a rapporteur in the conference.*

The EFL teachers are not confined within participating in the conferences and seminars inside the nation. Whenever they get the opportunity, they also go abroad for the participation. Udaya mentioned,

*I have been attending NELTA conference regularly since 2010. I attended two IATEFL conferences. I also went to BELTA conference. The professional visits to attend conferences made me realize how things work. Meeting ELT veterans from around the globe and having an opportunity to discuss ELT was another asset of joining those conferences.*

Likewise, Srijana asserted,

*I have attended eight NELTA conferences. The involvement in the conferences gave me exposure to new ways of teaching English. Later I also learned to make presentations and share my ideas with others.*

The EFL teachers who attend such conferences may be more updated with recent changes in teaching English, although Roux and Valladares (2014), whom I mentioned in Chapter II, found that this was not an effective approach for EFL teachers' professional development in their study. Such conferences may provide a



platform for EFL teachers for interaction with other teachers and scholars. However, participation in such conferences, seminars and workshops may not be easy and open for all teachers. After a study, Al-bidawi (2015) recommends to “reduce the tight procedure required to participate in lectures and to attend conferences and seminars” (p. 976). It may be one of the ways to encourage teachers to participate and get benefitted.

### **Discussions and Sharing**

Teachers in school usually discuss with their colleagues about the events and incidents in the school and students. It is rather an informal process. However, when such discussions and sharing sessions are made systematic they may be helpful in helping teachers to solve their problems. Abgayahoun (2016) mentions that it is possible for teachers to support their own professional development with collaboration with their peers, communication and informal interactions among the teachers. Sandhya shared the benefits of discussions and narrated,

*We do it often. After school, we stay for extra one hour. We talk about and the problem we had that day or the good event we had. We often discuss them with the teachers but all the teachers do not gather every day. Sometimes we do have LOG BOOK MEETINGS. In the meetings, sometimes we have only primary level teachers sometimes the whole school meets. In such meetings, the teachers talk about their classes and students, their activities and difficulties. We talk about every child and their progress and their difficulties or the difficulties that the teacher is facing. We also talk about how to overcome that problem.*

Although such discussions and interactions may be useful for teachers in their day to day teaching, all the teachers may not find them equally useful. Some teachers

may not enjoy discussing with others all the time. In a study, Shoqair and Shaaban (2013) found out that discussion with colleague falls under the least used strategy of professional development. Jay expressed a similar dissatisfaction and elaborated,

*They know that I am a good student and I belong to that particular institution so I can bring about the changes there. They accept the things I propose to the school. We have been able to conduct such colleague meetings and discussions sometimes in the school. They have been so influenced that in every meeting they expect some sharing from me. Even if there is nothing so special to share, if anyone has any problems in the classroom, they ask me if there is anything that they can do to solve the problem as if I know everything, as if I am a science teacher. This is really irritating.*

There are teachers at various levels of their career in a school. The teachers who have spent more time in teaching may be a helpful source of learning for novice teachers. In this regards, Richards and Farrell (2005) opine that schools have teachers with a different level of experience, knowledge, skills and expertise which is a valuable asset for other teachers for their development if they are shared and discussed. Likewise, a new model of professional development called Job-embedded professional development, is popular among teachers and teacher education which helps teachers to make improvement in their teaching and students' learning through continuous case discussion, action research, class observation and mentoring which are the activities of inquiry-based work (Darling- Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Hawley & Valli, 1999, Hirsh, 2009, as cited in Agbayahoun, 2016, p. 150-151). The teachers get the opportunity to learn from other teachers when they discuss occasionally their classroom issues and ways to get rid of them.

## Reflective Journals

The EFL teachers may also write a reflective journal after they teach to keep the record of what happened and how it happened in the class. These journals remind the teachers about the incidents that took place in their classroom. The details noted in the journals provide the teachers with the details about the incident, which may help them to stop continuing with their activities, change it if it is necessary or continue with it if it is useful. Richards and Farrell (2005) state that while reflecting teachers make a thoughtful assessment of the experiences that took place in their classroom which may guide teachers towards a better understanding of their own teaching. Moreover, teachers may also improve their command over the English language. Writing a reflective journal every day is an additional task on the part of EFL teachers, so all teachers may not write journals very often. Regarding journals, Jay explained,

*I have been writing reflections on my own and making my students write a reflection. Writing journals has helped my students to improve their writing skills. They write other times also besides writing in examinations. It has improved my writing habit as well. It helps me as a language teacher and as a language learner as well. I write how I feel and any event that happens in my classroom.*

The scholars and teacher educators accept that reflective journals are helpful tools for teachers to look back what they did in their classroom. Nga (n.d.) found out that reflective journals help teachers to strengthen their professional knowledge and pedagogy. Yet, teachers may not be able to keep the journals. Srijana expressed,

*I do not write reflective journals. It takes a lot of time to write journals after teaching in the classroom.*

Teachers may be able to write journals after teaching if they do not have to rush to the next class. Sometimes teachers may also find it useful to keep short notes on the class as a reminder for them about a specific incident.

### **Facebook Learning**

Facebook is seen as a common social networking site among urban Nepalese. The purpose of using Facebook might be different for different people, ranging from getting connected with people to getting connected to different sources of groups and links. In one of the studies, Stugres (n.d.) found out that Facebook has been an exciting means for teaching in tertiary level both for teachers and students in formal education system. The finding is interesting, in the line with what some teachers do to learn to teach and also to use them as a resource in their classroom. Sharing her initiatives for her professional development, Sandhya said,

*These days I can read some articles on Facebook walls.*

They use Facebook for sharing their experiences of teaching English and learning from others through interaction and reading.

The discussion of EFL teacher's experiences of opportunities for professional development indicates that EFL teachers choose the approaches that fit them personally and their contexts. EFL teachers choose and utilize the opportunities for professional development that meet the needs of their context. This idea is in the line of Knowles (1973) assumption of self-directed learning that I discussed in Chapter II, that adult learners learn when they feel the need of learning and also when the learning contents and the learning process can be incorporated to their schedule. The opportunities and development process brings EFL teachers' learning process and their need for their psychological growth closer (Tennant, 1986). Similarly, it demonstrates that EFL teachers prefer to learn through engagement in the learning

process. They try to relate the new learning to their context. Whenever they find that the learning items and the strategies of professional development irrelevant or of very less relevance, they do not enjoy, for instance, some teacher participants expressed that they hesitate to attend some discussion sessions and training sessions since they do not find those sessions relevant to their context and need. It indicates that EFL teachers are experiential learners.

Likewise, there seems to be a strong influence of Knowles (1973) fourth assumption of adult learning, i.e. problem based learning, on professional development of EFL teachers. EFL teachers are interested in the areas where they have problems, for instance, they adapt their teachers' ways to adjust themselves to the classroom situations when they feel they lack teaching skills.

### **Chapter Summary**

Although EFL teachers enter the profession without prior thought and plans, they keep their effort to make themselves better teachers and enhance their students learning achievements. They may be motivated by the success of other teachers or they may also be motivated by their own desire to be an efficient teacher. Professional development activities influence some EFL teachers so much that they do not remain teachers merely rather they look for places in adjacent areas like curriculum design, material production and teachers training. Following their own teachers, attending a training session, attending workshops and conferences, discussions and sharing, professional networks, reflective journals and Facebook are some of the approaches of EFL teachers' professional development.

## CHAPTER VI

### OBSTACLES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EFL TEACHERS

This chapter is guided by the third research question, ‘What are the challenges for EFL teachers’ professional development? How do EFL teachers overcome the challenges of their professional development’. I answer this question in this chapter. First, I discuss the challenges faced by the participant EFL teachers. The discussion of challenges is followed by the discussion of their experiences of overcoming them. Like in Chapter V, I illustrate the discussion with the EFL teacher’s words.

#### **Locating Myself**

I started teaching English since then when I did not know what teaching a language actually meant. The early days with students were fun. I had no any concrete responsibility to accomplish. All I had to do was stand in front of the classroom and make students read or write. I was not even expected to make them understand what they read and wrote. I was a paid volunteer who spent the whole days in the school.

Time changed, the place changed and ultimately responsibilities changed. I had to be an independent teacher in myself who could take the responsibility for student’s learning. Perhaps then, I started to realize what being a teacher meant. I felt the pains and pleasure that a teacher goes in his/her classroom and the school. The waves of challenges hit me almost in every step.

Every throb of pain made me realize the difficulty in making myself a teacher. In fact, I was unknown about the fact that being able to tolerate the pain was a step up towards making myself a teacher.

Every day I entered the school I had to assure myself that I would be able to stand whatever I encounter. I had to cooperate with the people who were completely different from me, with completely different thoughts about teaching and learning. When I put forward my experience they would simply twist it their ways and make it sound useless even though I knew that those strategies worked in other places. The school administration used to comment unnecessarily. They wanted a language classroom to be absolutely quiet. They wanted the classroom walls to be absolutely clean without anything pasted on it. Moreover, they wanted everything written neatly on the notebooks and did not care if the students could make sense of what they had written.

I used to work six to eight hours every day in the schools I worked. The working hours were never enough to complete all the school works in the school itself. I had to bring them home. I had to make the materials ready for the next class at home. I had to make the exercises and question papers at home since school hours were occupied with classes. Yet, the school paid less, hardly enough for me.

I was also a university student then. I was studying the same thing that I was doing in the school. I used to have exams but they did not manage any study leave. Sometimes there were training opportunities in the university and outside, but they did not let me go there. I used to teach during the school hours and prepare for the classes outside the school hours! Sometimes some students got unmanageable but the school used to turn deaf ears to the issues. I tried action research in my class as well. Two of the research went well and I could make some changes as well but I could not continue since the schedule was tight.

### **EFL Teacher's Difficulties for Professional Development**

The use of English language is explicitly realized in almost all aspects of everyday living like education, communication, health, media, even in the kitchen! It is not only used in the countries where English is used as the native language but also in other nooks and corners of the globe. The widespread use of English and its demands for employment might be the reasons that, as Celik, Bayraktar-Cepni and Ilyas (2013) opine, English has become a prominent language even in the countries where English is not used as an official language. The demand for effective use of language has also increased the demand for efficient professionals who can teach the language use effectively. However, as Yurtsever (2013) suggests, it has been difficult for schools to recruit skilled EFL teachers in the schools. This situation matches the situation of schools in Nepal as well.

However, despite the lack of capable teachers, according to Curriculum Development Center (CDC) (2007), English is taught as one of the compulsory subjects in Nepal. This is one of the reasons that in-service Nepalese EFL teachers' professional development has been a burning issue not only among the teacher educators and school administration but also of individual teacher who is seriously into the profession. NCED, as the apex body for teachers' professional development in Nepal, runs professional development programmes for EFL teachers. According to NCED (2016), professional development programmes may be run through resource centres as well. Moreover, private associations like NELTA also run such programmes for EFL teachers particularly. Teachers may take individual initiatives for their development. However, professional development of EFL teachers is not yet less challenging.



EFL teachers' professional development is about developing positive changes in teachers so that they are able to teach their students effectively. The development of positive change in EFL teachers requires them to do varieties of activities. I discussed some common activities that teachers do in Chapter V. Although EFL teachers are aware that they need to do varieties of activities to develop themselves, they face challenges that obstruct their ways.

### **Time: Profession Vs Professional Development**

EFL teachers carry out the professional development activities along with their profession. It might be an opportunity for the teachers to learn and apply them in their classroom at the same time, however, it is a challenge for them to manage time for both profession and professional learning at a time. The teachers are expected to be responsible for certain activities for certain time in the school. The additional tasks that they choose for themselves require additional time which might be a challenge for the teachers. Regarding the challenge of time management, Jay communicated,

*I joined a college. The school and college were somehow together. In the beginning, I taught full time. Later, I started teaching for certain periods only as a part-time teacher. At that time, I was moving from one school to another in my hometown. Then my class started so I preferred teaching part-time to continue my studies. When I had an examination, I would stop for some time and focus on exams.*

Another EFL teacher, Srijana also had the problem of time management, she disclosed,

*I know writing reflective journals is a good idea for teachers to keep the records of the classroom activities but I do not have time to write the journals. The routine is very busy.*

Sandhya said,

*I joined M Ed. I was also teaching in a school that time. It was very difficult to manage time. I used to go to attend the classes in the college in the evening. I had to teach for the whole day and then go to the classes. My college was quite far from home. It was always late when I home from the class.*

Thus, the teachers have difficulty in managing time for their professional learning along with their professional duties in their schools. However, the teachers' interest in learning pushes them towards keeping their effort in finding time for themselves for learning (Knowles, 1973).

### **English Language Proficiency**

EFL teachers need to learn English first, to be able to teach English. Although these teachers are the teachers of English language they may not have a good command over the language. Mohammadi and Moradi (2017) found out in their study that teachers are unable to communicate effectively although they are expected to be good at communication in their profession. Making themselves familiar with the language to be able to teach may be another challenge for the EFL teachers. The EFL teacher participants shared similar experiences. Jay narrated,

*I studied in a government school. So, you can imagine my situation. I had difficulty in even speaking for 5 to 10 minutes in the classroom, or write a couple of paragraphs properly and organized English. I was not a very good student. I was below average. It was difficult for me to major in English in +2.*

Likewise, Sandhya echoed,

*Actually, I am from a government school. Speaking English and writing English was itself difficult in the initial days. Though I was an English teacher I used to use Nepali in the classroom.*

The EFL teachers repeated the similar experience of being a student of government school and relating it to their poor command over the English language since, in the government schools of Nepal, the Nepali language is the medium of instruction. Referring to the language of instruction Bhattarai and Gautam (2005) state, because English is the medium of instruction in private schools, parents want to send their children to private schools rather than to government schools. However, everyone does not get the privilege of going to a private school for language competence. Udaya shared a similar experience relating it to her command of English,

*Being a student of English Language Teaching was the most frightening experience I have ever had. My dad didn't enrol me in the Private English medium schools where I could get exposure to English. Thus, I didn't speak English much during my childhood.*

Regarding the difficulty with the language, Srijana commented,

*Many things of English language were confusing for me to even if I was a teacher of English. I had to learn them at home before I went to teach.*

*Sometimes I had to stay awake whole night to learn tense and structures. I used to make the example to be presented in the class next day.*

Such problems are not typical of this selected EFL teacher. It is a common problem of teachers in other parts of the world too. Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2011) contextualized the similar situation with the teachers of Oman where it was found that EFL grammar is a difficult aspect of English to learn both for teachers and students; the more prominent fact is that the problems on the part of the teachers are more serious than the problems on the part of the students. If the teachers are not sure about the correct forms of language they cannot be expected to teach language appropriately. Likewise, if EFL teachers have troubles in communicating in English,

it becomes a challenge for the EFL teachers to teach English to their students. As Akbari (2015) mentions, EFL teachers need to be competent enough in the English language to communicate with the students in the classroom and provide a communicative space for the students to learn the language. Unless a teacher is equipped with English language skills, it is difficult for the teachers to be able to teach effectively. It, in turn, affects professional development of the teacher since teachers' professional development requires teachers to be able to teach effectively.

### **Training Opportunities Vs Appropriateness**

Teacher training has been recognized as one of the most influential means for teachers learning (Freeman, 2006) which leads to teachers' professional development. According to NCED (2010), teacher training and orientations are provided for teachers to help them learn more about teaching and learning. Although training opportunities have been one of the commonly used strategies for teacher learning, EFL teachers have problems with the training opportunities they get. Especially, the training set by the institutions where the EFL teachers work may not be fruitful for all of them. Jay asserted,

*I think such general training in the schools are just for showing that they care about the teachers' development. It is very rare, they do it when the academic session begins. It is just for the sake of saying or doing only. It has not been very fruitful. It is like a part of the calendar. But I do not prefer going there.*

It may not be the problem of this participant EFL teacher particularly. Sometimes the training and discussion sessions that a school sets hiring the experts and teacher trainers, may not reap fruitful results. It may keep teachers in the confusion that if the shared ideas really work in their context. Sandhya had a similar experience to share,

*Sometimes they call experts and teachers from other countries. They do come and share their experiences and difficulties they have in their classroom and tell how to deal with that situations. We just share our experiences and listen to their experiences. it is not just for training but sharing programmes.*

*Sometimes they helped but not always. It is because the difficulties they have in their countries and the difficulties we have in our country are very different. They share about such things which we don't have in our schools. Where the context matches they are helpful.*

The appropriateness of training sessions is a common issue among EFL teachers and scholars around the world irrespective of the location where EFL teachers teach. In a study, Yumru (2015) found out that teachers prefer teacher education to be planned according to their needs so that they can transfer the learning to their strategic context. Moreover, it is better if EFL teachers themselves are included with the authority, trainers and teachers while designing teacher education programmes.

### **Limited Services and Privileges for Teachers: Payments!**

Limited services and privileges for EFL teachers may be another most influential challenge of professional development of EFL teachers. It has a strong indirect effect on teachers' professional development. Borg, Riding and Falzon (1991) state that economic problems cause severe stress and dissatisfaction in teachers. When teachers are not satisfied with what they are paid for their work, it demotivates them from keeping efforts for better results in teaching. Regarding the payments and its effects upon the profession, Jay disclosed,

*I always say them if I make difference anywhere I want to have the same kind of treatment in return. I want to be treated differently. This focus was basically*

*on salary and privileges. When I do my best, they should treat me differently. That was the concept. But institutions do not like that. No matter what I do they treat me generally like other teachers. It sometimes makes me very uncomfortable.*

It is a challenge for teachers to manage their livelihood and keep developing their profession with what they earn. Sandhya had a similar experience,

*It is about the living you are earning. It is the salary. In early days, I didn't use to earn a lot. The salary I got was barely enough for me. So, it is the disappointing part of the teaching field. Nowadays, also most of the teachers do not get good pay. They work hard but when it is the day they get for what they did, it doesn't make them really happy.*

Regarding the payments to EFL teachers, Srijana echoed,

*Teachers work very hard but they are not paid enough and they always need to think about their student's progress and performance.*

EFL teachers do not earn much. It is difficult to invest their earning for their professional development since teachers also need to manage their daily expenses. When there are opportunities for teacher professional development like conferences and training, and the schools do not pay for them, the teachers may not want to participate. They lose the opportunity to learn. Regarding funds for professional development opportunities, Jay stated,

*Previously the school did not sponsor conferences and workshops. The teachers had to pay themselves so they did not want to participate.*

Increase in the payments for teachers may be one of the pushing factors for their professional development. It allows teachers to invest their time in learning more

about the profession rather than trying to find out other opportunities to earn their living.

### **EFL Teachers' Overcoming Strategies**

The discussion in the previous section of this chapter kept forward three major challenges of professional development for EFL teachers in Kathmandu. The professional development opportunities that the EFL teachers used for their learning are also the strategies that the teachers use to overcome the obstacles. However, the teachers' awareness of the existence of challenges in their context may encourage them to try to cope up with them individually for their own professional benefits.

#### **Extended Learning Hours**

The EFL teachers aware of their professional development, prefer following a maximum number of approaches that are within their reach. They manage to make some time for their professional learning despite the tight schedule. The teachers who have joined degree courses in teaching English experienced difficulties in balancing time and learning but they managed to complete their study. Regarding the study hours, Jay said,

*Most of my problems were related to managing time and money. Regarding time, my past experiences of working the whole day and working at night and studying at night college were common in Kathmandu as well as it was in my hometown. It could have been a bigger problem for other students but for me, it was a habit. Early in the morning, I prepared food, then go to school. After school, come back, eat some snacks and go to study in college and then come back home, cook food and then real study starts. This has already been a kind of habit for me.*

About the degree course, Sandhya echoed,

*I joined an evening college for masters. I used to teach in the school in the afternoon and attend the classes in the evening.*

Srijana also shared a similar experience,

*After I realized that I need to learn more to be an EFL teacher, I joined the university. I had classes in the evening. I worked during the day and studied in the evening.*

The obstacles that the participant EFL teachers shared were not about the formal classes merely. They hinted that they had problems in going for training and workshops for learning. In such cases too, the teachers seem to have managed time.

Srijana shared,

*We exchange classes whenever it is possible with other colleagues. Sometimes I also ask the administration to provide me with a leave to attend such events.*

Although EFL teachers are aware of their professional development, they find it difficult to manage time for such opportunities outside schools. Similarly, it might be stressful for the EFL teachers to manage an alternative themselves in their absence. Unavailability of the alternative may force teachers not to attend the learning session.

### **Modified Teaching Learning Activities**

The EFL teachers may not be able to transfer their learning into their classroom exactly in the way that had been discussed in the chapter or practised in the training sessions. This might be a common issue among EFL teachers. In such situations, the teachers try to adapt their skills in the way they fit their context.

Regarding modifications, Jay shared,

*I tried to modify my teaching. I try to know their culture and them as students as well. I modify to make it easier to teach in my context when my learning*



*differs from classroom situation. I try to understand what I am doing and why the principle behind to match my teaching in the context.*

The modifications may not always be limited to teaching and learning activities in the classroom. The EFL teachers modify their teacher roles as well in the classroom for better teaching and learning. Udaya shared,

*Students didn't obey me much. There would be nothing that would disappoint much than being ignored by your own teacher. I remember my students playing paper ball game when I was trying my best to make them understand the lesson. Later, I slowly started myself as a friendly teacher. It was not possible. I made myself a family member of each student. (Friend, mother, sister, nurse, counsellor) anything that was possible, and anything the students wanted to treat me as.*

Such adaptations help teachers to be able to teach in heterogeneous classroom situations as well. Being able to handle any student in any situation may be one of the markers of professional development of a teacher.

### **50% Fund from the School**

Professional development opportunities are not available free of cost for the teachers. The teachers may be required to pay for the opportunities in the schools or outside. If EFL teachers want to be benefitted with the opportunities, they need to pay. However, self-investment of the teachers for such learning opportunities is not so encouraging since teachers are already quite dissatisfied with their earning, which is barely enough for them, in most of the cases. In such cases, teachers try to find out alternative sponsors for them. Jay stated,

*I have convinced them to pay at least 50% of total expense. So, the teachers from my school are participating in the conferences and workshops.*

However, the situation is not same in all the institutions. Some schools pay for their teachers' participation readily. Regarding the fund from the school for professional development activities, Dil said,

*The institutions bear more than 50% percent of the fees for periodic workshops, seminars, conferences and training.*

When schools pay for the professional development opportunities for teachers, the teachers are encouraged to take part in them. However, there has also been a contradiction to what the teachers mentioned. OECD (2009) mentions that the teachers who paid for professional development attended the programmes for a longer period of time than the teachers who did not pay at all. It was also found that the paying teachers wanted more opportunities of similar types.

### **Chapter Summary**

EFL teachers are aware of the significances of their professional development, however, they are not free from challenges. Lack of English language proficiency might be one of the challenges. Likewise, less appropriate or inappropriate training sessions, difficulty in managing time for the profession and professional development activities, limited services and privileges for teachers are some other challenges for EFL teachers for their professional development. Despite the challenges, EFL teachers strive for their development. They study for longer hours since they prioritize learning. They also seek help from their school to make such activities available for them.

## CHAPTER VII

### REFLECTION, INSIGHTS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I present the insights I got from the study that I built from the narratives and their analysis in Chapter IV, V, and VI respectively. I also make a succinct discussion on what the findings referred to and how they may be employed for professional development of EFL teachers. I conclude this chapter and the study of the major findings guidelines.

#### **Reflection**

I did not know about teaching the English language when I entered the profession nor did I know that my postgraduate studies would be in English Language Education. However, I got into the field so deeply that I could not come out of it. My formal education continued to postgraduate studies in English language Education. Since the beginning of the degree, I was thoughtful about the research topic. I wanted to make myself a part of the study I carried out. I have seen some successful EFL teachers. Being a teacher of English I, personally, had to face many challenges. I also got opportunities for my own development as a teacher; however, I was not satisfied with what I was and what I was doing. The same dissatisfaction guided me to carry out a study on the topic of professional development of EFL teachers. I wanted to explore the opportunities that EFL teachers get for their professional development. I also wanted to learn about the challenges they have for building a better teacher in themselves and the ways they use to face the challenges.

The study, then, continued with the review of related literature. I read the studies that were carried out on professional development of EFL teachers in different

parts of the world. The literature was not only about the professional development opportunities for EFL teachers but also about other aspects of professional development like teacher roles, preferences of teachers, problems of professional development and so on. To organize literature review, I divided the section into three different subsections; thematic review, theoretical review and previous research studies.

Under thematic review, I reviewed three major concepts that are directly related to my study. I tried to make the meaning of teachers' professional development based on scholars' ideas and opinion. It widened my understanding of professional development. I could also relate the meaning of professional development with the meaning of professional development that teacher made for themselves.

I chose Adult Learning Theory as the theoretical base for my study. According to the theory, there are four different ways in which teachers learn. Experiential learning is the core of the idea of the theory. I tried to relate the EFL teachers' experience to the four aspects of Adult Learning Theory while making their meaning.

I read the research carried out by other researchers in Nepal and abroad. The review helped me to compare and contrast the experiences shared by EFL teachers in different contexts. It was interesting to read how EFL teaching is viewed in other parts and how they develop themselves as professional EFL teachers.

Besides the studies carried out in other countries, I also reviewed policy for teacher development in Nepal. It made me aware of the scope of better opportunities for EFL teachers. I learnt about the provision for teacher development in Nepal.

I discussed with my tutors to decide how I could carry out this study. The discussion gave a way out to the research method issue. I decided to make it a

narrative inquiry. The rest of the research design followed the framework of narrative inquiry method. With the research design ready, I prepared an open-ended questionnaire for an interview of EFL teacher participants. I reframed the questionnaire as per the suggestions of my research supervisor. I selected five EFL teachers from Kathmandu as the participants for the study.

The interview was quite a difficult task for me. It was difficult to approach the teacher as I was away from Nepal. We had to set time for phone calls. The Internet helped a lot. I called them and recorded their interview. Then, I transcribe the interview. After that, I knitted their experiences shared in the interview into stories.

The narratives read a general story of their professional development. Based on the narratives I developed and the EFL teachers' actual words, I made an analysis of the narratives. I developed three chapters for three themes. The themes were developed based on the three research questions that I set in Chapter I. While working on the themes, I discussed on experiences shared by the EFL teachers during the interviews. I also related their experiences with literature I found on professional development of EFL teachers.

### **Insights from the Study**

I had set three research questions for the study. I discussed the experiences of EFL teachers under three different themes in Chapter V and VI. The themes were generated for the research questions respectively. The discussion of the experiences of EFL teachers led me towards the following insights.

### **Process of Professional Development of EFL Teachers**

I learnt that EFL teacher entered the profession intentionally, but, to earn their living for short term. The teachers who felt that they enjoyed the profession looked for the opportunities to learn. They invested their time and money in their

professional development. The study of the narratives shows that after teachers enter in the profession and start learning about how they can teach in better ways they keep efforts for their development. I learnt that EFL teachers were likely to be promoted to other positions in the schools like school administration, teacher training and curriculum development. Their shifts and high-quality professional development are due to the changes in their classroom practices, students' learning outcomes and their beliefs and attitudes that Guskey (2002) argued. I also came to know EFL teachers were motivated by their seniors. Successful seniors and EFL teachers' interaction motivated EFL teachers towards their professional development. The study revealed that EFL teachers found opportunities from their mentors. They also learnt from trial and error of strategies during classroom teaching.

### **Opportunities for Professional Development of EFL Teachers**

The insights into the opportunities of professional development that EFL teachers utilize for their professional development supports Guskey (2002) that when teachers believe that their engagement in professional development activities actually brings about improvements in students learning, they tend to look for alternative ways of learning. Their narratives signify that the efforts that teachers keep for learning and their engagement in various activities are for the positive changes in their classroom practices, students' learning outcomes and their beliefs and attitude. From the narratives of the participants, I learnt that EFL teachers replicated their teachers' practices while teaching in the classroom in early days of their profession. It set them in the profession and helped them in critical classroom situations. They learnt more about teaching and kept building skills of teaching standing on their teachers' skills. Similarly, EFL teachers joined university degree courses after spending some time in teaching. The act of teaching boosted the feeling of the necessity of further learning

formally from university or university colleges in them. The enrolment in formal courses helped EFL teachers to look for other opportunities like conferences, workshops/seminars, training, and professional networks for learning and professional development.

I came to know that EFL teachers preferred to take training occasionally for their development and refreshment of their learning; however, all the training sessions they attended were not fruitful for them. The training sessions that schools set for all their teachers were usually not very fruitful for EFL teachers. They wanted training specially prepared for them according to their need which matched their contexts. EFL teachers found teachers' professional networks a useful source of learning for themselves. The interaction among the teachers through teachers' professional networks not only added knowledge and skills in the teachers but also built confidence in teachers. It prepared them as a source of learning for other teachers as well. Likewise, the EFL teachers in professional networks not only learnt from other teachers but also shared their learning with other teachers. Experiential learning took place in EFL teachers through professional networks.

I learnt that EFL teachers attended conferences, workshops/seminars when they got opportunities. Such meetings not only helped them to gain knowledge and skills of teaching but also extended their professional networks. Such workshops provide EFL teachers with opportunities to choose from among several topics. The teachers, as Adult Learning Theory proposes, can choose the learning items and modes of learning according to their need which contributes to their knowledge and skill development as teachers. However, the teachers wanted funds from school for such events since such events and tours were costly for the teacher to afford for themselves. In the same way, EFL teachers attended discussions and sharing sessions

in their schools. Such meetings were helpful for them to solve the classroom problems instantly if they had any. However, some teachers might not like to attend such sessions since they did not learn much from them.

Some EFL teachers kept journals of special/critical events that took place in their classroom while teaching but this was not used often by EFL teachers. They did not have time during the school hours to write journals. However, they knew that writing journal would be helpful for their development. Likewise, these days EFL teachers use Facebook for learning.

### **Impediments to Professional Development of EFL Teachers**

I found out that EFL teachers were aware of the need of finding out opportunities for their professional development, but the heavy workload hindered their learning. They had difficulty in managing time for their profession and professional development activities. Likewise, English language proficiency was also a challenge for EFL teachers. It was expressed that EFL teachers learned English in advance to teach English. EFL teachers' command over English built up after they got in the profession. However, EFL teachers had difficulty in transferring their learning from training sessions to their classroom. All the training sessions they attended did not match their context and addressed their needs. Such sessions do not contribute to changing teachers' beliefs and practices, instead, they may discourage them from attending the training sessions. I learnt that EFL teachers had limited earning from a single institution. They needed to find additional works outside their schools to earn their living. A lot of time for earning obstructed them from finding opportunities for learning.



### **Adjustments of EFL Teachers**

The insights regarding the adjustments of EFL teachers in the profession and for their professional development discern teachers' change in their attitude towards the profession as the basis despite the challenges. As Guskey (2002) argues, teacher professional development brings changes in teachers' beliefs, attitude and classroom practices. Teachers' involvement in professional development activities and adjustment during the difficulties is both reason and catalyst for change. I learnt that to assist their professional development, EFL teachers looked for alternative ways of learning like morning and evening classes in the university. They also substituted their classes with other colleagues to attend training sessions. The substitutions took place in the mutual understanding of the teachers in the school. Wherever the EFL teachers could not transfer their learning from training sessions to their classroom, they modified the learning to fit into their context. It helped them to find alternative strategies for effective teaching. Interestingly, EFL teachers enthusiastically attended professional development opportunities if they were funded, at least 50% of the total expense, by their institutions.

### **Conclusion**

Teacher professional development influences students' learning. From the insights, we can conclude that FL teachers are aware of this fact. They are also aware that their professional development is important for themselves. The awareness they have regarding the importance of professional development for their students and themselves is also an indicator of professional development, hence as Guskey (2002) mentions, professional development leads to changes. The awareness may lead them towards finding better opportunities in English language teaching, EFL teacher training and EFL curriculum development.

EFL teachers try to be benefitted from available professional development opportunities. They decide what opportunities they need to use and what they do not need according to the need of their present and their experiences (Knowles, 1973). They adapt themselves to the profession following their EFL teachers' practices in the early days of teaching. They take university courses as an effective approach for their professional development. They attended training and discussions as effective strategies for their development. They get into teachers' professional networks for learning. Upon funds from their school, they attend conferences, seminars and workshops as learning opportunities. Moreover, some teachers, despite a tight school schedule, create some time to keep written records of classroom activities and events, as reflective journals. These different opportunities for professional development have varying impact on teachers since different opportunities and activities require a different mode of engagement. Teachers' individual personality, their social roles and orientation towards learning influences their options for their professional development (Knowles, 1973). Therefore, all teachers cannot reap equal benefit from their engagement in professional development.

Although EFL teachers enter the profession unintentionally to earn living for the particular span of their life, they tend to look for opportunities for their professional development as EFL teachers when they start enjoying the profession. They are inspired by the success of that of other EFL teachers, teacher educators and, scholars. Professional development activities support their desire for change for betterments. The interest, involvement and change in EFL teachers in professional development activities make them capable of their high-quality professional development (Guskey, 2002) in the field of English language teaching.

However, it is a challenge for them to continue learning about their profession. They need to learn English for themselves before getting into the classroom for teaching. Building a good command over English is a challenge for EFL teachers. Their schooling has a direct effect upon their command over the English language. Similarly, they have difficulty in making time for their profession and professional development since both need to be practised with importance. Likewise, it is difficult for EFL teachers to transfer their learning from the training sessions they attend to their classroom. Their learning in the training sessions and their classroom context may not match. EFL teachers also need to find out alternative job opportunities to earn their living since earning from a single institution as a school teacher is not sufficient for them to live. It decreases their learning time and opportunities.

Despite the challenges, EFL teacher has found out some alternative ways to continue learning. Some EFL teachers have convinced their schools to sponsor a certain amount of fund for their professional learning opportunities like conferences, workshops, seminars and training. They diminish their family and personal time for their professional learning. They modify their learning to make it adaptable to their situation wherever it is possible.

### **Implications of the Study**

The review of the literature, both thematic and theoretical, throughout the study; the empirical narratives for the study and the construction of meaning from the narratives from EFL teachers' perspective demonstrate that teacher professional development is a continuous process. The teachers who are supported by the institutions have higher possibilities for their professional development. Teacher professional development, this way, is both an individual and a cooperative process.

### **Practice-Based Implications**

In-service EFL teachers are aware of the importance of their professional development and also about their learning needs as adults. They make personal efforts as well for their development. EFL teachers need to be supported by the schools for their development so that they can make the teaching-learning process effective. However, there seems to be a clear lack of understanding of the need for teachers' professional development in the institutions that teachers are in. If the institutions were serious about the issue of teachers' professional development, there would have been arrangements for the EFL teachers according to their need. Therefore, it is necessary to make the school heads aware of teachers' professional development obligatorily through revised policies for teacher education. The efforts from institutions help teachers to operationalize their learning in the classroom settings since they are not only the concerned authority for their development and effective practices but also the institutions are responsible for their professional conducts. The next support these policies have is the abundant opportunities for the teacher to learn irrespective of their choices since all teachers may not take initiatives from their personal grounds for their professional development. When the policies make it obligatory, the teacher is forced to learn. It, in turn, impacts learning on students. However, certain changes in their school routines and facilities are necessary for EFL teachers to create learning opportunities.

Next, the professional development opportunities for EFL teachers need to be made need-oriented. Need analysis needs to be made before administering professional development activities on EFL teachers. Likewise, professional development opportunities need to be funded, at least some percentage of the total cost, to encourage teachers to attend the activities. Similarly, EFL teachers need to be

provided with opportunities to learn English so that they are confident about what to teach and how to teach to their students.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The narratives of the lived experiences of EFL teachers, the participants of the study, reveal that teachers are developed but not born. The findings of the study regarding teachers' motivation for their professional development reveals that teachers look for alternatives and spend their time and resources for their professional development when they see the possibility for better earning and identity construction are parallel with idea that Knowles (1980) discusses while explaining the assumptions of motivation in Adult Learning Theory. Likewise, as Guskey (2002) opines the experiences shared as narratives of the teachers also reveal that professional development impacts changes in students' outcomes, teachers' classroom practices and teachers' beliefs and attitude. Therefore, broadening the scope of teacher professional development and teachers' involvement in high-quality professional development could be a step for motivating teachers for their own professional development.

Although the pace of change in teachers and maximum output from teacher professional development activities might not be generalized on teachers from diverse academic and socio-cultural backgrounds, the availability of the opportunities for teachers to get involved in the activities is important. Reduction in the top-down decision making for teacher professional development activities and increase in teachers' participation in the development of teacher professional development activities could be a helpful idea.

Moreover, according to the study, the interaction with teachers and among teachers is one of the efficient sources of teacher professional development. The more

they share their experiences the more possibilities for learning. As Knowles (1973) mentions, bringing the social roles that teachers play may also be a source for their learning if they are shared at the appropriate time.

### **Chapter Summary**

EFL teachers participate in various professional development activities to get better in teaching. The teachers who enjoy teaching and have a hope of making difference in students' learning, keep effort for their own development despite the challenges. They also try to minimize the effect of the challenges by looking for alternatives and solutions. They would have more learning opportunities if they were funded and considered with their workload during their studies. Providing teachers with opportunities to learn English language and English language teaching would support them and their students in effective teaching and learning.

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## APPENDICES

**Interview Guidelines**

**How do EFL teachers experience their own professional development? What opportunities do EFL teachers experienced with their professional development?**

- How long have you been teaching?
- Was it teaching English?
- What made you choose teaching?
- Please narrate the early days of teaching.
- What kind of teacher were you in the early days?
- Did the students like or dislike your presence in the classroom?
- How did you know about their like/dislike about your presence?
- What did the students like the most about you (you as a teacher) in those days? What did the students did not like about you (you as a teacher)? How did you come to know about that? Can you narrate the incident(s)?
- Did you personally enjoy teaching in those early years? What made you enjoy teaching? Can you narrate a lesson (s) that you enjoyed so much if you remember?
- What was disappointing about being a teacher? Can you narrate the bitter experience to me?
- How did you adjust yourself into teaching in such difficult days?
- Do you feel you have made some changes in yourself as a teacher since you began teaching? If you have changed yourself, can you share some of the specific changes that you remember?

- Do you remember anything like opportunities that you got which helped you to develop yourself as a teacher?
- Is there anything that you did yourself to make yourself better in teaching?  
Can you share how did you make it possible for you?

**Why and how do EFL teachers utilize/ not utilize professional development opportunities?**

- Did the institutions you have worked for have any provisions for you to develop yourself as a teacher? Can you tell me in detail about those provisions?
- How often did you attend such opportunities? Please share some incidents,
- Did they help you to change yourself as a teacher in a proactive manner? Will you please narrate some of those experiences?
- Did you sometimes find them of less or no use? If yes, why were they not fruitful for you?
- What would have made them fruitful in your case?
- Did you have any opportunities in your institutions to learn/discuss with your colleague about teaching in a better manner?

**How do EFL teachers overcome challenges/impediments of/for professional development?**

- Did you face any difficulty to make yourself the teacher you are today?  
Can you share some incidents that left significant impressions on you?
- What did you do when you were in such difficult situations?

- Did the encounter with the difficulty bring about any positive changes in you as a teacher? Please share how they brought positive changes in you.
- What betterments have you experienced in yourself from the difficulties?
- Can you share your professional development story? Please tell me major events/ experiences you had in all these years.