

TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICES OF CONTINUOUS  
ASSESSMENT SYSTEM IN ELT CLASS

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## AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of *Indra Kumari Oli* for the degree of *Master of Philosophy in English Language Education* presented on 29 December 2024, entitled *Teachers' Understanding and Practices of Continuous Assessment System in ELT Class*

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The Internal Assessment (IA) system was newly introduced in the curriculum of school-level education in 2020. The previous curriculum (2009) adopted a continuous assessment system (CAS) as an assessment tool for learning. However, the studies and reports discovered that it was not implemented effectively as anticipated. The teachers found it cumbersome and filled out the CAS form for formality only. Therefore, the new curriculum revised the CAS system of providing ticks to the students and incorporated a rubrics system under various criteria. The internal assessment also suggests that the teacher should assess the students as part of their teaching-learning and update their progress on portfolios for record keeping and self-evaluation of the students. Therefore, this research aimed to explore teachers' understanding of internal assessment through experiences in ELT classes at the basic level of education.

The study followed the phenomenological qualitative approach to collect the participants' experiences on the phenomena. The study purposively selected three basic-level English language teachers from public schools in Surkhet. Semi-structured interviews were employed as a technique for in-depth information on the phenomenon. Similarly, field notes, artefacts and document analysis were also used for data collection and triangulation. The theoretical framework carried out by this study was the Social Cultural Theory of Vygotsky to view the dynamics of language instruction, motivation, and evaluation in the classroom context.

The findings revealed a nuanced picture of discrepancies between perception and praxis. On the one hand, the English language teachers expressed positive perceptions towards internal assessment, highlighting its ability to improve academic achievement and engage students in active learning. However, they could not adhere to all the criteria as directed by the curriculum in praxis due to some practical constraints like poor understanding of the CAS, large class size, workload, lack of resources in school, etc. They also complained about the unavailability of training and orientation, as well as the monitoring system for implementing IA. I explored IA as a supportive tool for increasing the students' grades without actually enhancing the learners' skills. The teachers' preference for traditional paper-pencil tests suggests a need for additional support, extrinsic motivation, and resources to facilitate the transformation towards a more authentic use of assessment. Teachers should feel IA empowers them to regulate the students and minimize their burden and workload leading the students to independent learning. It can be concluded that the dominance of assessment of learning marginalized the assessment for learning and assessment as learning. Therefore, a more balanced approach is needed to maintain the assessment as learning and assessment for learning.

With the expanding theoretical insights into the cognitive dimensions of IA experience, this study provides viable implications for educators, policymakers, researchers, and teachers in English education for effective IA praxis. The findings suggest the justifiable praxis of IA in the classroom and aspire to future research to explore the perspectives and consequences of IA on students' lives.

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## सोध सार

अंग्रेजी भाषा शिक्षामा दर्शनशास्त्रको स्नातकोत्तर डिग्रीको लागि इन्द्रा कुमारी वलीको सोध प्रबन्धको शिर्षक "अंग्रेजी भाषा शिक्षण कक्षामा निरन्तर मूल्याङ्कन प्रणालीका बारेमा शिक्षकहरूको बुझाइ र अभ्यासहरू" १४ पुष २०८१ मा प्रस्तुत गरिएको थियो ।

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सन् २०२० देखि विद्यालय तहको शिक्षाको पाठ्यक्रममा आन्तरिक मूल्यांकन प्रणाली लागू गरिएको छ। यसअघिको पाठ्यक्रमले सिकाइका लागि मूल्याङ्कनका रूपमा निरन्तर मूल्याङ्कन प्रणाली (CAS) अपनाएको थियो। तथापि, अध्ययन र प्रतिवेदनहरूले निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्यांकन (CAS) लाई अपेक्षित तथा प्रभावकारी रूपमा कार्यान्वयन गर्न नसकिएको भन्ने निष्कर्ष निकाले। शिक्षकहरूले औपचारिकता पूरा गर्नका लागि मात्र निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्यांकन फारम (CAS) भरेको पाइयो। तसर्थ, अहिलेको नयाँ पाठ्यक्रमले विद्यार्थीहरूलाई विभिन्न मापदण्डहरूमा परिक्षण गरि अंकन प्रदान गर्न रुब्रिक्सहरूको निर्माण गरेको छ। आन्तरिक मूल्यांकन निर्माणात्मक मूल्यांकन पनि भएकाले मूल्यांकन र सिकाइलाई संगसंगै लानुपर्ने तथा सिकाइका लागि मूल्यांकन गरिनुपर्ने तथ्यमा आधारित रहेको छ। आन्तरिक मूल्यांकनले विद्यार्थीहरूलाई नियमितरूपमा सिक्नका लागि सहायता गर्नुका साथै व्यक्तिगत संचयिकामा उनीहरूको प्रगति अद्यावधिक गर्दछ। विद्यार्थीको संचयिका अध्ययन तथा अवलोकन गरेर उनीहरूको प्रगति विवरण थाहा हुनुका साथै विद्यार्थीहरूले आफ्नो स्व-मूल्यांकन समेत गर्न सक्षम हुन्छन्। तसर्थ, यस अनुसन्धानको उद्देश्य शिक्षाको आधारभूत तहमा अध्यापनरत शिक्षकहरूको आन्तरिक मूल्यांकन प्रतिको धारणा अनुभव र अभ्यासहरूको अन्वेषण गर्नु हो।

अध्ययनले घटनाहरूमा सहभागीहरूको अनुभवहरू सङ्कलन गर्न घटनात्मक गुणात्मक दृष्टिकोणको अनुसरण गरेको छ। तसर्थ, यस अध्ययनमा सुर्खेतका सार्वजनिक विद्यालयबाट आधारभूत तहका अङ्ग्रेजी भाषाका तीन जना शिक्षकहरूलाई सहभागी गराइएको थियो। सूचना संकलन गर्नका लागि अन्तर्वार्ता, क्षेत्र भ्रमण टिपोट, विद्यार्थीहरूको कलाकृति (Artifacts), र कागजात विश्लेषण जस्ता बिधि तथा साधनहरूको प्रयोग गरिएका थियो। यस अध्ययनमा कक्षाकोठामा अंग्रेजी भाषा शिक्षण र आन्तरिक मूल्यांकनको सम्बन्ध हेर्नको लागि Vygotsky को सामाजिक साँस्कृतिक सिद्धान्तको प्रयोग गरिएको थियो।

तथ्यहरूको विश्लेषणबाट धारणा र अभ्यासबीचमा भिन्नता रहेको कुरा देखिएको छ। एकातर्फ, अङ्ग्रेजी भाषाका शिक्षकहरूले विद्यार्थीहरूलाई सक्रिय सिकाइमा संलग्न गर्न र शैक्षिक उपलब्धी बढाउन सक्ने क्षमतालाई उजागर गर्दै आन्तरिक मूल्यांकनप्रति सकारात्मक धारणा व्यक्त गरेको पाइन्छ भने ठूलो कक्षाको आकार, कामको बोझ, विद्यालयमा स्रोतसाधनको अभाव, सरोकारवालाहरूको उदासीनता तथा आन्तरिक मूल्यांकन सम्बन्धि तालिम तथा ज्ञानको अभाव लगायत केही व्यावहारिक अवरोधहरूका कारण उनीहरूले पाठ्यक्रमले निर्देशित गरेका आन्तरिक मूल्यांकनका सबै मापदण्डहरू पालना गर्न नसकेको कुरा पनि स्पष्ट पारेका छन्।

परम्परागत परीक्षा कागज-पेन्सिल परीक्षणलाई नै शिक्षकहरूको प्राथमिकता दिने गरेको तथा आन्तरिक मूल्यांकन विद्यार्थीको ग्रेड वृद्धिमा मात्र सहायक भएको कुरा यस अध्ययनबाट देखिएको छ ।

शिक्षकहरूको कामको बोझलाई कम गर्न, विद्यार्थीहरूलाई नियमित गर्न र उनीहरूको विद्यार्थीहरूलाई स्वतन्त्र शिक्षाको लागि नेतृत्व गर्न सशक्त बनाउनको लागि शिक्षक तथा विद्यार्थीबीच सुमुधुर सम्बन्ध स्थापना गर्नका लागि आन्तरिक मूल्यांकन उपयोगी भएको छ । तथापि, सिकाइको मूल्याङ्कनको प्रभुत्वले सिकाइको लागि मूल्याङ्कन र सिकाइको रूपमा मूल्याङ्कनलाई सीमान्तकृत गरेको निष्कर्षमा पुग्न सकिन्छ। तसर्थ, सिकाइ र सिकाइको मूल्याङ्कनका रूपमा मूल्याङ्कनलाई कायम राख्न थप सन्तुलित दृष्टिकोण आवश्यक छ । यस अध्ययनले आन्तरिक मूल्यांकनको व्यावहारिक प्रयोगको दिशामा रूपान्तरण गर्नका साथै तालिम लगायत संसाधनहरूको उपलब्धता गराउनुपर्नेमा सुझाव दिन्छ। आन्तरिक मूल्यांकनबाट संज्ञानात्मक आयामहरूमा सैद्धान्तिक अन्तर्दृष्टि विस्तार गर्ने तथ्यको उजागर गर्दै यो अध्ययनले शिक्षकहरू, सरोकारवालाहरू तथा नीति निर्माताहरूलाई प्रभावकारी प्रयोगका लागि सुझावहरू प्रदान गर्दछ ।

१४ पुष, २०८१

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I know that my dissertation will be added to the permanent collection of the Library of Kathmandu University. By signing this document, I grant permission for my dissertation to be made available to any reader upon request for academic research.

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2024

## DECLARATION

I thus certify that this dissertation is my original work and hasn't been submitted to another university for consideration for a different degree.

.....

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## DEDICATION

To my devoted family, my inspiring teachers, enlightened mentors, and my well-wishers, who directly or indirectly involved me and showered me with their blessings, faith, unconditional affection, and continuous inspiration to complete my research journey to this point.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AaL	Assessment as Learning
AfL	Assessment for Learning
AoL	Assessment of Learning
BEE	Basic Education Examination
BLC	Basic Level Curriculum
CA	Continuous assessment
CAS	Continuous Assessment System
CBSE	Center Board of Secondary Education
ERO	Education Review Office
HKEAA	Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority
IA	Internal Assessment
ICSE	Indian Certificate of Secondary Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KU	Kathmandu University
KUSOED	Kathmandu University School of Education
LPP	Liberal Promotion Policy
LSWR	Listening Speaking Reading Writing
MoE	Ministry of Education
MPhil	Masters in Philosophy
NASA	National Assessment of Students' Achievement
NESA	Nepal Education Sector Analysis
NESP	National Education System Plan
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
NG	Non Graded
NEP	National Education Policy
NIRT	National Institute for Research and Training
OCE	Office of Controller of Examination
PhD	Philosophy in Doctor
PIE	Prelims Internal Evaluation
SCT	Socio-Cultural Theory
SEE	Secondary Education Examination

SESP	School Education Sector Plan
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SSDC	School Sector Development Plan
SSRP	School Sector Reform Plan
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
TU	Tribhuvan University
ZAD	Zone of Actual Development
ZED	Zone of Eventual Development
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The study ‘Teachers’ Understanding and Practices of Continuous Assessment in ELT Class’ explores the English language teachers’ perceptions, practices, and experiences of internal assessment at the basic level of education. This section presents the background of my study along with my experience with English language teaching and assessment as a student and teacher, a brief introduction to the provision of an internal assessment system at the basic level of education in Nepal, the rationale of the research, a statement of the issue, research questions, delimitation of the review followed by a synopsis of the section.

#### **Introspection of Research Issue**

It has been one and a half decades since I have been teaching English at an institutionalized school and simultaneously shouldering up some administrative roles. In 2018, it was a wonderful chance for me to conduct assessments, analyze the results, and upgrade the students. When I got the position of Head of the Examination Department, I wanted to integrate the Continuous Assessment System (CAS) for classes 4-7 at our school as suggested by (Ministry of Education & Sports [MoES], 2005). According to the CAS policy, the students from classes 4-5 and 6-7 needed to be evaluated by 60 % and 40%, respectively. There were different criteria to assess continuously and give timely feedback for improvements such as Attendance, Homework, Creativity, Tests, Project Work, Handwriting, Discipline, and General Behavior. I wanted to embrace the essence of CAS at the utmost level since it was meant to motivate the students with their regular studies, enhance their learning, and assist in formative and summative evaluation. It was discovered that the students who are good at formative evaluation are equally good at summative evaluation.

I continuously evaluated the students based on different criteria and marked them accordingly. I used to make the criteria myself and would clarify my marking schemes to the students. I used to assess the students regularly regarding their performances, handwriting, discipline, homework and classwork submission, cooperation with their colleagues, presentation, etc. My students were excited to learn in my class since they were actively participating in teaching-learning activities. They were evaluated every day. I realized the significance of the CAS and filled out the

CAS form continuously. I pasted the CAS chart on the classroom wall so that all the students could see their marks under different criteria and work to improve their learning. Pasting the CAS chart on the wall allowed them to compare what they had learned from the past to what they have learned from the present. I also experienced that my students were enthusiastic about completing their assignments and getting the maximum ticks. At that time, one tick meant average performance, two ticks meant good performance, and three ticks denoted excellent performance. I noticed that the students were doing well on the paper-pencil test, too. However, some of my colleagues at my school were unhappy to incorporate the CAS in their classes. When I surveyed them to get to know their perceptions regarding the CAS, most agreed that it was an effective strategy to improve the students' learning. However, in reality, filling out the CAS form was not a preferable job since it required extra effort and time to assess the students regularly. Somehow, we had been implementing it, developing our own CAS format, and assessing the students regularly despite sufficient training and orientation on CAS. My responsibility was to mentor and monitor the CAS form filling by my colleagues.

One day, during a tea break, one of my colleagues shared about her mother's colleagues, the teachers at a government-aided community school. Surprisingly, they always filled out the CAS at the end of the academic session, getting help from their family members. Some even published the results, excluding the CAS marks, which was shocking news. CAS recording form is used to fill out when the terminal examination reports are prepared (Chongbang, 2021). I got disheartened upon hearing the reality of CAS at some public schools. The teachers are supposed to be well-trained and updated with the curriculum, educational policy, and programs. I wondered how teachers can become so negligent for the future of their students. The CAS aims to constantly assess the learners, letting them know their strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, it aims to develop the student's cognitive, critical, linguistic, and soft skills. It also makes the students responsible for their learning, and teachers can feel relieved and enjoy their teaching. However, filling out the form in the end shows the teachers' negligence and lack of professionalism. Such unprofessional ethics and assessment practices deprive students of timely information on their progress and areas for improvement. As a result, if pupils do not receive timely feedback for improvement, they could lose interest in learning. Unfortunately,

the students would grow without linguistic and meta-cognitive competencies and skills.

The next incident that intrigued me about studying this phenomenon was when one of my male colleagues shared that the students were not serious about their studies because of the CAS. The students think that CAS marks will upgrade them to the higher class; therefore, they do not feel like working hard. As a result, it is hampering their studies and marks. His remarks made me explore how other teachers perceive and experience the internal assessment in the praxis.

### **My Childhood Experience with Language Instruction and Assessment**

I still remember my schooling days in class four, reading the English alphabet for the first time. English subject was introduced in the school curriculum from class four according to the National Education System Plan [NESP], 1971-76 as cited in (Ministry of Education [MoE], 1971). I and my friends felt it difficult to learn the alphabet, the building blocks of the English language; therefore, we wished to avoid it. The teacher was so stern that he made us mimicry, memorize, and practice in the classroom for our habit formation. I think he used the Grammar Translation method to teach us. He used to ask us the English words and their meanings in Nepali. I remember being physically punished for my inability to spell and tell the meanings of the words. The exam was really scary; therefore, most of my friends failed in English subject. However, I enjoyed English subject since the teacher pronounced the words so loudly and clearly. Learning English was a challenging task for me, and I used to feel special when learning some words and sentences in English.

In class five, there used to be a primary education completion examination at the district level. Unknowingly, I stood in the first position with the highest marks in English, which motivated me to perform better in my studies. At the primary and secondary level, there was English, and the language of instruction at government-aided community schools was Nepali, according to the National Education System Plan (NESP, 1971-76). I remember our English language teacher playing the audio on a tape recorder and engaging us in listening and speaking activities. There used to be a practical test of listening and speaking in the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination (NESP, 1971-76).

For this reason, he taught us such skills in class. The way the teacher delivered the lessons and provided us exposure in the class interested me in learning English by heart, and the examination of English was easier than other subjects. I used to be

upset when the teacher did not ask me questions in the class. When we girls and boys played word-meaning games (antaksharee) on Fridays, the group of girls always won and got appreciated. The teacher encouraged us to complete the classwork, especially Grammatical questions and awarded some toffees as prizes for correct answers. We always tried to be quick to solve the problems correctly. His technique of teaching and assessing simultaneously was interesting. We did not know that he was evaluating us during teaching. Now, I guess his instruction aligned with assessment for learning and assessment as learning. However, in my time, most of the students in the government school used to fail the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination because of the English subject. The SLC exam was regarded as the Gate of Iron in the Nepalese context, and crossing it led to opportunities for higher studies and employment (Shrestha & Gautam, 2022).

After passing my School Level Examination (SLC) with the highest marks in English, I joined 10+2 in higher secondary school majoring in English. With my growing interest in it, I gradually completed my bachelor's and master's degrees, and I am currently pursuing my M.Phil. (Master of Philosophy) in English language Education from Kathmandu University. Many friends were reading with me at the primary and secondary levels, but sadly, few colleagues had passed their primary and secondary levels. There may be various reasons behind the dropout rates of the students at the school level and even at higher levels, but one prominent reason is the evaluation system of my time. My friends shared that they left school because they failed exams, and they often complained about being weak in English for its lack of practical use. They belonged to various socio-cultural backgrounds; they lacked intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn the English language.

They were not involved in active learning and classroom participation, nor did they receive the facilitation from their teachers, school, and friends to learn English and evaluate their standards. If they had known about their weaknesses in time and received personalized feedback from their teachers, mentors, and MKO (More Knowledgeable Others), if teachers had identified their learning styles, they would have improved before. They would not have failed the final exam and given up their studies. To align with this, Gyawali (2021) also raised a similar issue in his systematic review, which stated that one of the possible causes of pupils quitting school is the assessment framework.

Even though I unknowingly stood in the first position in my class, securing the highest marks in English, I was not very communicative. I feel that if there had been continuous assessment during my time, I could have learned about my weaknesses on time and improved my communication skills. At that time, I studied to secure the class's first position, not to gain intelligence and skills. I was influenced by extrinsic motivation.

I have been an English language teacher trying to advocate for learner-centred instruction and evaluation. As an academic leader, I am careful about leading by example and inspiring others. Surprisingly, I have heard of teachers who have been blindly giving marks for practical exams like listening and speaking. Still, the teachers are found to assign the marks of internal assessment haphazardly, consisting of full marks of 50 out of 100 at the basic level (classes 4-8). In this regard, Adhikari (2019, as cited in Acharya, 2023) stated that teachers are still randomly assigning practical marks. As a result, students have attained better grades in internal assessment but are non-graded in paper-pencil tests.

Additionally, the ignorance of formative internal assessment hampers the summative assessment results, and the targets set by the curriculum cannot be achieved. Formative and summative assessments correlate with learning outcomes, improving students' performance in summative exams (Lam, 2013). Therefore, my positionality is that formative-based internal assessment should focus more on enhancing the students' skills, cognition, metacognition, and collaboration.

### **Provision of Internal Assessment System at the Basic Level**

According to the National Education Policy (NEP) (2019), schooling is divided into two levels: Basic Level (grades 1–8) and Secondary Level (grades 9–12). The Basic Education Curriculum (2020) recommends conducting formative and summative assessments in all subjects under the National Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education, Science & Technology [MoEST], 2019). Formative assessment strategies have included unit and terminal examinations, assignments, homework, projects, oral and written tests, and classroom activities.

According to the Basic Education Curriculum (2020), internal assessment (IA) has an equal weightage of 50% to external assessment. Both internal assessment (50%) and external assessment (50%) will take the form of summative assessment (p.96). Internal assessment is both formative and summative as it provides the students with feedback for betterment and certification for higher classes. William

(2001) argued that the difference between the summative and formative assessment depends on the use and functions. The same task can be considered formative if it provides information on strengths and areas to improve for the future and summative it measures what the students have learned at the end of the school year. In formative-based internal assessment, teachers have to prepare the portfolios of each student and update their progress. The portfolio details students' performance in different assessment areas like attendance, participation, project work, term tests, etc. as per the nature of the subjects. The pass marks of the internal assessment are allocated to 40% (CDC, 2020).

The assessment of other subjects emphasises project work and practical work. The tools that the curriculum suggests incorporating for the internal assessment are rubrics checklist, behavior observation forms, teachers' records, unit or terminal tests, quizzes, etc. The internal assessment of language-based subjects like English and Nepali is the same as both focus on the assessment of language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The assessment criteria for English language focuses on English language proficiency and communicative competency in the language. The internal assessment criteria and mark distribution in English subjects are displayed in the table below.

**Table 1**

*Criteria for Internal Assessment with the Marks Allocated*

Assessment Area	Weightage
Participation	4
a. Attendance (2)	
b. students' performance in teaching-learning activities (2)	
Reading (8)	16
Writing (8)	
Listening (10)	20
Speaking (10)	
Term tests (5+5)	10
Total	50

(Curriculum Development Center, 2020)

The internal assessment must be done continuously, maintaining a record of the student's progress. Therefore, I have interchangeably used it with the Continuous Assessment System (CAS) incorporated in the previous Curriculum for Lower Secondary Level (Ministry of Education & Sports [MoES], 2005). The continuous

evaluation system was created as a liberal promotion system to reduce student failure, class repetition, and dropout rates (Rai, 2019). Continuous assessment provides more emphasis on the attainment of various learning outcomes (Reddy & Grange, 2000). Therefore, continuous assessment is the most reliable method of evaluating a student's abilities and characteristics. This is because a student's performance is considered cumulative from the beginning of the course to the finish (Mercy et al., 2022). It can be stated that CAS is a type of test used in education to assess how well a student has progressed during a certain course. It also evaluates the overall tasks during a course and supports final markings (Mercy et al., 2022).

### **Rationale of the Study**

Assessment, an integral part of pedagogy, is pertinent to teaching-learning. It helps to discover the strengths and shortcomings of learners' learning and teachers' instruction. Additionally, assessment gives an overview of whether the curriculum's objectives are achieved. In the Nepalese educational context, the assessment practices are executed periodically as formative and summative evaluations (MoEST, 2019). The formative evaluation lets both the learners and the teachers know the areas of improvement, and on the other hand, summative evaluation upgrades the students to their higher class.

The assessment system was blamed to have been more theoretical as it did not examine the practical aspects and skills of learning. The CAS was introduced at the lower level of education to continuously assess the student's knowledge, aptitude, and skills and provide them with necessary and timely feedback for improvements (MoES, 2005). However, in practice, it was not effectively applicable. The studies showed that teachers were filling the CAS forms for formality only. Poudel (2016) stated that the teachers were not implementing CAS regularly because they took it as a secondary task. Suppose the continuous assessment system is taken as an extra burden. The teachers do not assess the students sincerely. In that case, it negatively affects the learners' learning and ultimately hampers national achievements. Even the educational reports concluded that the CAS was not successfully implemented and was inappropriate in our context. They suggested revising the assessment system. As a result, the new Curriculum 2020 integrated the term 'Internal Assessment' instead of CAS, which suggests providing the scores instead of ticks. The current plan, the School Education Sector Plan ([SESP], 2022/23-31/32 (2022), suggests that teachers should be properly trained to implement the revised assessments and analyze the

results of school-based assessments systematically. The (SESP 2022-2032) emphasizes making the formative assessment meaningful and improving the public examinations under the three tiers of government: local, provincial, and national. There is a dire need to examine the implementation of internal assessment, a form of formative assessment from the beginning, so that some improvements are recommended on time. In addition to it, the authenticity of the internal assessment relies on the teachers who have to work at the ground level. The teachers' understanding and experiences regarding internal assessment need to be explored so that the internal assessment can be productive and result-oriented. In this regard, Borg (2003) also stated that teachers' experiences and beliefs determine the use of pedagogical practices and curriculum implementation in the classroom. Hakim (2015) suggests that teachers should be knowledgeable and empowered. He stated promotion of the assessment system relies excessively on the caliber and literacy of English teachers, which ultimately enhances teaching and learning.

The rationale of my study is to explore the teachers' understanding and practice of the internal assessment and raise their unheard voices to the concerned authorities. Moreover, this research will justify the continuation or modification of the internal assessment through the experiences of practicing the internal assessment in English language class. In a similar vein, Rahimi Rad (2019) concluded teachers are at the center of every educational process in a classroom; as the system's implementers, teachers must comprehend and apply the reform's requirements for any educational reform to be successful. Therefore, it is crucial to explore the efforts made to implement the required adjustments and enhancements in teaching, learning, and assessment in schools. The teachers, educators, school administration, policymakers, and stakeholders will get some practicable ideas to make the IA approachable and practicable in all school settings.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 has guaranteed access to secondary education to all. Similarly, the National Curriculum Framework 2019 and the Nepal Education Sector Analysis (NESA, 2016) have mentioned that practical-based education should be provided from the basic level National Institute for Research and Training ([NIRT], 2022). These acts and policies have emphasized skills-based teaching, learning, and assessing for learning. It shows a sectoral readiness for improvement in education and assessment. No matter how innovative and ambitious policies are

introduced to reform the education sector, the learning outputs have been stagnant in Nepalese public schools. Likewise, the National Assessment of Students Achievement (NASA) revealed that there are 50 % below achievers at the basic level in core subjects like Science, Math, and Nepali. So is the case with English (NIRT, 2016). 48.5% are still having difficulty meeting the required minimal level of English proficiency (NASA, 2020, as cited in Khanal et al., 2022).

Similarly, dropouts are major issues across grades (1-12). Among 100 students in grade 1, 83 complete lower basic (Grade 5), and less than 25 graduate from secondary school (Grade 12). It aims to develop the national achievement of education and work efficiency in the global market and address dropout problems, the education system has been revised extensively. CAS was thought to be the solution for failing and dropping classes (Shah, 2021). However, it could not meet the expectations of education because Shrestha and Gautam (2022) concluded the teachers felt the process of CAS was confusing and boring.

The term CAS has been changed into 'Internal Assessment', allowing 100% internal evaluation for classes (1-3), 50 % for classes 4-8, and 25 % for classes 9-12. The recent curriculum framework has emphasized the practical assessment and revised the specification grids (MoEST, 2019). However, the studies by (Baral et al., 2020; Gyawali, 2021; Sapkota, 2023; Thapa, 2021) after the launch of the new curriculum argued that there are still some pitfalls with the assessment system and practice that need to be revised. In this vein, Baral et al. (2020) explained optional methods in the assessment framework are required to assess students' behavior, imagination, reasoning, soft skills, and fundamental abilities to make them autonomous in their daily lives. In an educational report, Thapa (2021) argued that the current assessment practice focuses more on learning than the authentic learning assessment. Similarly, Gyawali (2021) in his content analysis, criticized the assessment system of Nepal as he concluded that the evaluation system of Nepal for the secondary level is guided by theoretical and textbook instruction, written examination, and assessment of learning, which has not supported creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration rather it has created room for rote learning and increased dropouts. On the one hand, scholars like (Baral et al.;2020; Gyawali, 2021) argue for the authenticity of the assessment system in policy. On the other hand, some researchers (Sigdel & Sherpa, 2024; Thapa, 2021; Sapkota, 2023) argue for the practice of internal assessment.

Similarly, some researchers (Dahal, 2022; Saud et al., 2024) have explored the challenges in implementing the IA as it lacks training, classroom resources, and teachers' free time. If the problem persists, the IA will work as an assessment of learning, and the teachers will fill it out for the sake of formality only. The chances are the students will not develop communicative, cognitive, and problem-solving skills. The change in the assessment terminology will not work until implementation is ensured. When assessing the implementation of the assessment system, there is a dire need to get to know the teachers' understanding and practices, which matters in effectively adapting new assessment techniques as suggested by the new curriculum. Additionally, the previous studies by Baral et al., 2020, Gyawali, 2021; Thapa, 2021 have drawn conclusions based on the documents, contents, and reports about the assessment system not exploring the ground level. This study focuses on the issues of teachers' understanding of internal assessment based on their phenomenological experiences to fill the research gap.

### **Purpose of the Study**

My research aimed to explore the English teachers' understanding and practices of continuous assessment based on their phenomenological experiences in ELT classes at the basic level of public schools.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated based on the purpose of conducting the study.

1. How do the basic level English teachers share their understanding of continuous assessment in English Language classes?
2. How do they share their practices of implementing continuous assessment systems in their classes?

### **Delimitations of the Study**

This research looks into two areas: English language teachers' understanding and practices of internal assessment at the basic level. Subsequently, the research is delimited to the internal assessment (continuous assessment) and its contribution to summative and formative assessment in ELT class at the basic level. Similarly, my study is delimited to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which contributes to shaping the developmental phases of the students through scaffolding and collaboration with the teachers and peers.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter introduced a synopsis of the research. Additionally, it presented the provision of an internal assessment system for English subjects at the basic level. It pointed toward finding the insights, experiences, and practices of English teachers regarding the internal assessment at the basic level of education. It explained the reasoning along with the problem of the issue. Finally, it delimited the research to the periphery of the thematic framework.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This research explores the perceptions and praxis of basic-level English teachers on internal assessment. Various resources are used to compile the literature reviews from the database repository, such as Google Scholar, Eric, Research Gate, TU, KU e-library, and Lipzen. li, etc. The review covers thematic, policy, theoretical, and empirical studies. This chapter shares the conceptual framework and research gap, followed by a summary of the section.

#### **Historical Review of Assessment in Global and Local Space**

According to Green (1998), the Latin verb "assidere," which means "to sit with," is the source of the English word "assessment." and it suggests that teachers are expected to sit with pupils for some reasons to do "with" and "for" them. Simply, assessment is gathering information to examine something. It is an inevitable part of the field of education. According to Khaniya (2005), assessment is an integral component of instruction, and it is the act of examining how students have absorbed the material that their teachers have intended them to. Educating, learning, and assessing are interconnected and assume an extraordinary part in teaching and learning. William (2010) expressed that evaluation is a vital cycle in instruction. An appraisal is the most common way of collecting and assessing data on how students know, comprehend, and arrive at a conclusion about the following stages in the instructive cycle (Clarke, 2012). According to him, it is the process of gathering and evaluating information about a student's knowledge and capacity to decide on the course of study that will best suit them.

It refers to the general assessment of teachers' techniques or instruments to assess or quantify scholastic accomplishment and learning progress. The process of carefully gathering all available data from students, including their strengths and weaknesses, values, and attitudes, to better comprehend their knowledge, skills, and talents is known as assessment (Berry, 2008, p. 6).

Michael Scriven introduced summative and formative assessment, strengthening the distinction between assessment-of-learning and assessment-for-learning (Berry, 2008). Berry explains that assessment-as-learning was first used at Alverno College in the 1970s, creating outcomes-oriented assessment techniques in

higher education. Assessments are influenced by behavioral and constructivist learning theories. The purpose of assessment related to behaviorist learning theories is to determine if students have fulfilled the predetermined requirements. A comparison between the learner's final performance and the allocated learning targets will be used to decide. This evaluation perspective emphasizes the learning outcome. This type of evaluation is known as Assessment of Learning (AoL) (Berry, 2008). Constructivist perspectives on learning relate assessment to understanding the learner's learning process, capacities, and limitations. It also involves judging how best to support the learner's learning. This perspective, which is more in line with modern learning theories, emphasizes learning as a process. This type of evaluation is typically referred to by theorists as Assessment for Learning (AfL) (Berry, 1998, as cited in Berry, 2008). The AfL suggests aligning the evaluative process with students' needs and curriculum, reducing the strain of a single final exam and allowing multiple evaluations (Mathema & Bista, 2006). These days, school-based assessments, which are less formal, formative, progressive, continuous, diagnostic, localized, and teacher-managed, are better options for education. The assessments of learning, assessment for learning, and assessment as learning are presented below (Mathema & Bista, 2006).

### **Assessment of Learning**

Summative assessments are given after the course of study to certify and upgrade the learners to a higher level. Annual examinations, tests, final papers, projects, and presentations are some examples of summative assessments that can measure the standard of the learners and decide for the next level. They fall under the assessment of learning. Brink (2011) defines summative evaluation as a government-sanctioned test at the end of the academic session to decide if students have achieved the educational objectives. Similarly, it may be a test that a teacher administers to assess students' achievement and certify them. The summative assessments have some drawbacks since they do not support the students' learning. Khaniya (2005) argued that the three-hour-long paper-pencil test under the summative system could not measure the students' physical, social, intellectual, and emotional aspects. Therefore, alternative evaluation methods were invented to facilitate the students' learning.

### **Assessment for Learning**

Social interaction between students and teachers with similar learning goals is made possible by assessment for learning (Berry, 2008). Enhancing the learning of

both teachers and students is an inevitable characteristic of teaching and learning. It helps the teacher learn what worked well and what did not and prepare the lessons accordingly. It also allows the students to get updated on their achievements and informs them about the areas for improvement. Formative assessments are considered the assessment for learning or assessment as learning.

Formative assessment can be conducted using a variety of instruments, including journals, portfolios, surveys, oral interviews, and presentations. Classroom assessments should be as formative as possible (Ketabi & Ketabi, 2014). In the same way, formative assessment, according to McManus (2008) is the practice of giving teachers and students feedback during instruction. It also supports organizing the learning and teaching process to boost achievement. Teachers can use meaningful, immediate information from formative assessments as part of everyday instruction to re-teach or enrich with current student data (Brink, 2011). Formative assessment is practiced throughout the instruction to reflect, review, and get the way forward for betterment. Formative assessments provide teachers with information on how well their pupils have learned and a guide for designing their upcoming classes (Wuest & Fisette, 2012).

In the review, Ozan and Kıncal (2018) reasoned that the vital components of formative appraisal, like criticism, sharing objectives, and self and peer assessment, might be valuable in the students' developmental stages and ought to be carried out in their classrooms. Additionally, Chappius and Chappius (2008) proposed that educators and learners utilize the outcomes of formative assessments to determine what steps to take to encourage continued learning. Therefore, assessment for learning is significant in improving teaching and learning and engaging in deliberate and methodical tasks such as information collection, analysis, interpretation, inference-making, decision-making, and appropriate action.

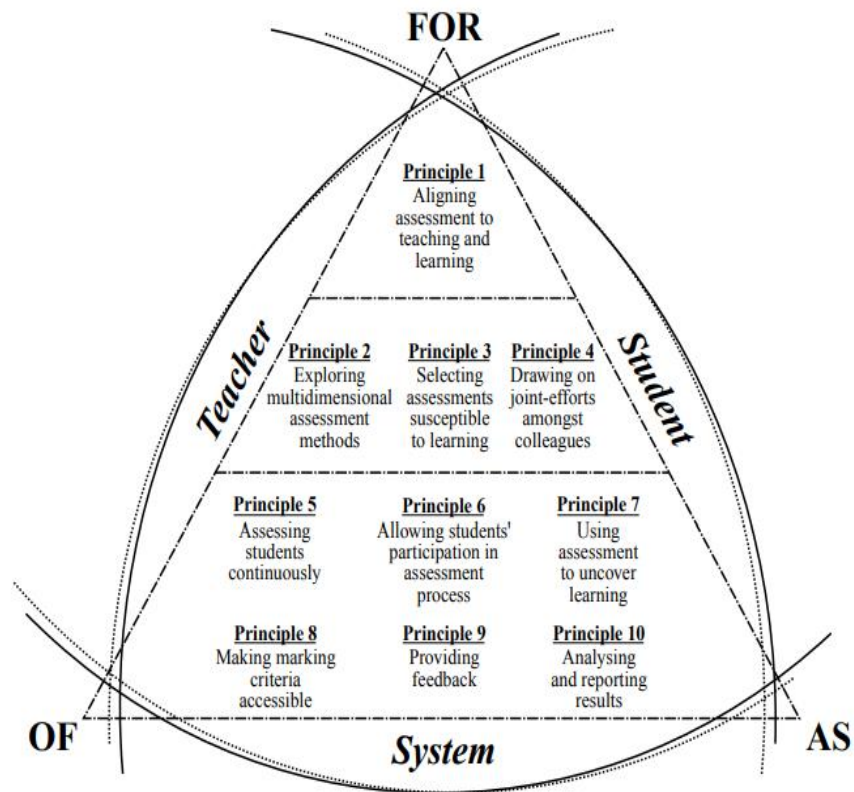
### **Assessment as Learning**

Assessment as learning is an innovative approach in the evaluation system. This seeks to enable pupils to learn and evaluate themselves. Berry (2008) stated that metacognition-related assessment aims to empower learners to become independent. Throughout the learning process, students must monitor and evaluate their learning and be conscious of what is anticipated. Their learning may be under their control to achieve the predetermined goals with the knowledge they have acquired. This evaluation approach emphasizes the student's active participation in the learning

process. Assessment as Learning (AaL) is the term used to describe this type of evaluation (p.11).

**Figure 1**

*Ten Basic Assessment Principals in AoL, AfL and AaL Framework*



(Adopted from Berry, 2008, p.14)

### **Internal Assessment as the Continuous Assessment**

Internal assessment is a continuous assessment that upgrades the students in higher classes through formative evaluation and enhances their soft skills and innateness (MoEST, 2019). It plays the role of both summative and formative assessment. Harlen (2007) stated that "Internal" includes reporting to parents and students, maintaining records, making judgments about which courses to take when there are options inside the school, and regular grading.

During the continuous assessment, the learners can explore and test their multiple intelligences and receive timely feedback from the teachers. The objective of the internal assessment is to prepare the students for life, facilitating them with some soft and life skills. Unlike the paper-pencil test in external assessment, the internal assessment includes the evaluation of attendance, participation, homework, project

work, reading, writing, tests, and listening and speaking in the English language in the Nepalese context.

The internal assessment is a form of continuous assessment. It is based on the principles of assessment for learning and assessment as learning. The main characteristic of assessment for learning is the development of multidimensional assessment tools and methods to guarantee the pupils' learning in collaboration with their colleagues. The main characteristic of assessment-as-learning is that it always involves students maintaining fresh knowledge through their interaction with the task and the evaluation processes that come with it. With assessment-as-learning, students actively participate in the evaluation process; teachers are no longer the only ones who provide feedback, and each student becomes a resource for self and peer learning. The continuous assessment is for 'assessment as learning'. Some of the examples of the internal assessment are presented below.

### **Classroom Based Assessment**

Internal assessment, also called classroom-based evaluation, was first used by the National Education System Plan (NESP) (MoE, 1971 as cited in Poudel, 2016). Chongbang (2021) stated Classroom Assessment (CA) is a micro-level evaluation that focuses on instructional decisions made in the classroom. The assessments that instructors and students conduct in the classroom as part of daily activities are known as classroom-based assessments, also known as continuous or formative assessments, since they are meant to be learning or for learning. Russell and Airasian (2012) stress, "classroom assessment is the process of collecting, synthesizing, and interpreting information to aid in classroom decision making" (p.3). They cover a scope of standardized and non-standardized instruments and procedures for social events and examine composed, oral, and different kinds of proof of understudy learning or accomplishment. Oral addressing and criticism, schoolwork tasks, students' introductions, symptomatic tests, and end-of-unit tests are a couple of instances of class-based evaluations. The significant goals of these evaluations are to convey constant information and to help instruct and learn.

### **Portfolio Based Assessment**

Portfolios are a deliberate compilation of a student's work that shows their development in a particular area. It is the cornerstone for appraising the new standards largely because portfolios contain student work completed over time (Wolcott & Legg, 1998). A compilation of works demonstrating a writer's varied range of work

for different audiences and purposes is called a portfolio. It represents the learning environment and highlights the student's accomplishments.

Portfolio programs often offer deferred assessment, allowing students to revise their work before the final assessment. Portfolios involve self-assessment and self-reflection, allowing students to control their work. Portfolios can provide a clear measure of development, such as etymological precision or the ability to organize arguments (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000). The students can make their self-assessments through their portfolios and develop critical self-awareness.

### **Continuous Assessment System**

An alternate form of assessment is a continuous assessment system that comes against the conventional paper pencil test and is administered throughout the academic year. It examines the students' progress during the course, letting them know about their progress and areas for improvement. Muskin (2017) stated that student progress might depend heavily on ongoing assessment. It illuminates criticism, remediation, or possibly improvement assigned to a student, a group of students, or the entire class as a developmental tool. It may also help develop ideas for related actions and determine whether a teacher or group of teachers requires professional development goals.

The teachers conduct continuous internal assessments to inform the students and learners regarding the benefits and drawbacks of instructional activities. The students have the opportunities for better learning with timely feedback and guidance from the teachers and colleagues. However, the provision of CAS was not practiced as envisioned in Nepal's national curriculum framework. Along the same line, Dahal (2019) concluded that the NCF's vision to execute student-focused education using CAS did not align with practice and was considered neither conceivable nor reasonable by the teachers. This originated from their doubt concerning getting thoughts from the 'West.'

### **Ensuring Learning through Assessment**

Assessment is vital to survey what is instructed and influences the approaches to learning and educating (O'Day & Smith, 1993). In this regard, Miller and Parlet (1974) argued that it was the assessment, not the teaching, to ascertain the pupils' learning. The acts of appraisal in the worldwide situation differ from one setting to another. Nevertheless, the motive behind the evaluation is to improve, update the learning, and upgrade the students. Test and evaluation data serve various functions,

including decision-making, feedback, and motivation, and they also aid in tracking student progress over time. However, if classroom activities are exam-focused or teachers frequently concentrate on helping students pass tests and keep a positive reputation. In that case, the assessment will be an assessment of learning rather than for learning. In this regard, Berry (2008) argues that the high-stakes examination negatively affects teaching and learning. If the students are taught to the test, learning frequently entails memorizing facts and repeating drills, which results in excessive and repetitive exams in the classroom that assess retention of knowledge rather than critical thinking and reasoning abilities (p.8).

In a similar vein, Gkogou and Kofou (2022) confirmed that current assessment trends prioritize the "what," "how," and "how" of learning, differentiated teaching methods, and ongoing and formative practices to provide equal access to educational opportunities for all students. It promotes independence, self-directed learning, and student-centeredness.

Alternative assessment methods include journals/logs, diaries, portfolios, observation, and peer and self-evaluation. It shows the trouble of learning a foreign language, how many have met their learning goals in that language, and what methods work well for teaching foreign languages. Second, the instructor may decide whether to keep running the program for teaching foreign languages. Therefore, Tosuncuoglu (2018) concludes that assessment is crucial for pupils' language acquisition. It is a crucial step in the educational process that aids students in applying their prior knowledge. It can also be used to categorize the instructional and learning activities used to meet the objectives and the assessments utilized to determine how well the objectives have been retained by the students (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 217). Therefore, teachers can plan and deliver lessons that encourage students to move beyond simple memorization to application, analysis, evaluation, and creation by using the updated Bloom's taxonomy.

### **Practices of Internal Assessment in Asia**

The practice of the internal assessment system results from the theory of learning assessment (Clarke, 2012). The internal assessment aligns with the authentic assessment for learning. It recommends that educators evaluate students' everyday activities frequently to learn about their areas of strength and growth in teaching and learning. Here, the practices of internal assessment at the international level are presented.

### **Internal Assessment System in Hong Kong, China**

The internal assessment is envisioned as significant in Hong Kong, China. To change the power dynamics between educators and educational authorities, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) decided to reform the English language exam by including a particular element of "school-based assessment" as the first step toward classroom assessment reform (Hamp-Lyons, 2006). China has incorporated a portfolio-based internal assessment system since then. According to Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000) portfolio-based evaluation can satisfy both instruction and assessment needs. A strong portfolio assessment is built around the curriculum and instructional values and changes as they do. According to Hamp-Lyons (2006) great portfolio evaluation requires abilities like presenting and facilitating workshops, self-evaluation, assessing student work, creating evaluation measures, deciding on portfolios, and applying educational information and subject expertise.

Similarly, feedback is crucial for the effectiveness of the classroom-based formative assessment (Hamp-Lyons, 2006). Feedback provides the roadmap for teachers and students to shape their performance and self-assessment.

### **Internal Assessment System in India**

The Republic of India's Ministry of Human Resource Development oversees the evaluation methods and frameworks. Educational boards, following the guidelines and requirements of the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) and the Center Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), and councils in several states and association regions used their processes to evaluate the students. Sarkar (2012) reported that in India, in basic level classes (6-8), 20% of the marks were allocated for internal assessment according to subject and instructor. The students were assessed based on the unit/periodical class tests, practical projects, activity-based learning, and case studies, with exceptions in the first term and exceptional circumstances.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (Curriculum Development Center [CDC], 2020) has incorporated summative and formative assessments. Regarding the formative evaluation, it explains that it is an ongoing process to track the progress of both teachers and students and provide feedback accordingly. It incorporates the assessment as an 'assessment for learning' and 'assessment as learning' for formative assessment. Giving imprints for developmental appraisal ought to be kept away from what it's worth to be utilized for the singular

advancement of students. Formative assessment includes various tools and methods like student portfolios, observation sheets, project-based work, and anecdotal records. The formative assessment guides the use of the checklist at three levels to mark the students' performance. The middle stage of the 5-8 class focuses on self-assessment to adapt, adjust, and decide on their learning strategies.

### **Internal Assessment System in Bangladesh**

In Bangladesh, primary and secondary school pupils are evaluated through internal exams, public exams, and ongoing evaluation (Ali et al., 2018; NCTB, 2020; Sultana, 2018, as cited in Islam et al., 2021). Formative and summative assessment methods are incorporated into the junior secondary (grades 6–8) English curriculum. The curriculum depicts the formative-based continuous assessment (CA) and finds that CA can assist students with yielding various advantages (Abdullah, 2010).

Internal assessment is a continuous intersection in Bangladesh. Student's perceptions and data should be gathered and assessed in each class. A casual task report, perceptual notes, a ten-minute retest of an activity to be prepared on a topic, an informal class discussion, a conversation between teachers and students after educational time, and numerous other such exercises should be assessed (Kamlesh, 2015). The internal assessment in Bangladesh focuses on formative-based continuous assessment for the ease and advancement of both teachers and students.

### **Internal Assessment in the Context of Nepal**

The internal assessment has gone through many reforms and evolution in Nepal. After Grade 10, the first official assessment of pupils' English language competency was the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) English test, administered in 1934 (Mathema & Bista, 2006; Shrestha, 2018; Wood, 1965). The SLC, currently known as the Secondary Education Examination (SEE), is managed through the Office of Controller of Examinations (OCE) under the Ministry of Education. It carries out the SEE analysis of additional more than 300,000 pupils annually. The National Examinations Board is the examination authority of the SLC Board. It manages the national exams in grades 10,11 and 12 (Shrestha & Gautam, 2022).

The SLC/SEE English test, over 85 years old, has undergone modifications, initially consisting of two 200-point examinations and later a single paper. In 1998, it began evaluating oral communication skills (listening and speaking) as an internal assessment earning 25% of points (Shrestha, 2018). The National Examination Board assesses reading and writing components. The recent curriculum 2020 has introduced

a hundred percent internal assessments for classes 1-3. The students are assessed internally based on their soft skills.

Similarly, in classes (4-8), the student's English language proficiency is assessed internally and externally. Both the internal and external assessments have an equal weightage of 50/50 %. The External examination of grade 8 is termed a Basic Education Examination (BEE). The local government administers BEE for grade 8 English, and passing it is required for registration in Grade 9. Schools also conduct yearly and terminal exams and formative assessments. The internal assessment system has a 25 % and 50% weightage in the secondary and basic levels of education in Nepal, as per the new curriculum framework for 2019. However, continuous evaluation in English courses has not been effective because instructors find it complex and time-consuming (Sapkota, 2023). Therefore, the evaluation system in school-level education is confined to external evaluation only, resulting in teaching to the test and negative washback effects (Shrestha & Gautam, 2022). Therefore, the internal evaluation system seeks for the authentic and reliable implementation.

### **General Challenges of Internal Assessment System**

Assessing the teaching and learning process is not free from challenges. Similar challenges are explored in developing countries. In India, some challenges are reported in school education. Evaluation has generally become mechanical and routinized. Evaluation is centered around estimating rote learning of content instead of estimating accomplishment of capabilities and learning results. Evaluation is a scary cycle that creates fear and prompts the naming and isolation of studies given the 'marks' they have scored in tests (MoEST, 2022).

Abdullah (2010), in the context of Bangladesh, stated that teachers and students believe that formative-based internal assessments improve learning opportunities that foster students' creativity. However, teachers track down difficulties in executing formative-based internal assessment practices. The head educators and other teachers shared challenges and difficulties with implementing CA, including a lack of classrooms, teacher reluctance, a lack of class teachers, a high workload, large class sizes, financial requirements, insufficient time to check homework and tests, a lack of CA manuals, a lack of CA training, and regulating (Islam et al., 2021; Wu, 2023). Additionally, uncontrolled class sizes and overburdened curricula may hamper the effective application of AfL techniques (Pradhan, 2021).

Similar challenges were explored by Dahal (2022) in the Nepali context. It was found that the teachers used the rubrics inappropriately in the continuous assessment which they perceived as challenging and time-consuming. Therefore, he suggested that the internal assessment system needs to be continuously monitored and supervised by the internal and external resource persons, and the teachers need to be supported by the school administrations for the successful implementation of rubrics-based CAS in school education. Similarly, Sigdel and Sherpa (2024) argued teachers are not given the authority or motivation to create and use the evaluation instruments that evaluate students' practical experiences, transformative learning, and critical comprehension. Moreover, internal assessment has not been accepted as valid, reliable, and standardized as the high-stakes testing.

### **Outcomes of Internal Assessment System**

Besides some challenges, internal assessment has some positive outcomes. Internal assessment demands preparing the portfolios of each student and updating their achievements in a specific time frame. Therefore, students are autonomous in recording their learning experiences, opinions, insights, reflections, and observations in the portfolios and taking ownership of their education. Regarding the strength of the internal assessment, Kamlesh (2015) concluded internal assessment motivates students to continue their studies, provides opportunities for improvement, and serves as a diagnostic test for educational counseling or reform. It helps students understand subject concepts and standards, gaining strength over them. Similarly, Islam et al. (2021) concluded that CA helps teachers evaluate students efficiently, recognizing psycho-socio impacts and devising strategies to help students overcome negative effects. It also provides teachers with feedback on teaching effectiveness, enabling them to adjust when necessary.

There are many benefits of continuous or internal assessment as it assists students with diagnosing their strengths and shortcomings. Some scholars have recorded positive outcomes of the internal assessment in Nepal in their research. Students' learned concepts can be recorded, showing growth and advancements and enabling self-evaluation, editing, and modifications (Luitel, 2022). Similarly, the students have positive perspectives on CA. The continuous assessment system facilitates students' positive attitude toward learning. So, students are inspired by themselves to participate in the class questions and answers session and self-monitor

their learning. Effective learning requires self-awareness and learning regulation, with internal assessment techniques supporting the same (Adhikari, 2023).

According to instructors, the primary reasons why students like CA are its effectiveness in enhancing students' learning, getting good grades on public exams, and concentrating on studies during the year. Furthermore, the teachers also talked about how continuous assessment is done through practical work, group presentations, peer work, class assignments, and oral questions. When guiding the CA, the teachers also consider the socio-psychological aspects of the students. The socio-psychological aspects include punctuality, patriotism, leadership, honesty, discipline, perseverance, and teamwork.

The outcomes of formative-based continuous or classroom assessment have empowered teachers. Classroom-based internal assessment provides teachers with powers (Hamp-Lyons, 2006). It is explored that in Australia, in the 1980s and 1990s, teachers were active in professional and personal development and took ownership of the assessment system. Bohora and Raut (2023) concluded that the continuous assessment system (CAS) works to raise student success. Additionally, it contributes to decreasing the rates of dropout and absence in class. CAS is essential for good teaching and learning. Each student's portfolio has been shown to significantly impact remedial comments given to students, which raises their learning level. Internal assessment procedures improved students' confidence, study habits, and academic motivation.

Although the internal assessment is outcome-oriented, it is not practiced effectively in classrooms. The study by Luitel (2024) revealed that teachers are practicing internal assessment as an assessment of learning rather than an assessment for learning and assessment as learning. The separation of assessment from classroom instruction is one of the flaws of Nepalese schools with CAS practices; hence, assessment is rarely used for formative reasons (Rai, 2019). Many schools cannot execute the Continuous Assessment System (CAS) as intended because they lack the necessary resources and conceptual clarity. Few teachers employ formative assessments at the classroom level to systematically guide, enhance, and change their instruction. Teachers' use of classroom-based exams has not resulted in anticipated higher-quality results. Furthermore, many children do not obtain the minimum allotted days for instruction and learning (MoEST, 2019). The outcomes of internal assessment in the Nepalese context have contextual variations.

### **The Concerns of Thematic Reviews in the Study**

An integral part of the teaching and learning process is evaluation, which affects both what is taught and how students learn. More recent trends support assessment for learning and assessment as learning, emphasizing continuous feedback, student-centred learning, and self-reflection. Traditional exams may concentrate on the assessment of learning. Alternative approaches to assessment can foster the growth of students' critical thinking and autonomous learning abilities and offer insightful information about their progress. Effective assessment procedures should promote students' overall development rather than evaluate their memorization of content. In contrast, students benefit from its promotion of autonomy, self-reflection, and continual improvement. Furthermore, internal assessment enhances a comprehensive educational experience by integrating socio-psychological and cultural aspects and emphasizing various learning activities that equip students for success in both their academic and personal lives. These concerns are the basis for teachers' readiness to adapt internal assessment with purpose as this study explores their perceptions of internal assessment.

Teachers also can benefit greatly from internal assessment. Teachers can use it to further their professional development and make real-time adjustments to their teaching methods. However, the evaluation system in Nepal is frequently criticized for being mechanized and emphasizing rote learning. This kind of evaluation can instill fear and low confidence among the students. Using continuous assessment methods is something that most teachers do not want to adopt or are not well prepared for. There are various reasons, like their heavy workloads, big class sizes, little time for assignments, lack of training for inability, and less preference. Additionally, schools frequently struggle with a lack of money, teachers, classrooms, and assessment materials. Even though it's essential to learn the teachers' perceptions of internal assessment and their practices in the real classroom, it provides some future directions for effective internal assessment use.

### **Policy Review**

English education in Nepal was introduced formally by the Rana Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Rana after he laid out the Durbar Secondary School in 1854 to teach his relatives. (NESP, 1971–76) recommended to include English as a subject from class four through to the undergrad level. The same plan suggested carrying out the internal English assessment in the final SLC examination. The pass marks for the

SLC were allocated 32 percent for admission at the higher level. The formal appraisal of students' English language proficiency began in 1934 after the foundation of the SLC Board in Nepal. However, the studies on the effectiveness of the assessment system concluded that the evaluation system of the English language had negative washback effects. In this regard, policies like those of the Master Plan Team (1997) agreed on the inappropriateness of the paper-pencil test. It stated that the theoretical exam based on a paper-pencil test is not sufficient to make an overall evaluation of the progress of the students. It further argued that the assessment neither assisted students with learning better nor assisted teachers with improving their teaching. Therefore, CAS was presented in the Ninth Plan period (1997-2002) to supplement the Liberal Promotion Policy (LPP), which pointed toward lessening dropouts and redundancy, especially at the primary level (Rai, 2019). The Tenth Plan (2002-2007) stretched out CAS up to grade five, and the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan (2007-2012) suggested spreading CAS to 6-7 classes. The CDC will create a framework for CAS in basic education, and schools will get logistical and technical assistance to implement CAS. DEO will conduct final tests at the end of eighth grade (SSRP, 2009-2015).

Later, school-based continuous assessment was developed by the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2014) to enhance instruction and learning and to accumulate school-based marks that could be added to final test results for certification and selection. As per Education for All (UNICEF, 2021), continuous assessment in schools seeks to decide on learning prerequisites and foster designated help for individual students.

The Curriculum Development Center (CDC) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) prepared a continuous assessment design that suggested providing ticks for different criteria like students' participation, attendance, project work, creativity, tests, and general behavior (MoES, 2005). The Continuous Assessment system aims to measure students' progress and enhance their content knowledge and soft skills. In reality, it is not sufficient to maintain and measure the level-wise competencies of the students as the teachers found it confusing and boring (Shrestha & Gautam, 2022). This means the students' assessment is limited to the school test and external exam, resulting in a negative washback on the English test for teaching and learning. In the same line (Shrestha & Gautam, 2022; Thapa, 2021) reported the CAS was not carried out in that frame of inception and spirit because of the lack of understanding, and teachers were happy with evaluating what had been instructed. Considering the insufficiency of the CAS because of little knowledge and understanding among the

educators, teachers, students, guardians, and policymakers, the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP, 2016-2023) proposed an upgrade of the CAS because of the illustrations gained from the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP). This permits an appraisal mediation methodology to be based on the SSRP's victories by making formative and summative assessments more advanced and student-focused. Over the past few years, some reforms have been started to enhance assessment. These include standardizing public exams, offering internal and external assessments up to the secondary level, and implementing a formative and continuous assessment system at the basic level. This has led to recognizing of formative assessment as a fundamental component of the teaching process. Giving teachers and students feedback on their instruction and learning may be a way to enhance learning (SESP, 2022-2032).

Therefore, the National Curriculum Framework 2019 is directed to assess language skills like listening, speaking, reading, and writing regularly and ensure that students achieve the desired grades. As a result, internal assessment in basic-level education is incorporated as a part of summative and formative (continuous) evaluations that bear the same weight as external evaluations.

The internal assessment system emerged as a new progressive and innovative approach to pedagogy. IA is a paradigm change from the testing, examination, and measuring approach to the assessment approach, according to (Gipps, 1999 as referenced in Chongbang, 2021). Chongbang highlights it also involved a move from centralized to school and classroom-based, from decontextualized to contextualized, from group to individual testing, from norm-based to criterion-based, and from culture-free to culture-relative testing styles. Internal assessment policies seek to give a more comprehensive and ongoing evaluation, individualized student treatment, and teacher empowerment.

However, studies have found that the assessment system has negative washback effects and is not workable because the CAS policy is not connected to the context of the teachers and students (Chongbang, 2021). The continuous assessment has some negative washbacks, as per the findings of some policy reports. Some researchers have made significant comments on transparency and consistency of continuous assessment. Especially in grading, it lacks transparency and consistency due to the absence of clear and simple rubrics (Sigdel & Sherpa, 2024). Unlike the policy, teachers lack the authority and motivation to create and utilize evaluation instruments that evaluate students' critical thinking, experiential learning, and

transformative learning. In addition to not granting teachers the authority to evaluate student performance using recently developed tools, the concerned authority has also not established the validity of presently employed tools except the paper-and-pencil tests (Sapkota, 2023). However, as Chongbang (2021) concluded, the authenticity of internal assessment relies on recognizing stakeholders in which teachers are regarded as key actors (p. 2).

The gap in policy is seen as it considers the internal assessment to be a part of summative assessment, and so is the case with secondary education. The Secondary Education English Curriculum (2021) has provided internal assessment as part of the summative evaluation (Saud et al., 2024). However, the nature of this assessment is both summative and formative (Basic Education Curriculum, 2020). Similarly, the discrepancy is seen in policy and implementation by the teachers who are not empowered to assess the students with authentic tools and trust.

### **My Theoretical Lens**

My study is focused on exploring the perceptions and practices of internal assessment systems that align with Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory (1978).

### **Socio-Cultural Theory**

The Sociocultural Theory (SCT, 1978) by Vygotsky assumes a critical part in the pedagogy and evaluation of second language learning. According to the Socio-cultural theory, language, society, and culture are interconnected. The interactive, communicative, and culture-reliant classroom provides conducive learning exposure to the student. In SCT, teacher-fronted illustrations (talk recitation, dialogic educating, and informative discussions), topics, ideas, and abilities are accessible to students. There are other support systems where teachers can lead individuals or groups to participate actively in classroom activities (Compernelle & Williams, 2013). This theory highlights the social construction of knowledge and the influence of cultural tools, especially language, symbolism, and technology. These resources can be used in formative assessments to mediate learning experiences and support students' meaningful engagement with the material. For instance, digital technologies, rubrics, and assessment portfolios can improve comprehension and engagement. Therefore, the sociocultural component helps assess the use of linguistic forms in language performance. Additionally, it evaluates the suitability of the language performance techniques and technologies adopted in a specific situation, considering the following

factors: (1) the culture, (2) the age and sex of the speakers, (3) their social class and jobs, and (4) their roles and position in the interaction.

Vygotsky's theory is centered on the idea that social contact is essential to forming cognition. Parents, relatives, friends, and society all play a crucial part in helping the students attain greater levels of functioning (Karki & Karki, 2024). The classroom is a miniature society consisting of pupils from varied backgrounds and learning abilities. The students should be asked to explore the knowledge in and out of the classrooms, discuss with their peers in groups, and present their ideas. The students need feedback and facilitation from their peers and teachers to prosper collaboratively. In this regard, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory is essential to a collaborative learning approach where students use social practices with mentors, teacher educators, and critical friends to strengthen their bonds with classmates and sustain their learning (Richards, 2008).

Internal assessment and socio-cultural theory are interconnected with each other. Teachers and peers collaborate during the interactive process known as assessment for learning (AfL). The AfL is based on Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective and is an interactive process where teachers and students talk about learning goals and how to enhance performance in both teaching and learning to achieve success. Vygotsky explains that learning stirs different internal developmental cycles that can work just when the child connects with individuals in his current circumstance and collaborates with his friends and More Knowledgeable Other (MOK). The key components of socio-cultural theory and their connections with the internal assessment are presented below.

### ***SCT is a Dialogic and Mediated Process***

According to SCT, cultural products, actions, and concepts structure human mental functioning, essentially a mediated process. Learning happens as an individual interacts with people, objects, and events in the environment and is embedded within social events. The study of how learners create a new language system with limited exposure to a second language (Lantolf & Bekette, 2009).

The children have varied physical, mental, critical, and problem-solving skills, depending on their socio-cultural, economic, and educational backgrounds. Not the same technique of assisting suit all the children to prosper equally. The teacher's responsibility is to diagnose students' distinct styles and abilities, identify ways to

improve by adhering to a time of guidance, and decide on the students' potential development by contemplating the outcomes (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, as quoted in Daneshfar & Moharami, 2018). Since the same teaching and assessment tool does not suit the students' varied learning styles, the teachers need to explore individualized teaching and assessing tools and techniques in the appropriate learning environment.

Internal assessments help students work toward their future potential by offering scaffolding, feedback, and increasingly difficult tasks in mediation. These assessments guide students from their current capabilities through their ZPD and toward mastering more complex skills within their ZAD. According to Lantolf & Thorne (2006, as cited in Daneshfar & Moharami, 2018), internalization is learning from social to personal. Although the learner participates in problem-solving exercises with others, he or she often completes the assignments independently. This is the way children's cognitive development shifts from social to psychological planes (Black & William, 2009; Rahmatirad, 2020). The learners need the right kinds of scaffolding, feedback, and mediation through internal assessment. Internal assessments facilitate students' mastery of various subjects by monitoring progress, promoting self-control, and coordinating evaluations with long-range learning objectives in dialogic and mediative procedures.

### ***The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)***

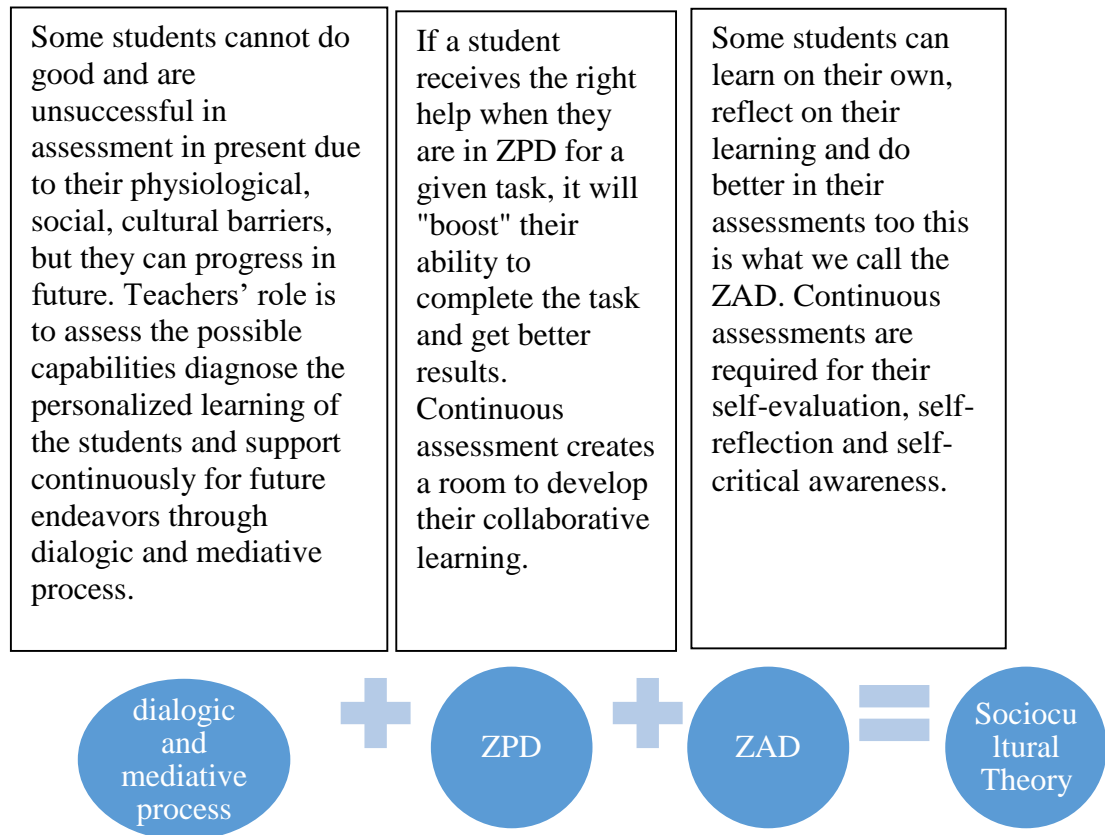
The prospective mental growth of the children can be termed 'buds' or 'flowers' in the developmental stage. The functions that are maturing and will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic condition are defined by the zone of proximal development. It is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). The teachers support using their students' zone of proximal development (ZPD) to advance to the next level of their learning. Shepard (2000) stated that Vygotsky's zone of proximal development concept relies heavily on dynamic evaluation, which determines what a pupil can accomplish independently and with adult assistance. Additionally, it provides the means to scaffold subsequent phases and creates precisely targeted teaching opportunities.

Internal assessment can assist in determining a student's ZPD, enabling teachers to modify support and instruction to suit each student's needs and promote the best possible learning outcomes. Continuous feedback is provided by formative assessment, which is crucial for learning. Vygotsky's theory supports the concept of scaffolding, offering short-term assistance to help students reach higher comprehension levels. Teachers can provide the right scaffolding depending on students' performance and needs with the help of effective formative evaluations. Therefore, Teachers should provide scaffolding or supportive activities to help students work through the ZPD.

### ***The Zone of Actual Development (ZAD)***

ZAD is the highest level of development in which the children become independent learners and accountable for their learning. It is the developmental stage of 'fruits'. The learners can accomplish the tasks independently without getting support from others. The first level is the real developmental level; it is the stage at which a child's mental abilities have developed and been established because of specific developmental cycles that have already been finished. Mental growth is described retrospectively by the actual developmental stage. Vygotsky's theories promote introspection regarding the learning process. By encouraging self-evaluation and introspection, formative assessments can help students better understand their learning styles and areas for development, consistent with Vygotsky's focus on learning self-regulation.

Assessments are pertinent in second-language instruction. The assessment should be planned to allow the students to develop their cognitive, metacognitive, communicative, critical, and cultural skills simultaneously. Generally, It is believed that the tasks that the students can complete in ZPD are expected to be done in ZAD. The goal of assessment as learning is shifting a child from ZPD to ZAD. The roles of those mentioned above in the three developmental stages of the assessment system are presented in the following diagram.

**Figure 2***The Developmental Stages in IA*

Vygotsky's developmental stages are inevitable for a child, and they need support in different forms. "Scaffolding" means supporting students as they pick up new ideas and progressively reducing that support as they grow more self-sufficient. Through peer interactions, group assessments, and feedback, teachers can facilitate opportunities for students to work on tasks that are challenging for them now at this time. Activities related to peer learning, like group projects, presentations, and peer assessments, are consistent with the socio-cultural theory. The cooperative learning atmosphere allows students to discuss and share knowledge and skills through their projects, portfolios, and presentations and facilitates the internal assessment system.

By highlighting the social, cultural, and interactive learning components, the implication of socio-cultural theory to internal assessment enhances the evaluation process. Incorporating scaffolding, peer learning, culturally appropriate tasks, and dynamic assessments into instruction can help teachers support the growth and potential of students besides supporting the students' knowledge. The internal

assessment is more than just a tool for measurement; it is an active component of the learning process and a fertilizer for the holistic growth of learners.

### **Empirical Review**

I have gone through various studies carried out nationally and internationally. I found a good number of research that explored how teachers and students perceive and experience the effectiveness and impacts of continuous assessment in ELT classrooms at the basic level. The findings vary from one context to another. The perceptions and practices of the internal assessment system in the global context differ from one level to another, from one state to another within the country and from one country to another. Some of the relevant studies for my topic are presented here.

In Saudi Arabia, “formative assessment is perceived as a promising opportunity. Any efforts to influence teachers’ perspectives will significantly impact their willingness to apply formative assessment” (Sarhan, 2021, p. 107). Similarly, Naraghizadeh et al. (2021) explored the correlational relationship between teachers’ reflections and their experiences of implementing alternative assessment techniques for formative assessment.

In their mixed method study, Saefurrohman and Balinas (2016) explored how English teachers used assessment for learning in classroom assessment. Some teachers designed self-assessment techniques, and some enjoyed the assessment tools from the textbook. The teachers provided verbal feedback for learning facilitations in the formative-based continuous assessment.

In a similar vein, Al-Shehri (2008), who included 49 participants (38 students and 11 teachers) from the College of Telecom and Information in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in his study on teachers' and students' attitudes toward formative assessment and feedback in teaching English for specific purposes (ESP), discovered that these methods improve teaching and learning processes.

Learning a language entails mastering the four language abilities speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Language assessment systems should focus on assessing language skills equally. Oz (2014) concluded that language skills should be assessed formatively since they help teachers give feedback and enhance language learning. He further reported that the language assessment is shifting from the traditional testing culture into an assessment culture aiming to inform students about their achievements.

In Bangladesh, Rahman et al. (2012) conducted a study to investigate the nature of assessing and giving feedback in English language teaching classes at the secondary level. It was discovered that the assessment system still follows the conventional method since the teachers assess their students' learning with close-ended questions and most students liked written assignments. In the observation, teachers were found to give verbal feedback in the classroom. Additionally, they suggested adding speaking and listening test elements to the national assessment framework.

Teachers have positive and negative attitudes toward assessments. In Korea, assessment has negative washback effects. Most examinees and teachers dislike the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) test. Junior students must sit for the tests for their higher studies (Choi, 2008). A similar case is found in the context of Nepal in the school following English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) policy. Likewise, Karki (2022) discovered that most of the test takers depended on the teachers to understand the questions, and he further stated that there was a negative washback of the exam.

Designing the assessment system depends upon various factors. Countries around the world have adopted their own ways and strategies for assessment. Some have emphasized summative, some formative, and some have integrated both as per the policy, need, and resources available.

Learners seem excited about the formative evaluation rather than summative evaluation since they are familiar with the tools and techniques of the assessment, and they get to know their progress and areas of improvement simultaneously. In a study by Maruf and Healing (2022), learners familiar with performance tasks and quizzes get constructive feedback from their teachers and work better.

Although internal assessments provide teachers with information on how well their pupils have learned as well as a guide for designing their upcoming classes, the teachers find such assessments boring and rather enjoy the paper-pencil test (Wuest & Fisette, 2012). Even in the international scenario, the discrepancies between the perceived purpose of continuous assessment and its actual practice were explored and found that secondary-level teachers in the Esan Focal Senatorial Region of Edo State of Nigeria had positive perspectives about continuous assessment strategies (Abejehu, 2016; Alufohai & Akinlosotu, 2016; Vjollca, 2019). Yet, they additionally had

restricted perceptions of what it entailed. That means teachers show a positive attitude towards internal/ continuous assessment but lack effective use in practice.

In certain situations, teachers lack a thorough understanding of the evaluation system, particularly the formative ones. In this vein, Modupe (2015) conducted a descriptive survey design consisting of mixed approaches. He sampled 160 teachers in Ekiti State, Nigeria, and revealed that most teachers were unaware of continuous assessment practices outside the classroom, and professional and non-professional instructors did not significantly differ.

In the context of Nepal, teachers did not show sincerity in continuous assessment. Poudel (2021), in his research, concluded that the teachers filled out the continuous assessment form for formative evaluation for the sake of formality only. This means the students' assessment is limited to the school test and external exam, resulting in negative washback on the test of teaching and learning English (Gyawali, 2021; Shrestha & Gautam, 2022). However, the theoretical instruction and examination do not entertain the students. Therefore, with the advancement of ICT, innovative and comprehensive techniques for instruction and evaluation are being suggested for implementation in the English class.

Chapagain (2005) investigated the impact of CAS on students' English language proficiency and found that the continuous assessment system was more effective and powerful than the conventional evaluation method.

Chaudhary (2021) researched the perceptions of basic-level English teachers on continuous assessment systems. Her survey discovered an absence of fair and strong assessments in schools. Teacher participants in her study agreed on a weak connection between assessment and learning. The teachers agreed that CAS reduces student class repetition rates. Additionally, there is a lack of continuous and normal input, proper training direction, monitoring, and evaluation.

Dahal (2022) researched to discover how teachers used CAS rubrics to enhance their teaching and learning processes. The narrative inquiry method was used to receive data from three participants in Kathmandu. His study focused on teachers' experiences with rubrics in continuous assessment systems and concluded that they were an interactive and authentic tool in the evaluation process; they brought uniformity and timely feedback. The rubrics could notify students of what is expected of them in their daily activities, their ability to foster learning and aid in self-

assessment, and their ability to act as tools for systematic rules with minimal bias in evaluation.

The narrative inquiry by Sijali Magar (2023) discovered that since CAS reflects students' learning progress and enhances evaluation, EFL teachers view its implementation positively. Projects, portfolios, and rubrics are examples of CAS tools that secondary instructors employ. Language hurdles, resource scarcity, and huge class sizes hinder the implementation of CAS, but teachers use these to enhance their methods and students' outcomes.

Similarly, the latest research by Bohora and Raut (2023) argued that the CAS is extremely viable in Health and Population Education to improve student's learning achievements. Arrangement of portfolios in CAS is important for remedial feedback. In addition to these, it assists in diminishing the absenting rate as well as the dropout rate of the students. However, insufficient resources (e.g., human and financial) are challenging elements for the effectiveness of CAS and should be addressed.

Saud et al. (2024) researched secondary-level English teachers' perspectives on internal assessment. The five ELT teachers from the community schools in Nepal were asked to examine their internal assessment procedures. They revealed that internal assessment is typically more of a formality than the embodiment of the assessment spirit. The size of the classes and the teacher's professionalism have a major impact on using internal assessment in the real sense of evaluating pupils and incorporating it into summative evaluation.

I discovered that those empirical studies focused on determining the effectiveness of continuous assessment and teachers' perceived experiences on continuous assessment at primary, secondary, higher, and university levels. All the studies showed the teacher's mixed attitudes regarding the phenomena. The synopsis of all the studies is that there is a discrepancy between perceiving and practicing the phenomena. CAS is better in many respects, but it is not successfully practiced. The perceptions and practices differ from one context to another context.

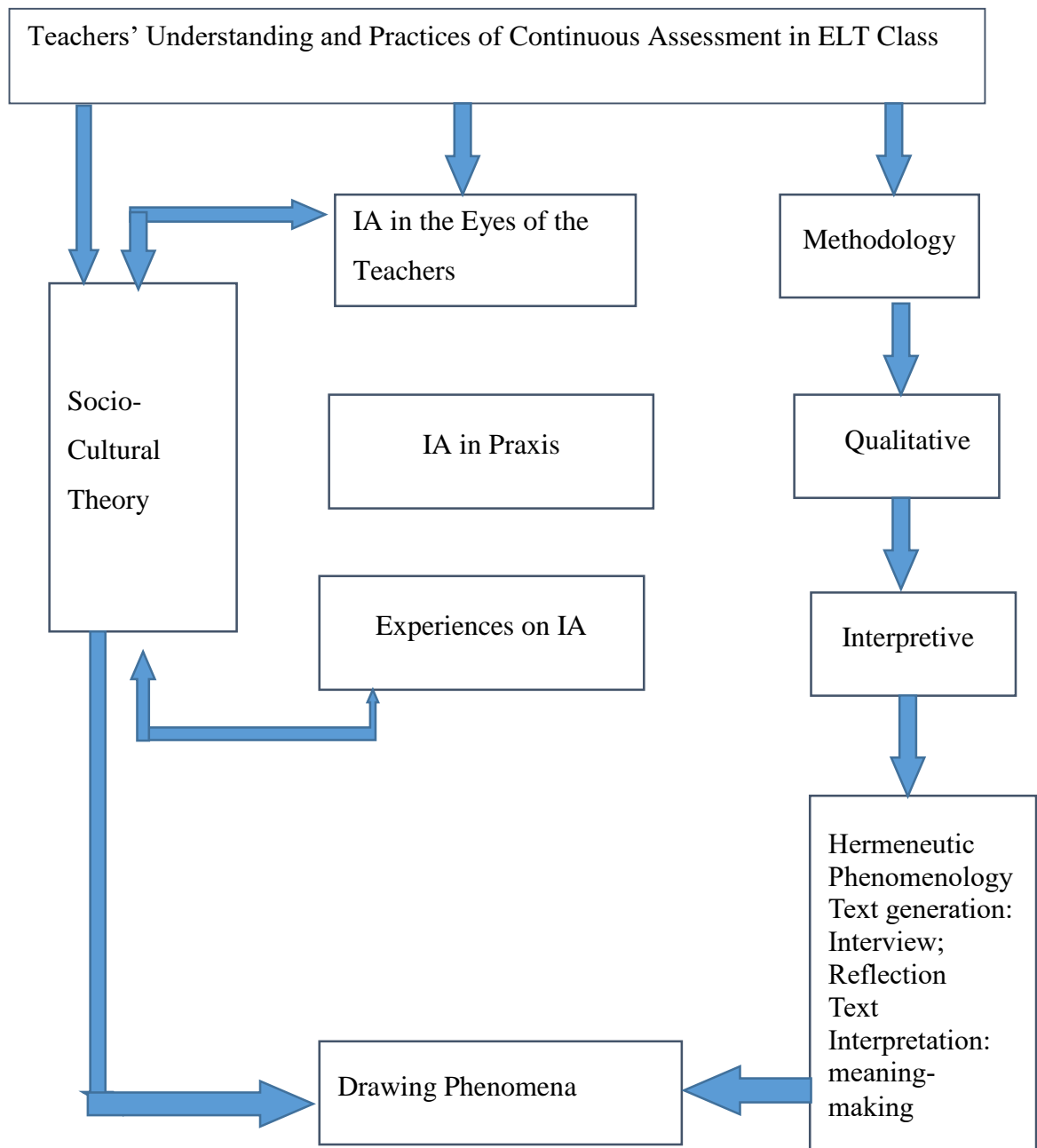
### **Research Gap Analysis**

After going through the previously researched work on the topic at both national and international levels, I confirmed that previous research studies were based on summative and formative assessment systems at various levels of education. In the context of Nepal, most studies (Chapagain, 2005; Dahal, 2019; KC, 2011; Rai, 2020) explored the perceptions, attitudes, effectiveness, and practices of CAS based

on the CAS system incorporated in the old curriculum 2009. Some studies (Bohora & Raut 2023; Saud et al., 2024) were done on IA of the new curriculum 2020 in different subjects and levels. For example, Bohora & Raut (2023) explored the perception of Population education teachers on continuous assessment. Similarly, Saud et al., (2024) explored the secondary-level English teachers' perspectives on student assessment.

Similarly, Dahal (2022) explored the rubrics-based assessment in general, not specifically to any subject. No studies were carried out to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of English language teachers at the basic level according to the newly introduced curriculum in 2020. As my point of departure is on the level-wise, subject-wise, and context-wise differences in terms of the phenomena, my study will bridge this gap by making the basic level teachers reflect on their lived experiences of the phenomena. The essence of their experiences will give the teachers, policymakers, and curriculum experts a way out. The findings will be applicable in similar contexts.

### Conceptual Framework



### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the studies related to my area from different perspectives. At first, I introduced the terms, such as assessment and kinds of assessment: formative summative, internal, external, continuous assessment, and thematic review. Then, I reviewed the educational and assessment policy under the policy review. I discussed the previously carried studies relevant to my topic on national and international levels and then analyzed the gap for my research. I also presented the theoretical and conceptual design of my study.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Here, I briefly talk about the overview of my philosophical grounds, research design, paradigm, approaches, research process, sources of information, intended field or site of study, procedure, methods, techniques, tools, data analysis process, quality standards, and the ethical considerations that I adopt throughout my research.

#### **Philosophical Considerations**

The term 'paradigm' was first coined by Thomas Kuhn in his book 'The Structure of Scientific Revolution' in 1992 (Saud, 2020). The research is based on the philosophical paradigm, the pattern of beliefs and understanding. It is the root of the research based on which the knowledge is known, interpreted, and viewed. Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that a philosophical design is a set of worldviews that directs the research. The philosophical paradigm deals with the ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological underpinnings.

#### **Ontology**

Creswell (2006) defines ontology as the study of reality. Realities are relative, specific, explicit and dependent upon their structure and content on individuals who hold them. Ontological assumptions are concerned with the meanings and constituents of reality. Guba and Lincoln (1998, as cited in Saud, 2020) state that ontology seeks forms and the nature of reality and knowledge.

Since the researcher needs to know how things appear and work, I also have my relativistic ontology, such as 'relativism is relative to the subjectivity. The reality differs from one person to another as it lies in the intentionality of the human mind. The socio-cultural contexts shape subjectivities, personal beliefs, and experiences. Knowledge is constructed by those who have experienced the phenomena. Therefore, I believe that the reality of the internal assessment (IA) at the basic level is relative to and dependent on the English language teachers living there. The lived experiences are relative to the teachers' experiences in their daily worlds.

#### **Epistemology**

Epistemology is the study of the ways of knowledge and how it is gained. Snape and Spencer (2003) expressed that epistemology highlights the approaches to knowing and finding out about the social world and seeks answers to questions, for

example, how do we come to know about reality and what constitutes knowledge? Knowledge is based on the dualism between mind and reality. Human consciousness and the world are not separable and cannot be studied in isolation (Moustakas, 1994). Similarly, Saud (2020) also stated that the human mind can construct everything through social attachment. He means that the social and natural worlds help construct meaning. I, too, believe in the essence of the realities extracted from the social involvement of the individuals. (Merriam, 2009) also explained that epistemological philosophy focuses on the meaning of the interrelationship between the two: the participants and the world. Therefore, I do not define the phenomena from the lens of its accepted reality but from understanding how the participants make sense of their everyday world (Moustakas, 1994). The interaction with the participants leads to the interpretations of the phenomena experienced by the individuals.

### **Axiology**

Axiology refers to the ethics, aesthetics, norms, and values influencing the research study. Values are the roots that guide the nature of the research. Individuals' values result from the reality that they perceive and reflect. The axiology of my research is value-laden, allowing my participants to express their perspectives and subjectivities regarding the phenomena. I believe in the first individual reports of life encounters, and Moustakas (1994) also expresses something similar. I focus on how universal experiences help understand feelings and perceptions and create knowledge. I accept that the human experience of the everyday world is a substantial approach to interpreting the world.

### **My Research Paradigm: Interpretivism**

This qualitative research is related to the interpretivism paradigm better to understand individuals on any phenomena through a systematic process. The social world should be interpreted through the eyes of the participants involved in the study. The individuals can interpret the social world through their own eyes and perspectives. Individuals' subjective feelings result from sociocultural and historical norms, and they develop a theory of meaning (Creswell, 2006). Like another qualitative research paradigm, interpretivism believes that varied, multiple realities can be integrated toward meaning-making (Moustakas, 1994). The purpose of interpretivism is to highlight how human experiences are extracted from the interpretation of the phenomenon. The essence is constructed through communication and interaction. The researcher's task is to make sense of the phenomena from the

perspectives of the individuals. Therefore, I have used the interpretivism paradigm to look into the perceptions and experiences of the English language teachers in practicing the internal assessment system in their basic level class (6-8). How they view and share their lived experiences has been interpreted in the findings without violating the essence.

### **Hermeneutic Phenomenology as a Research Method**

The term 'phenomenology' has been studied in different forms throughout history as it has been deeply rooted in philosophy (Merriam, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). The word 'phenomenology' was started from the Greek word 'phaenesthai', which signifies passage up or show up, and its development comes from phaino, a Greek word significance is to expose, to bring into light (Moustakas, 1994). Kafle (2011) defines the study of phenomena as their nature and significance, which is known as phenomenology. Phenomenology is a research approach that looks at a phenomenon from the viewpoint of those who have experienced it to capture its essence. Phenomenology aims to explain the significance of this experience in terms of what was experienced and how it was experienced (Neubauer et al., 2019).

To give a detailed account of lived experience, phenomenological researchers concentrate on how objects seem to us through experience or in our consciousness. The researcher interprets the lived experiences of a phenomenon as stated by the participants in the research. Christensen et al. (2010 as cited in Hirsch, 2015) clarified that phenomenological research varies from different qualitative methods in which it endeavors to grasp the essence of phenomena according to the viewpoint of experiencers who have encountered it. Phenomenologists focus on describing the commonalities among the participants experiencing the same phenomenon.

Hermeneutics is derived from the Greek word 'hermeneutic', which means to interpret. It comes from Martin Heidegger's (1889–1966) writings, who was one of the students of Husserl. Martin Heidegger laid the foundation of Hermeneutics in his books 'Being and Time' (1927) and History of the 'Concept of Time' (1925) (Kafle, 2011). It is primarily attributable to rejecting bracketing personal bias and substituting interpretive narration for descriptive narration (Kafle, 2011). Scholars like Max van Manen, Poul Ricour, and Hans George Gadamer later added to its value.

Hermeneutics is an interpretive process that focuses on historical and social contexts surrounding actions when interpreting a text (Gadamer, 2006). The observer is a part of the world, not bias-free, and understands phenomena through interpretive

analysis. He reflects simultaneously on one's own experience and the themes of the participants' experiences. A robust and nuanced analysis based on iterative cycles of recording and writing reflections considers how the data (or parts of the data) contributed to an evolving understanding of the phenomenon (Neubauer et al., 2019). The concept of the hermeneutic cycle explains how the process is understood and interpreted by considering the relationship and interdependence between the parts. The whole is incomplete without comprehending its components. Since the whole and its components convey the meaning, they are circular (Gadamer, 1975, as cited in Dangal & Joshi, 2020).

Hermeneutic Phenomenology helps to understand participants' lived experiences in educational settings. It stresses subjectivity, interpretation, and context and is adaptive and fluid. Researchers can use this method to investigate how personal experiences interact with larger social, cultural, and historical contexts. The insights from hermeneutic phenomenology apply to educational practice because they offer a more profound comprehension of educators, learners, and stakeholders, facilitating the creation of more efficient procedures and policies (Neubauer et al., 2019).

I have used hermeneutics phenomenology to explore the perceptions and experiences of basic-level English teachers regarding the assessment practice in ELT. The hermeneutic phenomenological approach helped me interact as a free inquirer and comprehend and interpret the life events of my participants, which is important in education to interpret the socio-cultural context and meaning-making. Investigating the lived experience is the main goal of interpretive phenomenology. It is crucial to acknowledge that people's realities are shaped by the environment in which they live; the researcher must comprehend that experiences are connected to social, cultural, and political settings (Flood, 2010). Therefore, I have interpreted the phenomenological realities of my participants based on their local context and culture, as well as their educational and social backgrounds.

I could collaborate closely with my participants to enquire about their experiences through their perceptions and practice of internal assessment in their class. My frequent visits and informal discussions helped build rapport and trust among them. My informal discussions and frequent meetings with the participants let me reflect more on the phenomenon and produce more genuine results. Similarly, as hermeneutic phenomenology requires, I have interpreted my participants' behaviors and interactions in conjunction with the social and cultural setting.

### **Study Sites and Respondents/Participants**

According to Moustakas (1994) a phenomenological study does not need many participants because gathering data requires an in-depth examination of human experience, and data analysis goes through rigorous steps and processes. Similarly, according to Polkinghorne (1989), the researchers should interview five to twenty people who have experienced the phenomenon. Boyd (2001) suggested selecting two to ten participants to get saturation on the phenomena. Using purposive sampling, I purposively selected six teachers from public and private schools. The three teachers belonged to private, and three belonged to public schools in Birendranagar Surkhet. In my pre-interview, I discovered that the teachers from the private schools did not have the assessment system as guided by the Nepal curriculum. They had their distinct ways of assessing the students. Therefore, my participants were limited to three English language teachers from public schools who had been practicing internal assessment. The teachers had also experienced the CAS according to the old curriculum in 2009. They could share their experiences comparing the internal assessment with the CAS. My study space was three public schools located at Birendranagar municipality Surkhet. Those schools were recognized and popular for their academics and extracurricular activities in the municipality. Therefore, I purposively selected three English teachers, including a female teacher who has experience teaching English at the basic level. Patton (2002, quoted in Creswell, 2015) stated purposive sampling is a standard to be sure to get rich information on the phenomena. A five-year-long teaching experience with homogenous participants helped me get a clear picture of the phenomena. My priority was for those who wished to sit for a longer interview and record their experiences on phenomena to contribute to the academic community.

I had pre-meetings, informal discussions, and ‘rapport building’ for ‘good data’ (Creswell, 2013). The venue for the interview was the natural setting, which means the periphery of the schools of the respective participants, where they were available at any time and could express themselves openly. Next, I could also validate the data by analyzing the documents like assessment forms, students’ progress cards, portfolios, answer sheets, etc., and I used my field notes to ensure the data was trustworthy.

I received the informed consent forms approved by the Institute Research Board (IRB), schools, and participants before proceeding with the interview. I ensured

the confidentiality of their names and information. The anonymity of the schools and the participants were maintained with pseudonyms. In the informed consent form, there was a notice of the reason for and methodology of the study. The participants were well informed about removing their participation at any time without a negative appraisal.

**Table 2**

*Profiles of Respondents*

Teacher (pseudonyms)	Sex	Academic Qualification	Teaching experience	Appointment Type
Karuna	Female	Master's degree	+13 years	Rahat Basic level
Dinesh	Male	Master's degree	+12years	Permanent Basic level
Mahesh	Male	Master's Degree	+15 years	Permanent Basic level

### **Data Collection Tools and Strategies**

The interview is the best technique for collecting data in any qualitative research (Creswell, 2006). I conducted informal discussions and semi-structured interviews. According to Magaldi and Berler (2020), the semi-structured interview is exploratory in qualitative research. An interviewer typically has a framework of themes to cover during a semi-structured interview. Nonetheless, an interviewer should prepare a thorough outline of the topics they wish to cover. Numerous academics contend that interviewers should often prepare an interview guide, a sort of unofficial topic grouping and inquiries that an interviewer might pose to various individuals in various ways (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, as cited in Ruslin et al., 2022).

A researcher can delve deeply into discovery with current directions given before and during the interview (Magaldi & Berler, 2020). Since researchers can modify the questions in semi-structured interviews according to the participants' answers, I asked probing questions in Nepali (Morse, 2015). Using Nepali language and open-ended questions helped me get in-depth information on the phenomena. For the data triangulation, I also incorporated the document analysis and observation notes (Fusch et al., 2018). While the participants shared their phenomenological realities as

perceptions, I needed to analyze the documents related to the assessment system in the new curriculum. Similarly, I needed to analyze the field notes that I made during my interview and visit to the participating schools. I collected the artifacts of the students, like answer sheets, project work, and homework, to verify the participants' practice. The data collection tools were interview guidelines, assessment forms, and students' answer sheets. I utilized semi-organized interviews focusing on questions that could go either way. Inquiries without a right or wrong answer permitted the members to investigate and elaborate more on the phenomena. I was concerned with asking questions about the perceptions and living experiences of the participants in integrating the internal assessment in ELT class. The questions demanded the perceptions, experiences, and practices of the assessment in ELT class.

According to phenomenology, the lead questions are based on the 'noema' and the 'noesis' (Moustakas, 1994). Noema and noises are interrelated in the phenomenological study. The noema encompasses the text's substance as it is presented to the researcher and the layers of meaning shaped by its historical setting. Interpreting the text from the researcher's historical and cultural perspective, including their preconceptions is the noesis (Gadamer, 2006). Hermeneutic phenomenology expands the scope to highlight the dialogical and interpretive quality of experience, elevating the concepts of noema and noesis to the level of a broader investigation into meaning, even though they still serve as a basis.

To gather the data from the interview, I first called to the participants to let them know about my purpose and their contribution to my research journey. I set the time to meet and have an informal discussion at their convenience in their school. I met each participant three times and had informal discussions in three rounds. Each round of interviews took 30-45 minutes. In total, I had an in-depth discussion on phenomena in about one and a half hours to two hours for each participant. In the first meeting, I talked about their childhood experiences on the assessment system while they were at their school to connect their past experiences with the present praxis. Then, in my second meeting, I gathered their perceptions, understanding, and attitudes on the phenomena. In the third meeting, I collected data on how they practice the phenomena in their real classrooms. With the permission of my participants, I recorded their voices on my cell phone and took some notes of their body language, gestures, and field visits, too.

Similarly, I took photos of their documents related to the IA for data triangulation. Although I was open to hearing what they had to say, I also included my own words and experiences to make myself more approachable and relatable to my participants. My sharing comforted my participants and made them feel free and open to express their thoughts and experiences.

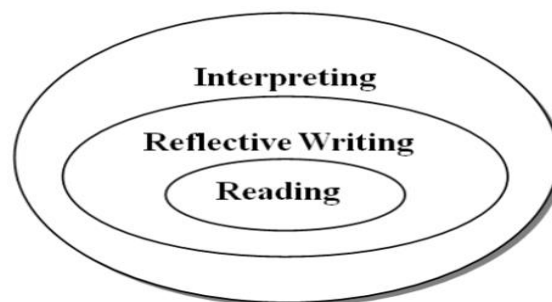
Later in the evening of each interview day, I transcribed and translated the data into English. I wrote reflections on each day after the meeting with three participants. I analyzed the documents and notes from the field visits, too. Then, I employed Van Manen's Hermeneutic cycle of data analysis. The hermeneutic cycle includes rigorous interpretation after reading and reflective writing (Lavery, 2003). The recurrent cycle of recording and writing reflections to produce a solid and detailed analysis is another term for it.

According to Gadamer (1975), Hermeneutics is a process of co-creation in which participants and researchers work together to produce meaning through a cycle of readings, writing reflections, and interpretations. Hermeneutic research necessitates self-reflexivity, a continuous dialogue about the experience while remaining present at the moment, actively creating interpretations of the experience, and challenging the processes that led to those interpretations. Keeping a reflective journal is one way to engage a hermeneutic circle that oscillates between the parts, and the entire text (Heidegger, 1927).

Finally, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), I transcribed the verbal data, created initial codes, looked for themes, reviewed the themes, and defined the themes before presenting the findings in various themes and sub-themes. Besides, I used some pseudonyms to present the direct quotes of my participants.

### **Figure 3**

*Hermeneutic Cycle of Data Analysis by (van Manen, 1997)*



(Kafle, 2011)

### **Meaning Making Process**

Interpretation of data and meaning-making is the primary function of research. I approached phenomenological data analysis. I conceptualized my interpretation process as consisting of the following steps: reading, reflecting, and interpreting; also, I included a reflection of my own experiences. Since my understanding of the process is derived from interactions with my participants, my role was to assist in its construction rather than impose it. As a result, as a phenomenological researcher, the participant's and the researcher's intricate process of experiencing and reflecting has produced layered understandings (Finlay, 2013).

Throughout this process, I repeatedly inquired about the essence, structure, and significance of the person's lived experience of this phenomenon. I, as a phenomenological researcher, tried my best to help them think, compile their experiences, and maintain an open mind and sensitivity to the phenomenon. Similarly, I tried to understand a phenomenon through the process of thematizing.

I listened to the audio several times and transcribed the files. Then, I repeatedly read the verbatim transcriptions to familiarize myself with the data. (Riesman 1993, cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006). After I became familiar with the data, I jotted down some initial ideas that interested me. I generated codes from that list of ideas to assemble all the individual data in meaningful groups. For this, I created the tables for each participant's transcriptions, colored similar ideas, and coded them. Then, I grouped these codes into more general classifications known as themes. I had possible themes that encapsulated the codes during this phase. Next, I compiled every pertinent data segment associated with every theme to concentrate the analysis on concepts rather than specific codes by organizing related data under overarching themes. I tried to create a clearer picture of my data. At this stage, I included all the themes generated out of codes as I sensed the significance of the individual codes.

Then, I rechecked to see if the coded data extracts for each theme formed a recognizable and consistent pattern and then I moved on to the next step which was defining the themes. Some sub-themes also emerged to explain the large themes. I separated two facets, perceptions and practices, in two chapters, with four themes and sub-themes. Therefore, text interpretation is a rigorous process that involves reading the text aloud, line by line, answering follow-up questions, reading the text again, reading the third line by line, and reading again (Van Manen, 1977).

## **Quality Standards**

The first-person reports of life experience make the phenomenological research reliable and contextualized. I considered qualities like verisimilitude, trustworthiness, reflexivity, and contextualization as quality standards, as Webster & Mertova, 2020) suggested.

### **Verisimilitude**

Phenomenological research involves three aspects: resonance with the researcher's experience, plausibility, and confirmation through like and other events. It is quality because the characters in the narratives should reflect and represent similar people in society. At least the story should relate to the positionality of people in the same circumstances. New insights are produced when the reader's and researcher's experiences align. Plausibility guarantees that the information reported is true and unrestricted like events document comparable experiences and validate critical events using a critical events model. According to Bruner's observation on verisimilitude, convention and narrative necessity rather than empirical verification and logical requirements drive narrative constructions to attain verisimilitude. It is not penalized to identify stories as true or false. I maintained verisimilitude through the thick descriptions of the phenomenon expressed by the experiencers.

### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness in qualitative studies refers to the data's dependability and accuracy. In phenomenological research, individual human experience and the influence of pivotal moments on our comprehension are highlighted, elevating individual differences to the point of expectation and value. In a narrative, persuasiveness, and coherence are directly related to trustworthiness. The data should ideally be as thick as possible, and the common themes or plots should be discovered. The analysis is conducted through hermeneutic techniques to identify underlying patterns in various story examples (Polkinghorne, 1989). I have maintained the trustworthiness of my research by carefully analyzing and thick descriptions of the interview transcripts and field notes.

### **Reflexivity**

It is recognized as a key component of qualitative research, and my work would be incomplete without some reflexivity. I began using reflexive analysis as soon as the research was conceptualized. I approached qualitative interviews as professional practices, engaging in critical reflection that increased my awareness of

the speech act and various linguistic choices and usages. Positional and textual reflexivity are the two types of reflexivity I have worked with in my research.

Positional reflexivity allowed me to position myself in the world and question my positioning, enabling me to see details missed during investigations. I could acknowledge my part (e.g., assumptions, positionality) in understanding the phenomenon of interest (Van Manen, 2007). Textual reflexivity is crucial for understanding lived phenomena. Reflexive textual practices involve reflective observation during production, using the southern hemisphere for author voices and the northern hemisphere for participant voices.

### **Contextualization**

Placing a concept, incident, or piece of information within a larger context to improve comprehension and relevance is known as contextualization.

Contextualization is modifying information or ideas to fit a particular cultural, situational, or environmental framework. I have verified the data in this study with authenticity. For the audiences to compare their viewpoints and environments with this study, I allowed the participants to use self-reflection and illustrations to gather rich data with the descriptions.

### **Ethical Considerations**

I considered the ethical issues in my research from beginning to end. I acknowledged the literature in the related field and properly followed the guidelines of the Research Board of my university. Besides, I kept the following things in my consideration to maintain ethics throughout my research.

### **Informed Consent**

I consider the right to get information about the research going to be carried out. Everyone associated directly and indirectly with the research has the right to know about it. I informed the participants about the nature and purpose of my study and gained access through gatekeepers or officials (Creswell, 2015). I got consent from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), selected schools, and participants before conducting the research.

### **Autonomy**

I did not allure or force them to participate in the research. Rather, I asked for voluntary participation from those willing to provide their time and contribute to establishing knowledge through their lived experiences/world views. The data

collection process was open for discussion and interpretation. My participants were autonomous in sharing their perceptions and experiences of the phenomena.

### **Confidentiality/Anonymity**

I maintained the confidentiality of schools and participants with some pseudonyms. Similarly, I have kept the data transcriptions safely locked in my drive. I assured them of their withdrawal from participating at any time they wished.

### **No Risk No Harm**

I made sure that my research anticipates no risk and no harm. I created a safe and comfortable sharing environment, ensuring them of their contribution to the instruction and assessment. Rather, I made the participants feel valued upon reflecting on their experiences shared with the academic committee. I safely protected the audio data and transcriptions on my laptop with a security password.

### **Sense of Respect**

I tried to respect the participants, audiences, and scholars from the previous studies. I provided equal values to all the co-researchers and respected the audience (readers), providing sincere information without altering the findings (Creswell, 2015). Similarly, throughout the study, I properly cited and credited the previous researchers, scholars, and publications with proper referencing.

## **Chapter Synopsis**

This part of ‘Research Methodology’ presented the philosophical paradigms like ontology, epistemology, and axiology rooted in my design. It briefly explained the methodological process of sites and sample selection for the data collection. It also explained all the steps for data analysis. It provided insights into quality standards and ethical considerations as well.

## CHAPTER IV

### PARTICIPANTS' UNDERSTANDING OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

This chapter explores the participants' understanding of the continuous assessment system in the ELT class at a basic level, particularly in class eight. Here, I have shielded the perceptions of three participants, Dinesh, Karuna, and Mahesh, from public schools in Surkhet. They shared their understanding relating to the IA as a CAS through their respective voices. They also expressed the challenges of IA. For the meaning-making of the research information: "How do teachers perceive the IA in the ELT?" I carefully analyzed and interpreted the data from primary and secondary sources (documents) and developed four broader themes and some sub-themes based on my participants' perspectives. The themes are as follows: (a) Assessment in the Eyes of Teachers, (b) IA as CAS (c) Challenges with the IA.

#### **Assessment in the Eyes of the Teachers**

Assessment has been recently revised in the new curriculum 2020 for the basic level. The newly introduced assessment in class eight from the academic year 2023 has incorporated the internal and external assessment system. Internal assessment is meant to regularly assess and facilitate learning. It aims to diagnose weaknesses and improve their learning achievement by providing feedback (BLC, 2023). The IA looks upon the assessment for learning and assessment as learning. However, my participants' views on assessment and internal assessment are parallel to the assessment of learning rather than the assessment for and assessment as learning. Dinesh stated *an assessment is a tool to measure the student's achievement using formal or informal means. It can be done both in and out of the class. It is done at the end of the lesson.*

Similarly, Karuna also viewed the same as Dinesh. According to her, *assessment is the measurement of whether the learning is achieved. Objectives are met or not.* In a similar view, Mahesh also supported the assessment of learning as he said *it is the evaluation to measure the student's learning achievement.*

From their understanding, it is shown that assessment measures students' achievement rather than timely marking the learning growth and guiding the students to their optimal level of learning achievement. It is a summative evaluation. In this regard, Amua-Sekyi (2016) stated summative tests are administered at the end of a

semester or program to gauge student progress or program efficacy. Assessing learning is the term for it, and it typically takes the form of external exams or tests.

Assessment and instruction need to align as an integral part of pedagogy. Assessment is meant to examine the learning achievement and facilitate the learning process.

To answer the question of why assessment is necessary, Karuna answered: *As per the system, we must follow it; it is needed for both teachers and students. The learning achievement of the students determines the performance of both teachers and students. Teachers' teaching and students' understanding are evaluated through assessment.* Her reasons for assessment go along with the summative evaluation. Summative evaluation is usually utilized after an educational activity and is intended to evaluate the learner's overall performance. It is typically used to make judgments for grading or identify preparedness for upgrading (Poudel, 2021). However, according to Norris (2012), the primary goal of language assessment is to gather data for planning language support programs that will help students reach higher proficiency levels.

Similarly, Mahesh's reasons for the assessment line up with Karuna as he replied *it is done to determine the grade and level and determine the students' weaknesses.* Teachers' perceptions are also guided by the experiences in assessment as students. In this regard, Mahesh recalled his days and system of assessment:

*We started our English language class 4. The teachers used to assign homework, check, and give term-wise examinations. But now, there are different tools to measure learning achievement. Now, the assessment is functional. We knew about our marks. Teachers showed us copies of the terminal examinations. We used to recite at our time, and if the familiar or recited questions were asked, we passed; otherwise, we failed. We were confused if there was a replacement of I instead of we in the question. We did not know the pattern. We worked hard with the limited sources, but students are not studying sincerely despite the multiple sources these days.*

The weightage of IA equals the EA in the new curriculum, and Dinesh and Karuna had the same perceptions regarding the provision of IA. They said *we have 50 percent for internal and 50 percent for external examination for class eight. We have headings for the internal exam like attendance, participation, listening, speaking, reading, and writing.* Karuna further said *36 full marks are for language skills. Four*

marks are allocated for attendance, morality, and project work. Out of 36, 10/10 marks are for LS and 8/8 for RW. However, Mahesh misunderstood the internal and external assessment systems. He shared that, *internal assessment is 40% for CAS in classes six and seven, and external assessment is 60 %.* However, in class eight, there is an internal evaluation of 25 % and an external evaluation of 75 %. Their perceptions revealed their updated status on the changed curriculum. Karuna was updated with the new curriculum and grid. Dinesh knew about the changed curriculum but was unsure about the criteria, so he explained the criteria by looking at the grid (field notes). Another participant seemed unaware of the changed curriculum and grid for class eight. From my field notes and discussion with the in charge, I discovered that there was no coordination between teachers and administration to implement the CAS effectively. They blamed each other for the delayed results of the first terminal exam. My participant Mahesh shared

*Our class coordinators prepare the results; therefore, I am not that attached to the CAS and am not well aware of the CAS. I have no idea if it is my fault or that of others. I have not been updated with the CAS of class 8.*

In my field visits, I learned that the schools led by knowledgeable principals were trying their best to integrate the IA at their optimum level, but the schools with no trained and knowledgeable leaders were lagging behind. Even in the interaction with the school administration and higher authority, it could be sensed that they, too, did not have a clear understanding of IA. The IA was not prioritized much.

I further got into the in-depth discussion to explore their understanding regarding internal assessment and its nature, either summative or formative. In response to the question, ‘What is internal assessment? Is it a summative or formative evaluation according to the curriculum?’ Dinesh responded that internal assessment is meant for:

*Measuring the habits, performances, and achievements of the students. Inside the class, we can take the internal assessment. Listening, speaking, terminal exams, and presentations are included in the internal evaluation conducted inside the classroom. It is a formative evaluation. Because the students know their strengths. Formative assessment can build the students' performance; therefore, the assessment is formative. Formative evaluation is better and more essential than summative assessment.*

Dinesh added that *formative means improving learning achievement and summative means grading the students*. He meant to say that it is both a summative and formative assessment. Adhikari (2023) affirmed that internal evaluation is an integral part of assessing pupils' learning progress. Furthermore, the term "internal assessment" describes the continuous evaluation procedure that educators create to gauge the learning objectives of their pupils. Karuna opined:

*It is both summative and formative; 10 marks are added to the final exam; therefore, it is summative. In Karuna's view, a formative assessment is done in the middle to improve the student's learning, and a summative assessment is done at the end of the grade to promote the students to the upper level. Classwork and activities are assessed in the formative assessment.*

Mahesh also had a similar opinion *formative assessment is a continuous assessment to give feedback, and summative assessment is for grading.*

To summarize their generic perception of assessment, the discussion showed that the teachers' perceptions of assessment align more with an assessment of learning rather than an assessment for learning and assessment as learning. They answered assessment measures the learning achievement of the students and teachers, but they are unsure about the formative and summative assessment types. Their definition of summative and formative assessment employed the assessment of learning and assessment for learning, respectively.

### **Internal Assessment as CAS**

The recent curriculum introduced IA as CAS, revising the ticks' system to a marks system. The previously introduced CAS was not implemented as expected. The teachers were giving the CAS marks haphazardly (Adhikari, 2019; Chongbang, 2021; Shrestha & Gautam, 2022; Poudel, 2016). In this regard, my participants also agreed on its ineffectiveness for various reasons. Karuna said:

*CAS was meant to improve the student's performance, but we couldn't do so. We were overloaded, so we filled it in the final at once. CAS was a failure because students got marks without judgment. I also gave the marks by taking references from other colleagues at my school.*

She differentiates between the CAS and IA as:

*CAS is meant to be a liberal promotion system, and it's for filling out the form and tracking the students' progress daily. It doesn't fail the students because the subject teachers provide CAS marks liberally. In our time, there was a*

*pass/fail system. In internal assessment, there is again a pass-fail or NG system. Unlike the CAS system of Reja giving, the internal assessment system is good. Before, there was the provision of giving marks only, not letting the students know how they were getting marks, but the assessment is fine these days, and the students can see their marks.*

According to the curriculum, IA should be included in daily instruction. However, for record-keeping purposes, the tasks on language skills should be done at least once during the timeframe of each terminal examination, and obtained marks should be recorded in the portfolio. For example, during the first terminal examination, two listening and two speaking tasks, one integrated task, two reading tasks, and two writing tasks should be asked to assess a student's performance as an internal assessment. If more than once is done during a terminal, an average mark for each assessment area should be made (CDC, 2023, p. 27). In this regard, I asked my participants about their understanding of IA and whether it is a continuous assessment system or not. Karuna stated that *internal assessment is a continuous assessment because it suggests that the teacher continuously assesses the students*. Confirmed assessment is a continuous procedure that gives pupils lots of chances to learn, has well-defined, quantifiable learning objectives, and is a systematic method for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data to gauge how well students are fulfilling the requirements (Suskie, 2004 as cited in Devi et al., 2024).

Karuna is happy about the IA as she does not have to assess the students daily and provide the marks for formality like in the CAS. As she said, *there are criteria with marks in IA; therefore, it is easy to measure the students' performance fairly and allocate the marks to the students. We can assess the students once a term. It's easy to keep the unit-wise record in IA at our convenience.*

According to her, CAS structurally differs from IA as it was introduced in the previous curriculum, demanding daily assessment with ticks under different headings. IA does not ask to give ticks, but we must provide scores once for each term. However, both aim to support the formative and summative assessment. Likewise, my next participant, Dinesh, opines IA is like CAS, as he explained; *it is a phase of CAS. There are some criteria to measure in the internal assessment, such as in the CAS.*

To give teachers a thorough framework for evaluating their pupils' English language proficiency, the Curriculum Development Centre has released an English specification grid. For a comprehensive assessment, the grid considers several testing

variables and student skill areas. Knowing about the curriculum and grid is a demanding task for teachers. Grid has suggested evaluating students' use of English language abilities in practical circumstances incorporating authentic resources and real-life scenarios. Therefore, learning the grid and implementing it in the assessment process brings effective results in language learning. The grid prioritizes the development of critical thinking abilities, effective communication skills, and language fluency in terms of student ability. It motivates students to participate in insightful discussions, articulate their thoughts clearly, and analyze and comprehend texts. The purpose of the new grid aligns with the theory of Piaget (1932). Education aims to create critical thinkers and independent thinkers, not people inclined to accept dogmas, accepted wisdom, or externally imposed truths without question.

The grid also encourages imagination and creativity via writing assignments and spoken presentations. There are some criteria under the internal assessment, including language skills, participation, and tests. I have also asked my participants about their understanding of them and how to assess those criteria as directed in the specification grid and Prelims of Internal Evaluation (CDC, 2023) for classes 6-8. The in-depth understanding of the teachers is presented in the following sub-themes.

### **Assessing the Listening Skills**

Listening skills come first and foremost as the receptive skill when discussing the four language learning skills. Understanding and reasoning are included in the listening capacity (Kapanadze, 2019). It is the most important communication, comprehension, and proficiency skill. Research on language acquisition abilities has shown that speaking (30%), listening (45%), reading (15%), and writing (10%) are the methods by which people gain language competency when they communicate (Coşkun & Uzunyol-Köprü, 2021).

By the end of the basic level, students should be able to comprehend and react appropriately to hearing in various contexts for some reason, according to the new basic education curriculum (CDC, 2020, p. 69). Therefore, it focuses on assessing listening skills, including some listening texts and exercises after each lesson unit. Teachers can decide the number of internal tests for listening. Facilitating the process of maintaining internal assessment records, it is recommended that teachers maintain a record of their student's performance on two different task types, each with four marks until the end of time. Portfolios should be used to keep track of assignments and students' performance. It facilitates feedback on their progress and adjusting the

remedial instruction accordingly (CDC, 2023, p. 22). Some listening tasks suggested in the grid are: 1. Listen and act 2. Listen and draw 3. Listen and answer 4. Listen and follow 5. Listen and tick 6. Dictation. The instructor can use recorded audio or their voice to assess pupils' listening abilities. The 'listen and answer' test items may be multiple-choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blanks, or matching (CDC, 2020).

Dinesh, as the first respondent, expresses his understanding of the assessment of listening; *the listening test evaluates the pronunciation of the students; it demands checking and making sure they can pronounce the same as the speakers in the audio.* Dinesh also revealed that *no listening is done even in the end; we can't give a listening test because of time constraints.* His perceptions align with Panthee (2024) as he confirmed that although listening skills are covered in the curriculum, they are not given enough attention because of a lack of professional development opportunities, big class numbers, restricted access to technology, and little exposure to English outside of the classroom.

From his revelation, it can be interpreted that the listening test is not done in practice. For formality, marks are provided to the students without the students conducting the listening test. Similarly, Mendelsohn (1994) affirmed that teachers overlook the importance of listening in improving communication skills, and many educational institutions do not adequately teach it. Unlike Dinesh, Karuna seemed positive towards the listening assessment as she elaborated:

*CDC has prepared the listening materials and included them in the textbook. It asks to evaluate whether the students can recognize and pronounce the words. For listening, links are on YouTube produced by the education department, and apps are available online after COVID-19. There used to be cassettes before, but these days, links can work for playing the listening text. I have downloaded all the apps used for the testing listening.*

Karuna seems well aware of the materials and resources available to assess the students' listening skills. However, she is unsure about the activities to assess the students' listening skills. *It does not specify the times. There are unit-wise listening tests. We give the test as per the time we take term-wise. Sometimes two and sometimes one for ten marks.* She showed the speakers and microphone she bought personally for listening and speaking activities showing her initiation and professionalism in the instruction and assessment process. Mahesh also explained:

*There are listening texts after each unit, and one listening test consists of eight full marks. The teacher can record his/her or students' voices or use the recorded audio for the listening test. Students can listen to the text three times as per their needs. Based on the text, teachers can ask questions like true or false, fill in the gaps, match concise questions, and test listening skills. Only one audio is played in the final exam, and after each unit, there are listening texts available. We can do it before the final exam. Our classes are not fully facilitated for listening. If we have the materials, it's ok; otherwise, there is a problem in teaching, listening, and assessing it.*

From the sharing of my participants, it was explored that they are aware of assessing the listening skills of the students, unlike the grid, they perceived to play only one audio and ask only one type of question. Similarly, they do not have the same opinion on activities to assess the listening or agree on its full implementation in class. The sharing of my participants matched with Saud et al. (2024) as they revealed that the teachers do not follow the spirit of testing listening as intended. Similarly, Ghimire (2019) concluded that teachers in community schools in Nepal have overlooked the importance of listening skills. Due to a lack of possibilities to listen to real tapes in the classroom, the pupils' listening comprehension skills are lacking. Listening skills are ensured when the teachers maximize the listening opportunities using various technological tools in the mediative procedure.

### **Assessment of the Speaking Skills**

Speaking is an important and productive skill. It demands creating speaking exposure in the classroom and regularly assessing students' speaking skills. According to the new 2020 curriculum, students should be able to speak effectively and interact with various audiences for academic, social, and personal objectives (p.69).

Aligning the goals of the curriculum, some speaking activities are suggested for the teachers to assess accuracy, range of vocabulary, structure, and fluency. The speaking tasks are: 1. Question answer 2. Describing picture 3. Describing people/place/object 4. Reading aloud 5. Talking about oneself 6. Speaking on a simple topic 7. Retelling stories 8. Reading aloud (p. 91). It is suggested in the grid that the teachers have to ask for any two types of speaking tasks of full marks, four for each, and maintain the record for evidence. Before speaking on the subject matter, pupils should be allowed to think about it. This way, 10 to 15 minutes per student

should be provided to test speaking skills. In this regard, I asked for the understanding of my participants, and Dinesh, in the first line, shared:

*As per the grid, we can ask to speak in class, take the oral test, and present in class. We give the marks later. We can ask at least three questions about speaking, like what your name is, what your father does, and where you live. I am not sure if the marks are 8 or 10. The pronunciation is checked from the speaking test.*

According to Karuna, *speaking is also a criterion to assess, and the grid says to give five minutes for a student to speak on a topic. The topics can be general. The speaking test consists of 10 full marks. Speaking tests should be done once a term, and the record for the final evaluation should be kept.* Mahesh perceived:

*The eight marks were allocated for the speaking test. Speaking tests include picture descriptions, speaking on any topic, self-introduction, etc. As per the situation, the following questions can be asked: A student can get eight to ten minutes to speak. The interview and picture description carry four marks, as well as the project work and presentation. However, my students have problems in speaking, silent letters, suffix words, subject-verb agreement, singular plural, and tense structures.*

Teachers had perceived the speaking test differently. This also explicitly expressed their update with the changed grid and their priority for the assessment. Their perceptions showed that they were not confirmed about assessing the speaking test. The full marks of the test, time allocation for a speaker, and the types of questions were varied. The two participants were unsure about making student's portfolios for speaking records. Portfolios are important tools for internal evaluation since they let the teachers and students know the progress in speaking and generate interest in learning. Similarly, Efthymiou (2012) explored that in the EFL classroom, student portfolios are an advanced kind of evaluation that can genuinely support the growth of speaking abilities and metacognitive abilities besides stimulating their interest in learning.

### **Assessment of the Integrated Skills (Listening and Speaking)**

The curriculum integrates listening and speaking skills and suggests asking for an integrated task of full marks four. Talking or conversing about the language function or actual scenario, such as situational role-playing, acting out, etc., is a part of this assignment. Teachers should build assignments whereby several students

converse (listen and reply) in response to a scenario designed to use language function exponents. This simultaneously evaluates the abilities of the two students.

Consequently, speaking and listening should be required for this assignment. The teachers can use the rubrics suggested in the PIE to grade students' achievement on this assignment.

However, the teachers were unaware of this task. They had perceived that listening and speaking skills were separately assessed in full marks 20; 10 for listening and 10 for speaking.

### **Assessment of the Reading Skill**

Reading skills are receptive skills that precede writing skills. After completing the basic level, the curriculum aims to provide students with the ability to read and comprehend various literary, factual, and graphic texts utilizing several methods or cognitive processes to generate meaning (p. 69).

Teaching reading aims to develop different sub-skills of reading. Therefore, different aspects like accuracy, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension are assessed in terms of reading. An English teacher can design tasks to assess these aspects and reading skills. The grid suggests asking any two questions for the reading test. It has full marks of eight. The amount of internal reading assessments is a decision that teachers make for themselves. The grid has suggested to include the following kinds of assignments that involve reading.

1. Reading aloud a text of about 100 words (for fluency and accuracy)
2. Reading comprehension and vocabulary (oral and written)

To assess the skills of fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, the teacher will select a reading text grade appropriate to the level and design four questions based on it, which will carry four marks. The reading comprehension test can be designed based on the different types of reading text: story, brochure, biography, notice, letter, news stories, etc. The question includes multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blanks, true-false, short answer, ordering, and more. Inference, appraisal, restructuring, and literal comprehension should all be included in the questions. Dinesh shared his perception that *reading tests measure the reading power of the students and whether they can understand the questions*. His perception of reading is similar to Anderson's (2003), as he stated the goal of reading is comprehension. Dinesh also shared that *a minimum of three questions should be asked from the passage or poem. If his reading is good, he can fill in the blanks,*

*match the following, or state true and false.* His perception of reading tests aligns with the reading comprehension of the external test. Sapkota (2023) affirmed that teachers provide instructional materials that are centered on exams rather than on enhancing students' learning.

The teachers have an incomplete understanding of assessing the reading skills in internal assessment; as Karuna replied, *I have not seen what we should test exactly in the reading test. I know about the external assessment of reading only. I give reading tests at my convenience.* Similarly, Mahesh did not know about the reading and writing test in internal assessment.

The participants perceived the reading assessments as external assessments, and they understood that they should ask only one type of question to keep a record of the reading assessment. This shows that the teachers have overlooked the reading skills of continuous assessment.

### **Assessment of the Writing Skill**

Writing is a productive skill that allows students to express their learning in written form. It is vital to assess the writing skills in language learning. The curriculum has specified some objectives to enhance and assess writing skills. It seeks to improve students' ability to write for a specific audience and purpose by helping them generate, collect, and arrange ideas and information while showcasing a strong command of vocabulary and grammar to meet fundamental communication demands.

Controlled/guided writing (Developing story, form filling, dialogue, description of table, graph, diagram, etc.) 2. Free writing (Paragraph, letter, application, news story, essay, etc.) 3. Writing project work. There should be two writing tasks: one controlled/guided writing and the second free writing. The types of writing should be the same as the types dealt with in the teaching-learning process during the period. The content, structure and organization, vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and punctuation should be assessed while checking the students' writing. (CDC, 2023, p. 26).

I wanted to know how they perceived the assessment of their writing skills. In my question about how the curriculum suggests assessing writing skills in the internal assessment, Dinesh said *we should first ask to listen, read, and answer the questions based on reading or listening. Writing answers are required for writing skills.* Similarly, Karuna discussed *assessing guided and free writing like letters, essays, and paragraphs. She explained that we could ask one question for the writing task, which*

*was eight marks. We can give the project work on the same topic taught in the class and provide the marks. We can record the marks we obtain and prepare the results for the final examination.*

My next participant, Mahesh, didn't say anything about the writing assessment in the internal evaluation. The other two participants had similar perceptions of the writing test but thought they should ask only one question instead of two in the grid.

### **Assessment of Participation**

Students' performance in teaching and learning activities and attendance should be used to evaluate their participation (CDC, 2023). Two marks are awarded for the student's attendance and performance in the teaching and learning activities. The internal evaluation suggests keeping track of their performance and attendance and then assigning grades based on the judgment. The marking rubrics are as follows. Two marks for 90% and above attendance, 1.5 marks for 85% to below 90% of attendance, 1 mark for 80% to below 85% and 0.5 marks for 75% to below 80% of attendance. Similarly, for students' performance in teaching-learning activities, some rubrics are suggested to assign two marks.

*Dinesh perceived that attendance comes first. How many working hours, and how many days the students were present and absent? For participation, three marks are given. Dropout rates are also evaluated in attendance. There should be a record of the students three times. Karuna said we should assess the students by looking at their activities in the classroom. Guidelines are available from the CDC, and we should assign the marks based on the performance. We should fill out the forms.*

*Mahesh said that the two marks are for participation, and teachers must keep the marks if the child is involved in the classroom. For attendance, two marks are allocated to 100 percent attendance. The students can get 1.5, 1, and 0.5 marks for 80%, 70%, and 60% attendance.*

The teachers have developed some understanding of assigning the marks for participation and record keeping. They are unaware of the rubrics for assigning marks for classroom participation.

### **Terminal Tests**

10 percent of the final exam's points come from the terminal evaluation. A record of at least two terminal tests should be retained for the external examination. The Curriculum Development Centre established a specification grid that determines the whole weight and marks for the written test in reading, writing, and grammar. If

the writing and grammar components are not covered in class or presented during the final exam, including them all together will not be required. The final exam marks from the terminal test should be converted into 10% and retained on file. If there are more than two terminal tests, the average mark of 10% will have to be calculated for the final examination or the grade sheet.

My participants understood the terminal tests well but had asked for the test in different full marks. The marks for the terminal test are 50 and 30 as per the instruction by the school administration. They reported that they show the answer sheets to the students and let them know their scores, strengths, and weaknesses since the IA is a formative evaluation.

### **Challenges with IA**

Even though the participants had a positive attitude toward continuous assessment, they reported some challenges to implementation. Dinesh shared his dissatisfaction with the IA as he viewed *it as killing the time needed to prepare for the external assessment. Students take it informally. They don't pay much attention to their studies. They are confused about evaluative tools other than reading and writing.* However, Dinesh realizes that he is also responsible for avoiding internal assessment tools. He expressed *that this is not the fault of the students. It is our fault. They are not accustomed to listening and speaking; therefore, they don't believe in listening and speaking. But we should do it.* Implementation of the IA goes along with the school context and system. In this regard, Dinesh further elaborated:

*It depends upon the school to teach and assess the students. According to the school's physical structures and students' attitudes, lesson planning and teaching-learning activities are carried out. The students have different perspectives and attitudes. Good students take it positively, while bad or noisy students take it negatively. Some think that they are asked as punishment. Sometimes, we ask questions to control unnecessary noises in the class.*

Dinesh's viewpoint is like that of Sapkota (2023), who contended that assessments can occasionally punish pupils rather than enhance their learning. Karuna and Dinesh view *IA as expensive for project work, and difficult to conduct in large class sizes.* One challenge to implementing CAS in a language class is the teachers' limited time and workload (Sijali Magar, 2023).

Mahesh also expressed his difficulty in the implementation of IA. Similarly, most educators expressed dissatisfaction over their lack of sufficient teaching and

learning resources. The availability of suitable teaching and learning resources impacted the integration of the curriculum (Kapambwe, 2010). Mahesh further expressed that the challenge with IA is created due to the students belonging to different settings. He shared *that our school is overcrowded with students. Even in classes 9 and 10, the students can't write ABCD well and complete the tasks. Teaching and assessing large classes from different socio-cultural backgrounds is very difficult.*

Mahesh meant the same assessment does not work for all the students in his class. His opinion aligns with Poudel (2016), as he stated an additional challenge with IA is making language tests appropriate for the local setting and the needs of Nepalese students. It entails considering linguistic, cultural, and educational disparities and creating culturally relevant and sensitive language assessments. The challenges with the IA are further interpreted by connecting with the theory in the following sub-themes.

### **No Orientation and Motivation for Implementation of IA**

Since the Internal Assessment is newly introduced, some teachers do not even know about the internal assessment. There are no more orientations and training sessions on the implementation of IA, as all participants agreed on the unavailability of the training and orientation sessions. Dinesh expressed that *we should be oriented but we have not yet. CEHRD has not given any training regarding this assessment system. There are many teachers without training. It's very challenging to implement AI at ground level.* Karuna agreed that she was not given any training from anybody else except for the oral orientation by her head teacher. She further said *we are not included in the outside training because we are mobilized from a local fund. Permanent government-paid teachers get a chance to do such training, but the internal resource person orients us. Yes, our school provides the forms.*

However, the assessment standards outlined in the English curriculum for secondary school students are generally known to the teachers. Nonetheless, they have been affected by the conventional method of assigning grades to the pupils' internal assessments (Saud et al., 2024). Unlike this, Karuna shared the teachers are still not updated in the recent assessment system as she revealed that *once, a teacher colleague told the students that there was a paper-pencil test with full marks of 75. But I said 50, and he asked questions accordingly. Still, some teachers are not updated with the curriculum.* Mahesh said:

*The training and incentives are not sufficiently provided. Teachers must travel a long distance, investing more, but only 200 Rs per day for TPD training is not convincing enough to attend the training. There used to be a Resource Person (RP) to provide the training for the primary level. They used to go to the village, gather their relatives, have tea snacks together, and complete a training package of 3 days in 1 day. They used to say that you are well known for everything and responsible for your work. Why waste so much time? The teachers received 600 Rs. In a day and come back. They segregated excellent, good, and average remarks themselves.*

The teachers accept that they are not practicing the internal assessment due to various circumstances. Mahesh concluded *that we are not able to practice the IA fully. It should be done regularly, but it's not done so in practice. However, we have not seen any forms for internal assessment training since the new curriculum was introduced.*

There is no training and orientation for all the teachers. The training provided is not enough to fully implement the IA in practice. There are not many alluring incentives. Similarly, Sigdel & Sherpa (2024) stated it is not that teachers do not know about various assessment methods and procedures; rather, they don't receive enough encouragement and assistance. There is much work to do; therefore, teachers skip training and internal assessment. Some teachers perceive that the varieties of assessment tools create authenticity and interest in assessment; however, they prefer paper-pencil tests to other assessment forms. Therefore, internal evaluation rarely results in an assessment for learning or an assessment as learning. In the same vein, Berry (2011) stated, “use a variety of assessment strategies and assessment tasks to allow a range of different learning outcomes to be assessed” (p. 99). Workshops and training are required for ELT instructors at the basic and secondary levels to prepare them to create test items and conduct formative assessments in the classroom.

Through better teacher incentive and assessment programs and reinforced teacher management arrangements, teachers will be held responsible for their students' assessment and academic achievement (MoEST, 2019). Organizing different training and orientation sessions, preparing mentors and rooster trainers in each school, inviting teachers and educators to interact and discuss, and making decisions are sought after in my study for the successful execution of assessment policy. It's because the input aligns with the output. As Krashen (1985) affirmed,

learning is based on input, interaction, and output processes. According to Liu (2015), some key elements of effective assessment techniques include their diversity, continual nature, and observation of the learning process and outcome for students. Therefore, there is a dire need to mentor, monitor, and motivate the teacher to successfully adopt the curriculum and assessment system.

### **No Resource, No Portfolio**

My two participants shared their helplessness and inability to incorporate the internal assessment in their classes due to a lack of materials and resources at their school. Mahesh revealed that *there is no sufficient training, and materials are lacking. Only a hard copy of the curriculum is available at school, and I haven't seen it.*

Similarly, Dinesh said:

*We can't do the listening test because we do not have speakers at our school.*

Similarly, Mahesh revealed the reality that continuous assessment has not been implemented fully. He stated *theoretically, it's good, but practically, it's not applicable in most schools. For project work, listening and speaking. If we have the materials, it is okay; otherwise, teaching and assessing are problems. I do not know if it is my fault or that of others, but I have not received the CAS forms to update the IA records.*

He further said *that if the teachers are provided with many incentives and facilities, they can give their extra time for homework checking, correction, and feedback; otherwise, they cannot.* From Mahesh's sharing, two issues were raised regarding implementing the IA: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation leads to self-exploration and initiation to get updated with the recent curriculum, materials, trends, and assessment tools. Extrinsic motivation, like the sufficiency of resources, curriculum, CAS forms, progress sheets, and support from the staff, also fosters the assessment process. However, from their perceptions, it could be interpreted that they did not even have a proper understanding of internal assessment as Dinesh had to look after the curriculum to explain the criteria of the internal assessment, and the next participant had shared the old system of CAS as he said, *internal assessment consists of 25 percent.* Therefore, teachers' professional knowledge is crucial to ensuring the validity and reliability of assessments.

CAS practice in Nepalese schools found a very poor situation; the teachers do not even have access to fundamental CAS materials like forms and files, and the task of portfolio maintenance is ineffective due to the teachers' limited time and resources

(Rai, 2019). However, one of my participants shared that she has been giving internal tests like listening and speaking using the speakers she has bought personally. This aligns with the theory of self-determination. Her happy expression and loud voice showed her confidence in the internal assessment. She was motivated to incorporate the Internet assessment in her class. She said *I think I am the best to incorporate the IA in my class, giving me a sense of completion and pleasure.*

As we know, instruction and assessment should go side by side to match the approaches of assessment, assessment for learning, and assessment as learning. However, the assessment did not take place due to the lack of resources. Therefore, Islam et al. (2021) suggested to fulfill the curriculum's goals and objectives, sufficient infrastructure and human resources are needed to implement the intended English language assessment method.

Within the socio-cultural framework, educational resources are viewed as social supports and cultural instruments that facilitate learning. These resources, which can be physical (textbooks, curriculum, portfolios, speaker, audio sound, technology), social (colleagues, students, school administration, parents), or symbolic (language, symbols), support students in engaging with and comprehending material in a way that is appropriate for their culture and context. Resources are essential for guiding cognitive development, giving learners access to knowledge in their (ZPD), and scaffolding their learning. In the educational process envisioned by socio-cultural theory, resources play a crucial role through collaboration, context-appropriate materials, and meaningful social interaction.

### **IA is Time-consuming and Boring**

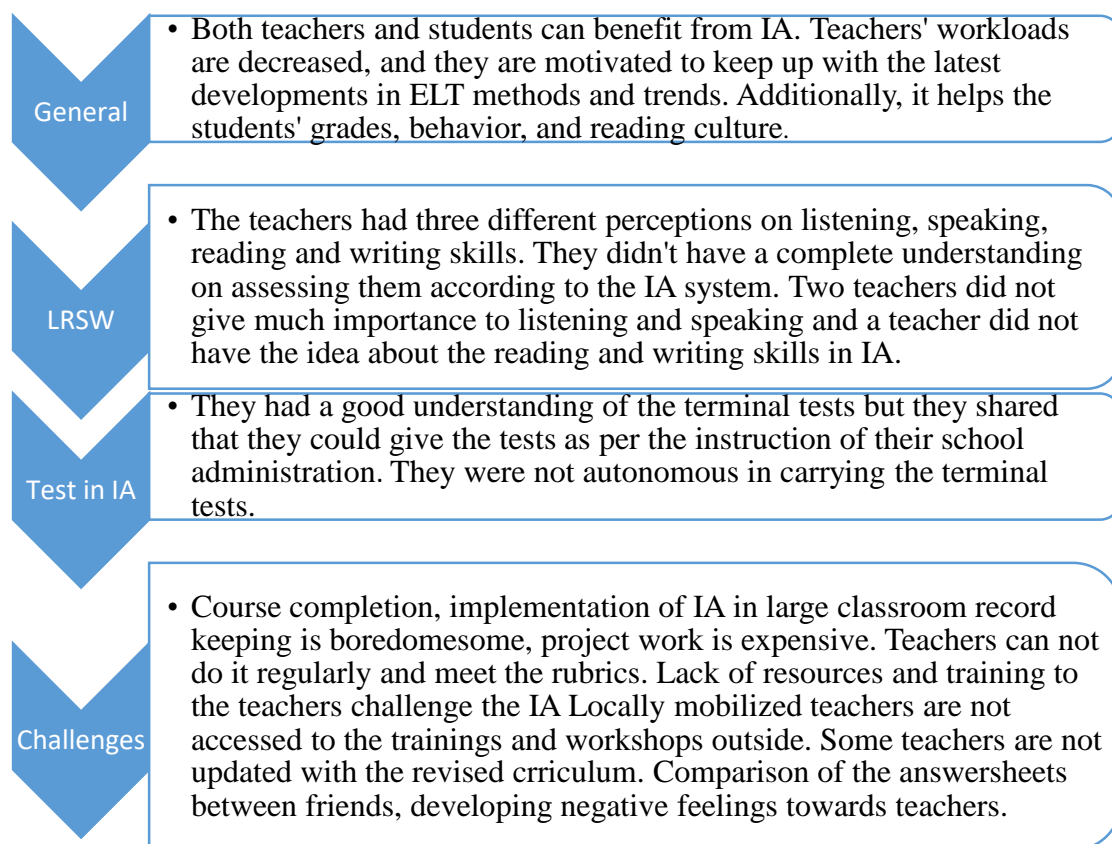
One of the challenges of internal assessment that my participants perceived is that it is time-consuming and boring. They explained that none fails in the practical exam. They have to retake the exam if they get NG therefore, it kills time. They also complained that they have a large class size, and the students are not up to the level of completing the tasks and cooperating with them in the teaching and assessing process. As Mahesh said, *there are more students, so it is difficult to implement. There has been no complete implementation or satisfaction with the internal assessment. Students cannot understand the audio. The language problem and lack of tense structures challenge the internal assessment.* As a result, the IA activities seem uninteresting and tedious even though they create maximum and meaningful learning opportunities in class.

Shah (2021) also contended that CAS is a tedious and lengthy procedure. In the same vein, Mahesh shared that *we have 80 students in a class, and it's hard to check the homework minutely. If we like to check the homework carefully, we can't check more than 2/3 copies daily. We have 5 periods of 55 minutes for each period. We must teach regularly during our periods, check those copies, and make continuous assessments. It's really hard to manage time. If there are few students, it's easy to make continuous assessments. It's easy in rural schools because there are few students around 10,15. But it isn't easy in our context.*

IA emphasizes social interaction, scaffolding, collaborative learning, and individualized support within the ZPD. Socio-cultural theory can be time-consuming even though it promotes rich, meaningful, and collaborative learning environments. The theory strongly emphasizes procedures that call for more time for introspection, discussion, and project-based learning, all of which support more genuine learning opportunities and deeper cognitive development. Even though these methods could take longer, the time invested in educational outcomes is very valuable because students gain knowledge and skills that last a lifetime.

Although continuous assessment ought to be closely linked to the processes of teaching and learning, many educators still believed that the CA required a significant amount of their time. Many teachers did not think they would complete the curriculum with CA (Kapambwe,2010). Acharya (2023) also confirmed that teachers are taking the internal assessment as a cumbersome and boring job as it requires filling up the portfolio of students, updating the progress periodically and facilitating the students accordingly. Mahesh perceived that the *individual teacher's record-keeping was burdensome*. Parents and teachers still do not completely understand why continuous assessment of students (CAS), introduced in 2009, is preferable over summative exams (Poyck et al., 2016, as cited in SSDP,2016-2023). Teachers have complained that it is hard to implement, complicated, and cumbersome. Instead of determining whether or not students have acquired the necessary abilities and concepts, the emphasis appears to be on documenting in a somewhat mechanical manner. Most of the time, teachers do not use the CAS to guide their teaching. The teachers should have explored innovative techniques such as self-assessment, peer assessment, and group assessment in large classes to check the assignments and give feedback.

The perceptions of the teachers in IA are summarized in the following figure.

**Figure 4***Insights on the Perceptions of Teachers on IA*

My participants generally had a positive attitude towards the internal assessment as they expressed that IA benefits both teachers and students. Teachers' workloads decrease, and the student grades, behavior, and reading culture are enhanced. The teachers had different understandings of IA. Two teachers did not emphasize listening and speaking skills; similarly, a teacher did not have much idea of the reading and writing skills of internal assessment. This shows that the teachers are not well-oriented regarding the new curriculum and revised assessment. The terminal tests are also administered as per the instruction given by the administration; therefore, the teachers are not autonomous in assessing the students as per their will and knowledge. There are some challenges with the IA. Course completion and implementation of IA in large classroom record keeping is boring. Some project work is expensive. Teachers cannot do it regularly and meet the rubrics. The lack of resources and training for the teachers challenges the IA.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I presented the perceptions of my three participants regarding the internal system and its criteria, as well as rubrics. I presented how they had perceived the assessment of participation, attendance, LSWR, and terminal tests. My purpose was to know if my participants had a proper understanding of the IA system or not. Whether they were updated with the newly introduced curriculum or not. Knowledge is believed to be power, leading to smooth execution and implementation of the phenomena.

## CHAPTER V

### PRACTICE OF INTERNAL ASSESSMENT IN ELT CLASS

Here, I have mentioned the practices of internal assessment in the English language classroom of my three participants. I have presented the practices under some themes and subthemes, such as a. Assessment Practice of Various Criteria in ELT class b. Record Keeping of the IA marks, c. Learning Opportunities with the IA d. Theoretical Connections to Internal Assessment

Assessment tools determine the process and outcomes of language learning. to raise language proficiency and instruction as well as to examine or evaluate students' academic performance (Phongsirikul, 2018). Teachers play significant roles in employing the tools and techniques compatible with the assessment's objectives and the school context's feasibility. In this regard, I have asked my participants what assessment tools are in practice in their classrooms. All three participants had similar practices in internal assessment. They assessed the attendance, language skills, and terminal tests and maintained the records. Dinesh shared:

*We have both internal and external examinations. We give the exam three times but irregularly. The subject teachers give other tests randomly. For internal assessment, we evaluate the criteria like attendance, participation, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. We skip some activities and focus on exam-related activities like reading, guided writing, and free writing. Therefore, we ask the students to practice using the practice book (BLE set).*

From his sharing, it can be interpreted that the teachers are not taking the internal assessment criteria as anticipated, and their teaching-learning process aligns with the external evaluation of paper-pencil tests. The purpose of reading English is to enable students to pass this subject in written tests. According to Sapkota (2023), most teachers are not using the various tools available for both assessments. Teachers use paper-and-pencil assessments to evaluate their students because they opt for their comfort zones.

*Karuna said some forms include attendance, participation, homework, listening, and speaking skills. I give exams before each terminal exam and keep a record of the marks. The level of my students is very low. I have to teach tuition*

*classes to enable them to pass. They recite without comprehending and copying in the exam.*

It shows that the students lack comprehension and creativity in English. Students do not get good marks in English; getting a passing mark is challenging.

### **Practice of Assessing Listening Skills**

Assessing the listening needs much preparation beforehand. Teachers need resources like sound systems, speakers, audio files, question sets and worksheets, and record-keeping files. Therefore, all the teachers want to avoid it as they regard it as unimportant and time-consuming too. Dinesh said *to listen, we can't as we don't have the resources in our class*. However, listening must be done regularly as part of teaching-learning activities. It depends upon the teachers how they benefit from the resources available to them. Karuna said:

*For listening, I play the listening audio included in the textbook. I use speakers available at school. I prepare the questions and give the worksheets to the students. I do a listening test 2 times before terminal exams. There are unit-wise listening tests. I give the test term-wise. Sometimes two and sometimes one for ten marks. I develop the questions based on the book. Or by listening to the audio, I can make the questions like fill in the blanks. Then, on test day, I first distributed the worksheets, play the audio three or more than three times unless the students understand and feel confident enough to do the tasks.*

Mahesh had a different practice. As he said, *once in a final exam, I give a listening exam for eight marks by playing the audio text 2-3 times. I ask short questions, true-false, matching, etc.* Moreover, he disclosed the reality that *on these days, we provide practical marks without executing the exams. There are defects in the languages, even in the native language, but we provide 25/25 in the practical exam. We lack listening and speaking skills at present.*

His sharing aligned with the research by Ghimire (2019) and, Rana and Rana, (2019). They concluded that the teachers in public schools do not focus much on listening ability as they believe that teaching listening is not necessary for the examination. Without using formal examinations, the listening test's scores are determined by random evaluation. This results from students' unwillingness to use their speaking and listening skills and teachers' negligence in teaching them (Rana &

Rana, 2019). The teachers do not incorporate all the speaking and listening exercises specified in the textbook and are solely concerned with the test.

Karuna revealed that *there are listening activities after each lesson, but I am exam-oriented. I take the listening test before the term exam.* Acharya (2023) explored that the classroom instructions are test-oriented as teachers run behind the course completion allocated for the term and they waste much time and energy in terminal tests of the internal assessment. Parallel to Karuna, Mahesh also shared *I do not have the time and space to conduct the listening. Listening should be done continuously, but I cannot do it. Honestly, the class has no provision for listening and speaking activities. Only before the final exam, I can conduct one listening exam.* Similarly, Vani and Naik (2023) explored how teachers emphasize improving students' reading and writing abilities more than their speaking and listening abilities. The statistical results verified that the NASA 2020 listening exam was challenging for the test takers. This can be a result of the conventional emphasis in schools on reading and writing rather than speaking and listening (Khanal et al., 2022). A similar reality was revealed in the research by Saud et al. (2024), where the teachers only recorded the marks from the final test. They do not adhere to the grid chart's instructions for measuring listening skills; instead, they give each student a pass mark to boost their grade.

### **Practice of Assessing Speaking Skills**

Assessing speaking is important to check the students' pronunciation, fluency, accuracy, and confidence in the English language. The latest curriculum emphasizes providing much time and exposure for enhancing speaking skills through a communicative and learner-centered teaching approach. To my question about the practice of speaking assessment, *Dinesh said that for speaking, we ask to speak in class. I ask the oral test and presentation in class. I give the marks later.* However, it was not found in the record. It showed the discrepancy between saying and doing.

Pre-information is expected to be used in the practical exam, such as the listening and speaking tests, so that the students are mentally ready to take the test in the second language. My participant, Karuna, agreed that they informed the students before the test, and she expressed how she conducted the speaking test.

*There are lots of topics to discuss when speaking. According to the roll number, I ask the students to talk about general topics like describing their English teacher, describing their class, etc. I need a week to complete speaking in my class. A*

*student is given 2-5 minutes each for 72 students. Similarly, for speaking, she gives 1 week in total. 2-3 minutes for each student. She can do 15- 20 students a day. She feels it's quite difficult because of the large class size. She further explained: "We keep the marks slip front and inform the students about their speaking test. We write instructions on the board and call the students roll number-wise. The contents for speaking are, for example, describe yourself, your classroom, school, father, mother, etc. Contents are wide text like stories, news, and reports like reading."*

The teachers' assessment practices disclosed that none followed the exact essence of speaking. A teacher had done half a job, and two teachers did not have the record system to present on my field visit. Unless we have documented the speaking activities and marks provided, we cannot say we have incorporated the assessment system accurately. In such a case, the internal assessment of speaking abilities as part of the summative evaluation for BEE has disregarded the theoretical constructs of assessment for learning, assessment as learning, and assessment of learning. Because of such practices in the classroom, the speaking test was difficult for the test takers in the national assessment of students' achievement. NASA (2020, as cited in Khanal et al.,2022) reported over 50% of the total examinees had received a score of zero or one from three speaking tasks

### **Practice of Assessing Reading Skills**

Reading is assessed differently by the teachers. Karuna said *I give the reading tests and give marks in the diary. Reading activities help segregate the levels of my students. My students are very poor in reading. I provide rezas as,1,2,3,4,5 and give the marks under the reading heading. They are asked to read the lesson. If anyone did not start reading, don't get any marks. The students don't reach up to level 4 and 5. In English medium, most students can do it, but in Nepali, students can't utter the words. Who knows, they get ticks, but who does not know they get cross? We know their level when they come in front. Some become speechless when they come in front and return to their seat. Assessing reading becomes very quick.* Dinesh asked his students to read the lesson aloud and assign the marks based on their reading. However, I could not see the documented file for it. The sharing of the reading assessment from my participants shows that they do not have the proper understanding of assessing the reading. It is because they assessed the reading aloud only, which helps check their pronunciation, clarity, and speaking. However, they failed to assess the student's reading comprehension, which is suggested by the curriculum. Mahesh does not know

how to assess reading and does not do anything about it. Half of the grade eight students cannot read the text for the basic and surface meaning of the text. They received below the national average (NASA, 2020). NASA indicates that they can understand information expressly stated in a single reading passage. Therefore, students should be taught to be familiar with all forms of reading comprehension, including literal comprehension, reorganization, inference, evaluation, and reflection, starting with elementary school reading assessments.

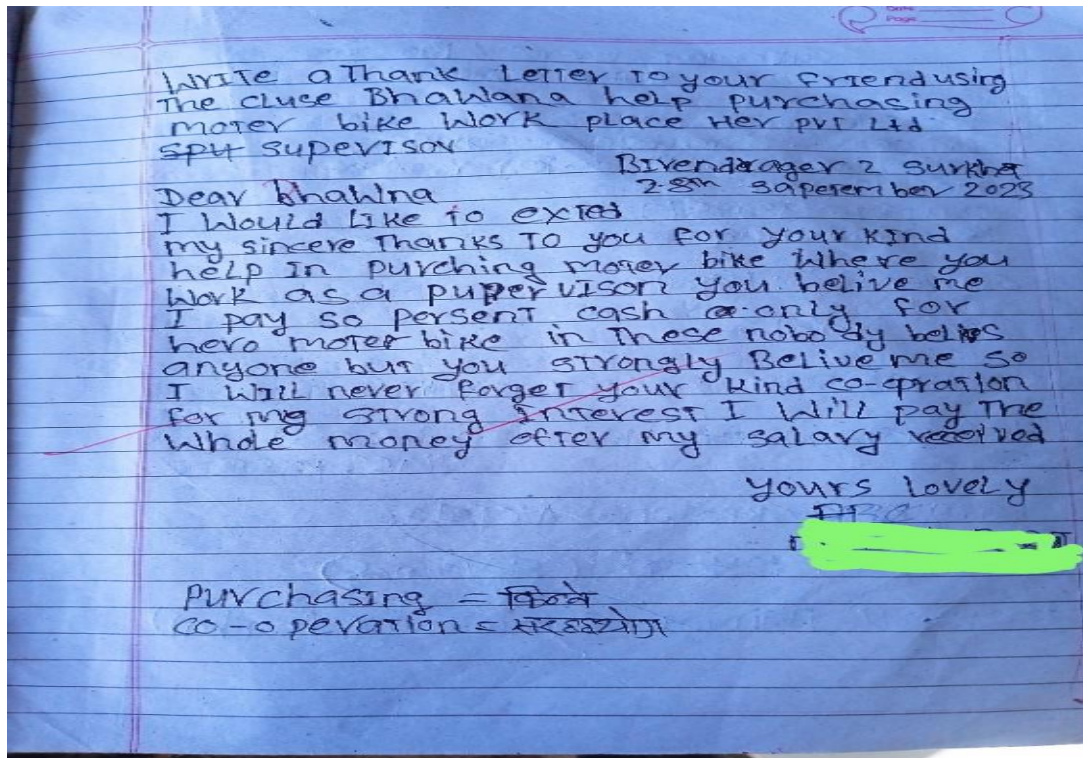
### **Practice of Assessing Writing Skills**

According to Karuna, *for writing, I give project work. For example, I ask for letter writing in the project work if I teach letter writing. I ask them to do the project work on the A4 paper and present their writing to the class. What I teach in writing is 'writing an application letter to your teacher in class'. I gave the same question as the project work: They must prepare the letter in A4 paper. If there are 75 students in a class, I divide the task as per the roll number e.g., 1-15 Essays, 16-31 formal letters, 32-47 informal letters, 48-63 report writing, etc. I only have one question for one student.* Dinesh said *I ask to write some guided or free writing to assess the reading and writing skills of the students.* When I visited the school, his students were busy writing application letters as guided writing, and some had submitted him. However, Mahesh had no idea about assessing the students' writing for internal assessment.

Enhancing students' learning attainment is the primary purpose of formative assessment (Berry & Adamson, 2011). Therefore, teachers should give writing tests to support their students' writing and creativity. However, from the field visit, I learned that the teachers give writing tests, but do not provide feedback on their writing. If the students are not provided with sufficient feedback on their assignments and formative tests, they will not get a chance to know their progress and areas to improve. The tests would no longer be formative in such cases. In this regard, Morris et al.(2021) confirmed giving feedback is an integral part of formative assessment. Similarly, Sardareh and Mohd Saadb (2012) concluded that students should receive information on enhancing their learning via formative or descriptive feedback. Feedback should also be goal-oriented and tell students of their present performance level concerning the learning objectives.

**Figure 5**

*A Sample of Marking Writing of a Student*



### **Practice of Assessing the Participation**

Students' participation plays an important role in grasping the ideas from class instruction. If the students participate actively in the teaching-learning process, meaningful and memorable learning occurs in a conducive environment. There is a rubrics system for assessing the participation of the students. To my question, 'How do you assess the students?' Karuna said

*We assess attendance with two full marks and two marks for classroom activities. How active are they in the class? Looking at their performance, we give two marks for participation. By observing the behavior of the students. We evaluate by asking questions. Homework assignments were submitted or not? Discipline or not? If anyone makes noise, we don't give marks.*

Her practice clearly showed that she was not following the participation guidelines. She only checked for the students' activeness in class and disregarded their curiosity to learn. The teachers are suggested to check the curiosity level of the students in the participation and assign the marks in four levels: 0.5, 1, 1.5, 2 (Subedi, 2024) similarly, for assessing attendance, the teachers have to check their regularity in class and assign the marks as per the

rubrics. Karuna further said that *the class teacher prepares the total attendance results in the ledger sheet. The headteacher is proactive, and is providing marks two as per the formula as he has ideas in the calculation. We make the discussion and make uniformity for marks.* Dinesh faces challenges with his students' attendance as they are not regular in school and skip class. He expressed the following reasons:

*They don't do the homework, so they are afraid of the teachers, and they are small and not serious about their studies either. They are out of track at home and school. We have a fine system to stop the students from skipping the class. We buy some materials for constructive tasks out of their fines.*

The class size can make it difficult for teachers to conduct continuous assessments and maintain accurate records of classroom participation. Mahesh further said *I assign participation grades to students based only on their terminal exam outcomes because of the large class size.* Given a distinct set of marks for final exams, his internal assessment procedure appears to be against the spirit of assessment. As we know, the complete integration of the assessment system needs regular updates the curriculum. However, the teachers' indifference and ignorance of the recent curriculum ultimately hampers students' performance. Mahesh showed his indifference to the assessing system and record keeping of participation. Many people lack clarity regarding the appropriate application of CAS and the various factors influencing its application (Rai, 2019).

The assessment of the participation and record keeping was challenging for the teachers. The study by Saud et al. (2024) discovered that not all teachers evaluated students' participation similarly. It is not appropriately planned for the accomplishment of the intended goal. Time constraints did not motivate the teachers to conduct their work in an organized and well-documented manner. The internal assessment of the components, such as assessment of learning, assessment of learning, and assessment for learning, is inconsistent with the definition of "participation" outlined in evaluation guidelines. Saud et al. (2024) it is more formal than doing what should have been done.

### **Practice of Assessing the Terminal Tests**

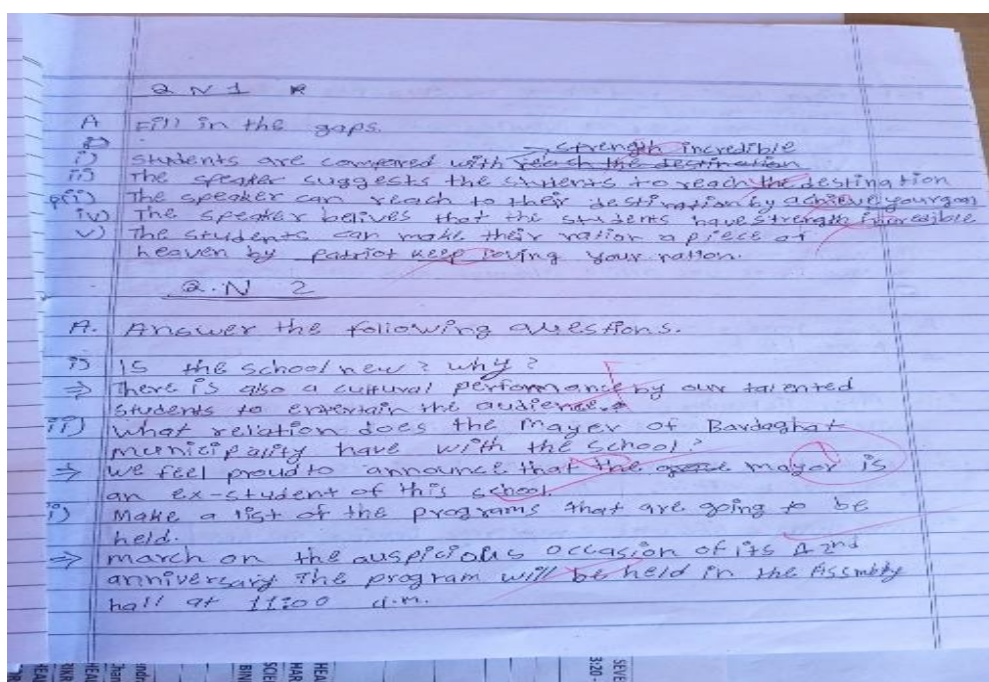
One of the requirements for internal evaluation is the score received on terminal tests. Before the final exam, most schools administer two terminal exams. As a result, the grades that students receive on the terminal exam are based on the criteria

for the terminal test score. Terminal tests are meant to let the students know about their weaknesses and strengths and provide them with remedial teaching in need. Therefore, the answer sheets must be provided to the students. In this regard, Dinesh said *we give copies to see before the results. Sometimes, I check and tally the copies in front of the students. They can also learn about their weaknesses and strengths.* As William (2010), stated the primary goal of assessment for learning is to give feedback so that students can strengthen their areas of weakness in their learning.

The teachers said that the answer sheets were handed in with feedback to let the students know their strengths and weaknesses. The artifacts revealed that the students did not have to learn anything from the checked papers as no feedback was found except for the marks. The feedback is the roadmap for diagnostic teaching for both the teachers and students. Without sufficient feedback, the formative assessment acts as the summative assessment. In the context of Nepal, Sapkota (2023) revealed that “there is no perfect trend of using formative assessment to provide feedback for further improvement” (p. 63). In the same line (Hamp-Lyons, 2006) stated that the success of formative assessments conducted in the classroom also depends on feedback, which gives teachers and students the direction they need to take to shape their performance and self-assessment.

### Figure 6

#### A Sample of Corrected Paper of Term Test



Karuna said *we give the terminal exams in full marks 50 and convert them into five marks. We prepare the grade sheet but don't give the progress cards. Only the students know their marks in each subject. We show the results in 50. If any student has to transfer to the school, they receive the grade sheet.*

Formative assessment does not always build rapport between teachers and students, but sometimes it creates clashes, too. Karuna had a bitter experience with the paper distribution of the formative test, as she shared:

*Once, I had a bitter experience with the marks of my students. I had newly joined this school in 2075 BS. The questions are sent from outside. I had not taught the re-arranging type of question in the passage, but it was asked. I decided to add five marks to each student's total marks. However, the first student had already done everything correctly and got the full 5/5 on that question. This means he was not to receive the bonus marks of 5 like the others. He was angry with my decision and tore the answer sheets. He had to give me back as we had to store the answer sheets for six months for the record. Others clapped and hooted for his deed. It irritated me, so I punished all the students. I was a new teacher here, and they did not know I also gave corporal punishment. The next day, a female student's parent visited our school and complained that her daughter could not move her hands and eat food because of my punishment. She asked if she had sent her daughter to get beaten at school. That was a frustrating moment for me, but we collectively faced the guardians. Our colleagues convinced her that no one enjoys punishing students without obligations. Then, I became cautious in dealing with the students, especially while physically punishing them. I ask about their health first.*

In the formative-based internal assessment, students get to know their scores, and they may not be happy with the marks. There is a chance that they might develop misunderstandings about the teacher. Sometimes, internal assessment seems to have been affected by the halo effect of the teachers; therefore, Adhikari (2023) suggests that internal evaluation marks should be free from the halo effect. Biased free feedback on grades and words fosters positive rapport between teachers and students.

From the practices of the participants, it can be stated that they have not followed the essence of internal assessment for all the language literacy skills and students' participation. From Karuna's experience, we can conclude that internal

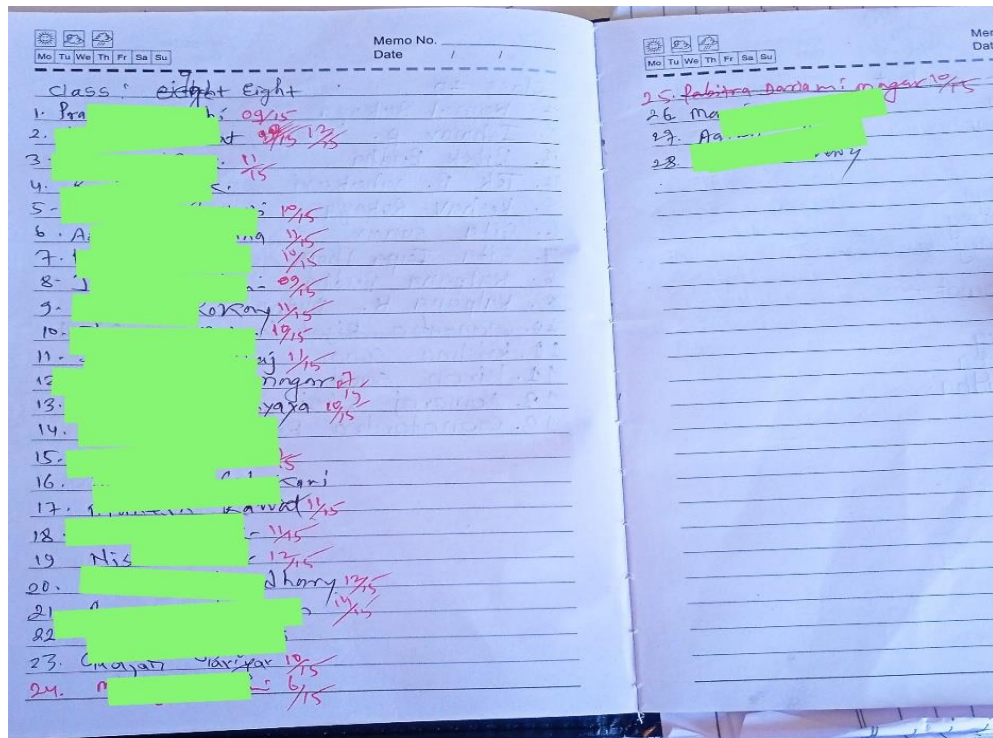
assessment is not just about marks and grades; it is about evaluating the overall performance of students and providing personalized feedback in need. Feedback is not only for the students. It is for the teachers as well. Receiving and giving constructive feedback is a step toward better instruction and assessment.

Teachers cannot blame others for their inability to update the curriculum and assessment system. They must be self-directed and motivated to explore, create, and incorporate the assessment tools in their class. Teachers can use the available resources and use low and no-cost materials for the instruction and assessment procedures. In a large class, self-assessment and peer assessment techniques can be implemented using rubrics based on internal assessment. Such techniques lessen the students' workload and make the learners responsible for their learning.

### **Record Keeping of the Internal Assessment Marks**

In an internal assessment system, documentation, which is called a portfolio, is essential as well. Based on the portfolios of the students, the teachers are directed to calculate the marks and prepare the grades of the students, integrating the marks of the final exam. In this regard, I asked my participants about their documentation or portfolio system, and Dinesh shared that *we don't have a record for the term, but we updated it in the final exam. It is also not mentioned in the grid. In the final result, we include these criteria. We have a diary to record the marks we obtain during classroom activities. We check the attendance for participation marks. The students from classes 6,7,8 run away from school; therefore, we keep a record of absence.*

As Dinesh stated I did not find a systematic record-keeping system for internal assessment. He had kept the record of obtained marks in the term exam in his diary. See the image below.

**Figure 7***Record Keeping of Term Tests in a Diary*

Karuna explained that it is challenging to maintain the record. We also need to submit the mark for the internal assessment to the municipality. We need to update the marks of class 8 in the municipal office. The Municipal education may ask for the record. Karuna said teachers should show the assessment criteria on the board and explain their importance. They are careful about their assessment and performance and those who do not understand are not serious. They think they can pass but the chances are that they will fail. If students are absent in the listening and speaking even though the teachers are inviting them, they can fail in the internal assessment. There are mark slips to keep the record. There are columns to keep the marks ledger in the term exam.

Figure 8

A Sample of Form Filling for Internal Assessment

Second Terminal (Internal) Assessment-2080									
English									
Roll No.	Students Name	Section	Terminal Exam	Attendance & Participation	Listening & Speaking	Reading & Writing	Total	Grade	Grade Point
			10	8	20	16	50		
1							0	NG	0
2							0	NG	0
3							0	NG	0
4							0	NG	0
5							0	NG	0
6							0	NG	0
7							0	NG	0
8							0	NG	0
9							0	NG	0
10							0	NG	0
11							0	NG	0
12							0	NG	0
13							0	NG	0
14							0	NG	0
15							0	NG	0
16							0	NG	0
17							0	NG	0
18							0	NG	0
19							0	NG	0
20							0	NG	0
21							0	NG	0
22							0	NG	0
23							0	NG	0
24							0	NG	0
25							0	NG	0
26							0	NG	0
27							0	NG	0
28							0	NG	0
29							0	NG	0
30							0	NG	0
31							0	NG	0
32							0	NG	0
33							0	NG	0
34							0	NG	0
35							0	NG	0
36							0	NG	0
37							0	NG	0
38							0	NG	0
39							0	NG	0
40							0	NG	0
41							0	NG	0
42							0	NG	0
43							0	NG	0

1st Term Internal									
2nd Term Internal									
Roll	Students Name	L+S	R+W	Theory	L+S	R+W	Theory	Alt.	Alt.
		20	16	50	20	16	50/75		
1	Ashikari	19	10	38	16	14	38	12.5	4.5
2		10	10	20	15	14	26	12.5	4.5
3		12	12	24	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
4		12	12	24	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
5		12	12	24	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
6	Shah	10	10	20	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
7		12	12	24	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
8	Devkota	12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
9		12	14	26	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
10		10	10	20	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
11	Ashikari	12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
12		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
13		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
14		10	10	20	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
15		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
16		10	10	20	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
17		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
18		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
19		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
20		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
21		10	10	20	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
22		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
23		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
24		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
25		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
26		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
27		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
28		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
29		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
30		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
31		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
32		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
33		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
34		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
35		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5
36		12	10	22	16	14	30	12.5	4.5

Mahesh said *we don't have the record system. Once before the final exam, we maintain the scores of the internal assessment.* The sharing of the teachers shows that they have not completely maintained the record system like a portfolio of the students. Teachers treat portfolios merely as record-keeping files and only use them to a limited extent (Saud et al., 2024). Maintaining a portfolio is a demanding job for the internal assessment which allows the students to reflect on their learning and make a self-assessment. The students can get motivated to do better in their learning marking

their weaknesses and strengths. Portfolios are for letting all the concerned parents, teachers and future teachers know the student's learning abilities, goals, and growth. The students can decide what they want to learn and how they want to, depending on the individual portfolios that they have made. Portfolios work as the reflection of the student's progress and performance.

### **Learning Opportunities for the Students and Teachers**

Internal assessment facilitates the student's learning. There are criteria to assess and create learning opportunities for the students. Homework checking and giving feedback are some of the things that most teachers practice in their classes. According to the research, teachers who regularly review or provide comments on their students' classwork, homework, projects, and assessments can significantly enhance their learning outcomes (Brown, 2019). Similarly, a dedicated teacher must regularly assess students' work and offer comments in the classroom. The IA seems beneficial in enhancing language skills and encouraging the students to engage regularly and actively in class. Dinesh viewed that following the grid completely enhances the results, and students can learn *about their weaknesses and strengths on time*. Karuna also had a positive attitude towards the IA. She stated *IA provides maximum learning opportunities because if a student is absent, he/she can take the exam the next day. It's not possible in a paper-pencil test. I mean the students can't skip the internal assessment*. In internal assessment, students can track their progress themselves by seeing their marks obtained using different criteria. Rai (2019) conferred that students have a very poor attitude towards studies because of the continuous assessment system. However, my participants had a positive attitude regarding IA as they shared that internal assessment maximized the students' learning opportunities as it is a formative assessment. Mahesh also shared:

*There are many benefits of CAS such as encouraging students to learn and get feedback. CAS is formative; therefore, it energizes the teachers, develops their expertise, and updates the new trends of ELT. It also develops teaching skills; it makes the teachers capable, punctual, active, and expert intellectuals. CAS is formative and keeps the teacher up to date.*

The internal assessment demands more discussion, collaboration, working in groups, assessing peers, and providing feedback for improvement. Such tasks let the learners know their level and construct the knowledge and ways for further progress. Therefore, this assessment aligns with the SCT. Cooperation, social interaction,

scaffolding, and cultural relevance are the bases that link socio-cultural theory to learning opportunities in assessment. SCT-based assessments emphasize dynamic, formative, and real-world methods that let students grow via discussion, feedback, and introspection. SCT sees assessment as a continuous, social, and developmental process that actively supports learning as opposed to seeing it as a simple way to measure knowledge. Assessments become effective tools for assessing and improving learning when combined with peer interaction, cultural tools, and scaffolding in the zone of proximal development. The students expect encouragement from their teachers and peers to improve their learning. Therefore, positive feedback has an impact on motivation. Similarly, Narciss, and Huth (2004, as cited in Adarkwah, 2021) discovered that when it comes to encouraging learning, feedback is a crucial instrument, and both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and achievement are impacted by informative feedback.

Assignment checking and feedback giving are important to upgrade the level of the students. Acharya (2023) discovered the average math score of students whose classwork was assessed by the teacher was higher (38.55) than the average score of students whose work was not examined (33.00). The checked papers are handed to the students so that they can learn about their weaknesses and strengths through the formative feedback and observation provided by the subject teacher. However, the students compare and complain about their marks to the teachers. It has been observed that giving students grades as feedback encourages them to concentrate more on performance goals (passing the test) than learning goals (comprehending the material). As a result, pupils start comparing themselves to others instead of concentrating on the task's challenges and trying to do better (Attwood, 2009 as cited in Amua-Sekyi, 2016). A similar experience is with Karuna as she shares: *as soon as my students receive the answer sheets, they compare their marks with those of their friends rather than see their mistakes and comments. I snatch the papers if they do so and complain to me about the marks.*

The students may receive different marks and grades in similar responses due to the subjective impression and emotions of the teachers. As Karuna shared, *giving the marks depends on the mood and attitude of the teacher.* Therefore, teachers' emotions may bias students' grades (Floman et al., 2013).

Teachers are checking the assignments and tests themselves, but they have not applied self-assessment and peer assessment techniques. According to Sharma et al

(2016), students who took part in self-evaluation showed greater interest in the criteria and insightful comments and critical analysis of their works. Additionally, students needed to be more truthful about their work, treat other students fairly, and be ready to support their claims with proof. Therefore, besides serving cognitive functions, student self-assessment promises to foster a more collaborative relationship between teachers and students and raise students' responsibility for their learning. In this regard, Thapa (2021) shared that communicative liveliness and practical application of language should be considered while selecting a task for assessment. This allows the students to learn as they get ready for the assessment. Dinesh shared *IA motivates learning, students become capable of learning, and problems are solved immediately*. Teachers can establish a nurturing environment that raises students' motivation and sustained involvement by coordinating internal assessments with SDT principles.

Therefore, from the sharing of my participants, it can be summed up that IA benefits teachers and students. Similarly, Dahal (2019) conferred that teachers can significantly enhance students' learning outcomes by routinely reviewing and providing feedback on their assignments, homework, projects, and tests.

### **IA Reduced Workload and Stress**

My participants had a positive attitude toward IA as they shared that the implementation of internal assessment minimizes the teachers' workload in the class. They do not have to work at once for the final examination, nor do they have to check the papers for 100 full marks, nor do they have to invigilate for 3-4 hours in the terminal and final examinations as Karuna said, *our teacher colleagues are happy to invigilate for 2 hours for the test of full marks 50*. Similarly, the students do not have to sit longer for the written test. In this regard, Shah (2021) affirmed continuous assessment is more dependable and inspiring. There is no pressure for students to take final and terminal writing exams. The teachers do not need to check the copies of full marks 100/75 at once because of the internal assessment of 50 marks. As Mahesh said, *it's very hard to check 900 copies in 3 exams of full marks 100 but internal assessment is reducing the load of copy checking*.

The teachers get assistance from colleagues and administration making plans and decisions, conducting the assessment activities, assigning the marks, and preparing the results. They share their expertise, ideas, experiences, and resources. therefore, they can feel relieved and supported. My participant, Dinesh, said *there are expert teachers, ToT, and coordinators in our school. They provided suggestions and*

*helped us with the internal assessment. Similarly, Karuna shared our head teacher orients us for the assessment and prepares guidelines for marking students' attendance.*

According to socio-cultural theory, education is a cooperative endeavor. Knowledge and skills are co-constructed through interactions between learners, teachers, and peers, this lessens the workload on an individual basis. According to Vygotsky, scaffolding helps teachers and peers support students by breaking down tasks into smaller, more manageable pieces, and then progressively removing the supports as the learners gain more competency. This helps teachers manage the teaching load by focusing on targeted assistance rather than overwhelming students with large tasks, and it also lessens the immediate workload for students because tasks are scaffolders according to their current abilities.

Education is a socially mediated and shareable process; therefore, assigning responsibilities, utilizing scaffolding, concentrating on tasks within the learner's zone of proficiency, and utilizing cultural tools reduce the workload. Therefore, social interaction, cooperation, and cultural and digital tools support learning and help balance and reduce the educational workload. In online tools, Ming (2005) explored online technology which not only lessened the workload for teachers in a formative assessment setting but also gave students instant feedback on what they had learned. As a result, students are encouraged to learn deeply.

### **Major Highlights of the Practice**

Teachers often use textbook-based listening texts and worksheets to prepare questions and administer tests. They should give unit-wise listening tests, sometimes with varying marks based on the time taken. Teachers lack the proper understanding to assess the listening skills of their students. They give the listening test once before the final exam, and practical marks are provided without executing the exams, resulting in a lack of listening and speaking skills. In this regard, research by Ghimire (2019) and Rana & Rana (2019) found that teachers in community schools do not focus on listening ability due to the examination point of view. The marks for listening tests are assigned through random assessment without formal tests, leading to a lack of emphasis on listening and speaking skills. Teachers often prioritize reading and writing over listening and speaking abilities, resulting in students not reaching the level required for the NASA 2020 listening exam.

Like listening skills, speaking assessment is crucial for checking pronunciation, fluency, accuracy, and confidence in the English language. Although the latest curriculum and assessment system emphasizes communicative and learner-centred teaching and assessing approaches, teachers' assessment practices reveal that none exactly follow the essence of speaking assessment. They lack complete understanding and willpower to assess the learners' speaking skills. One of the reasons is that it takes a lot of time to assess a large class, but the teachers can assess through dynamic assessment processes like peer assessment. According to Wenny and Fajar (2009), peer evaluation is more successful than teacher evaluation because it motivates students to proactively exchange ideas.

Similarly, the reading and writing skills under internal assessment are avoided since only one teacher seemed to have assessed the reading-aloud activity. However, other teachers did not evaluate the reading nor maintain the record system. For writing, teachers are asking to do some guided and free writing, but they have not given feedback on them.

Students' participation is not followed as what is allocated in the internal evaluation guideline. Only the teachers tracked attendance and assigned marks disregarding the curiosity and active participation of the students in class. In the same line, Saud et al. (2024) concluded not all teachers evaluate students' participation similarly. It is not appropriately planned for the accomplishment of the intended goal. Everyone concurred that the time limit does not motivate them to assess the participation in a format and manner that is thoroughly documented. The teachers have filled the attendance and participation columns randomly (Saud et al., 2024).

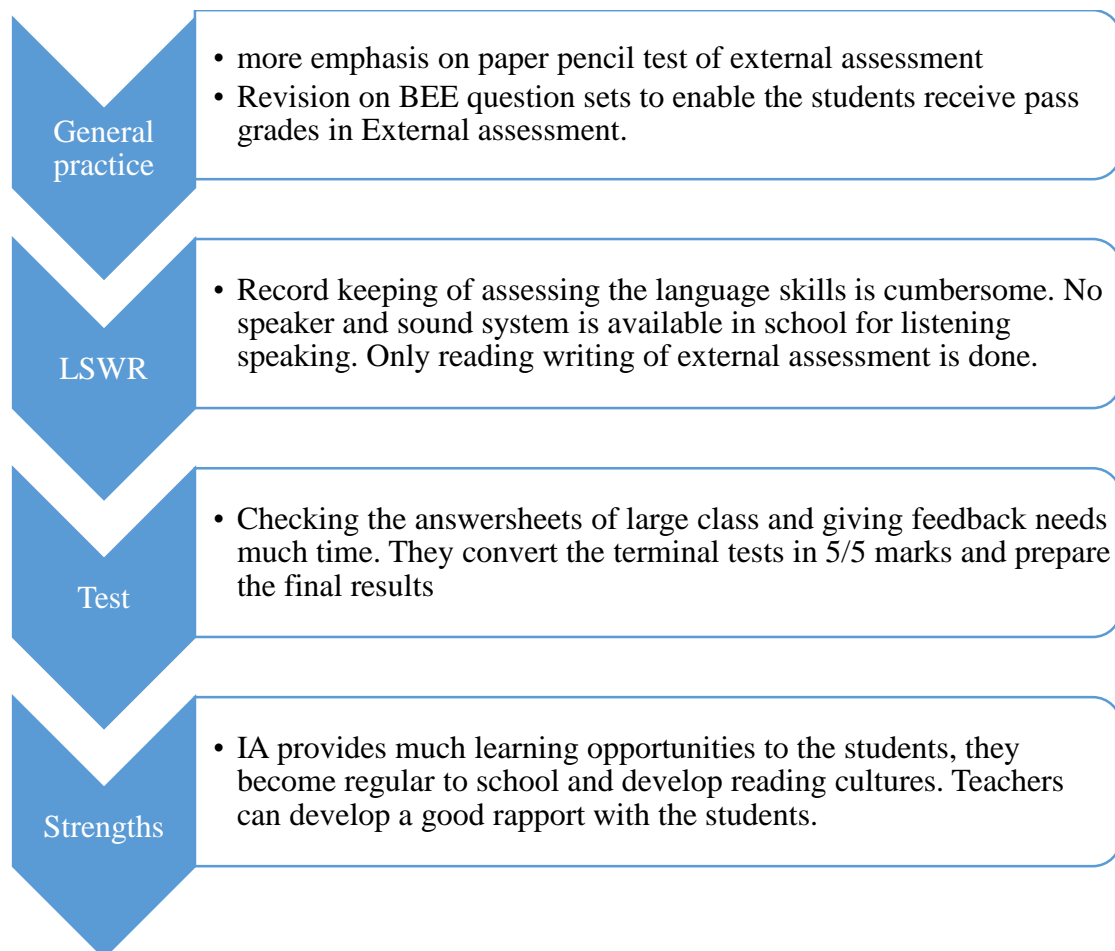
From the practice of IA, it can be concluded that the teachers are not following the IA completely because they are unintentionally forced to help their pupils get the marks and scores that they desire on the paper-pencil test. They make the pupils focus on rote learning and memorize the assigned notes and capsules to achieve this. The practice of the assessment system differs from one teacher to another and from one school to another school. Since the internal assessment is contextualized, informal, and directed to the students, learning diversities in testing are acceptable; however, the essence of IA should be uniformly followed.

### **Researcher's Reflection on Internal Assessment Practices**

The idea behind this new assessment methodology was to replace the conventional "assessment of learning" approach with an "assessment for learning"

methodology. However, since the beginning of the school system in Nepal, there has been a strong cultural emphasis on tests and exams in the classroom. According to Kleinsasser (1995), these cultural practices are strong and resilient and do not alter quickly or readily.

There appears to be insufficient interaction between policy and practice as well as between macro and micro contexts. Because of this, head teachers and teachers lack the motivation to implement continuous assessment practices and believe it is an unnecessary policy that burdens teachers (Chongbang, 2021). However, instead of assigning assessments (like paper-pencil tests), teachers should assign direct assessments, which are then carefully analyzed along with the proper feedback. Assessment can also be carried out from student journals, portfolios, observation logs, peer evaluations, and other sources in addition to traditional exams. Teachers can create and implement various learning-enhancing activities that are worthy of the language used in real-world contexts and with vitality in communication (Thapa, 2021). Similarly, teachers have to employ learning-oriented assessments to ensure the learning of students and teachers. According to Turner and Purpura (2015), rather than being tools mostly under the authority of teachers, evaluations ought to more actively engage students in introspection, decision-making, and ownership of their development. Students' self-regulation, engagement, and accountability in learning and assessment correlate with the assessment as learning. The goals and objectives of the curriculum at any level should serve as the basis for assessment plans, so the goals and objectives of the curriculum and the design of assessment methods, techniques, and strategies need to be appropriately aligned..

**Figure 9***Insight of IA Practice*

From the above figure, it can be summarized that IA offers learning opportunities and enhances the rapport between students and teachers. However, there are some technical and practical challenges with it. The teachers prefer paper-pencil tests for external assessments and revise BEE question sets for better marks. The assessment of language skills is cumbersome and challenging due to the constraints of resources like speakers or sound systems. Large class answer sheets take much time to check and give feedback. Similarly, teachers lack access to training and updates for the complete implementation of the IA.

### **Theoretical Connections to Internal Assessment Practices**

The internal assessment system aligns with the assessment for learning and assessment as learning under the constructivism paradigm. Constructivists believe that learning occurs through social interaction and collaboration among the learners. The children have various learning styles and cognitive abilities, which can be identified and fostered with peer cooperation and scaffolding by the teachers or MKO.

Therefore, I have presented the theoretical connections to internal assessment practice in three phases of development.

### **IA in Dialogic and Mediative Process**

Internal assessments greatly aid a students' advancement within the dialogic and mediative circle. Not all students can benefit from uniform pedagogical tools and techniques because of the multicultural, lingual, and socio-economic contexts and cognitive abilities of the students. Some students have not progressed in the present assessment, but they have the potential to improve later. Therefore, teachers and colleagues can help diagnose the students' appropriate learning styles and intelligence in this stage. Teachers must adapt their pedagogy to the unique learning styles and approaches of their pupils (Khanal, 2021). The teachers can extrinsically motivate the students through interaction, informal discussions, and mediative tools like technology, motivation, rewards, positive feedback, comments, and grades. The students can be encouraged to learn more when teachers use ICT in assessment. In this regard, Karuna said she downloaded the listening audio from YouTube and gave the students a listening test. Playing the audio sounds available on line is an authentic and energizing meditation for the students.

Similarly, the teachers also could benefit from this process when they had meaningful communication, collaboration, and orientation among the teachers. The teachers who were supported by their colleagues and had a strong support system in school were implementing the IA to a greater extent. The teacher participants shared that the incentives and assessment materials such as the resources, CAS forms, hardcopies of curriculum, grid, and portfolios were the mediative tools to facilitate the teachers' work on internal assessment.

### **IA in ZPD**

Getting the information on students' present skill levels from the interaction and conversation with the students, the teachers track their learners' progress provide scaffolding to support learning, and offer timely, structured feedback for better progress. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) can be expanded with internal assessment. By promoting peer evaluation, facilitating collaborative learning, and monitoring students' progress over time, they progressively assist students in transitioning from assisted performance to independent mastery, which means they are shifting from ZPD to ZAD.

Internal assessments ensure students are consistently challenged within their ZPD, encouraging deep and sustained learning through customized assessments and feedback. The students can assess their peers, provide feedback and constructive comments, and build up their confidence in independent learning. The students supported by the teachers can develop high intrinsic motivation. Deci and Ryan (1985) noted lower intrinsic motivation in students who perceived their teachers as cold and uncaring, and Anderson, Manoogian, and Reznick (1976) found that children had very low levels of intrinsic motivation when working on an engaging task in front of an adult stranger who ignored them and did not respond to their initiations. The collaboration and scaffolding mediation among the teachers reduced the workload and pressure of my participant while she was assessing her students with the help of an experienced teacher at her school. She shared *that I had recently arrived at this school when the CAS was being implemented. At that time, a lady head teacher filled out my forms herself, and later, I knew how to do it. It means not only the students but also teachers can develop more within their ZPD, collaborating within their circle.* Therefore, according to Black & et al. (2002), getting support from peers is crucial for getting past those early doubts while taking on the challenging task of altering the expectations and culture in the classroom. Educational institutions foster and tackle any kind of challenge through collaboration, communication, and support from each other.

### **IA in ZAD**

The participants have experienced some students being responsible for their learning in the classroom. They are self-motivated and accountable for their learning and assessment, which we call the students' ZAD. Continuous assessments assist in self-evaluation and enhance the students' ZAD.

Internal assessments are frequently used to determine learners' current level of independence, so there is a close relationship between the Zone of Actual Development (ZAD) and internal assessments. Teachers can obtain insight into the ZAD, which guides future instruction, scaffolding within the ZPD, and personalized learning, by evaluating what students can accomplish independently. In addition to measuring students' autonomous knowledge, internal assessments also in progress monitoring, offer constructive criticism for self-control, and lay the groundwork for formative and summative evaluations. These tests provide chances for continued improvement while ensuring that instruction matches students' true abilities.

Therefore, internal assessment allows social interaction among students and teachers who share the same vision of learning (Berry, 2008).

The intrinsically motivated children are in the circle of ZAD. According to develop mentalists, children are energetic, curious, playful, and inquisitive from birth, even without particular rewards, when they are in their healthiest stages (Harter, 1978, as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2000). Through this, the teachers can promote the developmental zones of their students with the effective use of authentic assessment tools, record keeping, and portfolio maintenance. Similarly, teachers with intrinsic motivation can contribute more to instruction and assessment because they do the work for their reasons, like happiness and satisfaction from their deeds. My participant Karuna said *I work the hardest of all because I am not happy until I do so*. Self-satisfaction plays an important role in working professionally.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I presented the three teachers' assessment practices in their classes. This chapter included the experiences that my three participants were sharing regarding the implementation of continuous-based internal assessment. I made some themes to get to know the assessment system in the basic English class. The use of internal assessment has been influenced by their prior experiences, working environment, monitoring by the school administration, availability of training and support system, and resources from the school administration.

## CHAPTER VI

### KEY INSIGHTS, CONCLUSION, RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS AND REFLECTION

I conclude my research adventure with this chapter. It includes the findings of my study after the meaningful discussions in the previous chapters. The main takeaways, my assessment of the entire research process, the educational implications, and my reflection wrap up the section.

#### **Key Insights**

Through the phenomenological approach to understanding the experiences of my three participants, I produced the insights by reflecting simultaneously on my own experience and the themes of the participants' experiences (Gadamer, 2006). The insights were discovered after the data was coded, thematized, and evaluated. I view research as a methodical, scientific way to discover the truth, and it needs rigorous practice, patience, and critical self-awareness to conclude. My conclusions are intriguing yet not universal. The other teachers and scholars may have different perspectives on them.

Critically analyzing the data and reflecting upon the experiences of my participants, I have discussed the major insights as (a) Easier Said than Done (b) the Need for a Support System (c) A Tool to Trade a Grade (d) A Hook to Control the Crook (e) An Authentic and Empowering Weapon.

#### **Easier Said than Done**

My study discovered the differences between the perceptions and practice of the internal assessment. Although my participants understood the internal assessment system, they could not implement it fully in their classes. The school administration, parents, students, and teacher colleagues are not convinced about it. The compulsion made for course completion, more focus on paper pencil tests, practicing ten sets, and shortage of time and materials discouraged the implementation of internal assessment. The teacher participants reported that it was difficult to implement wholeheartedly in large class sizes and low-resourced classes. The teachers had many periods, five or six periods a day out of seven; therefore, following the essence of IA was not applicable.

One of my participants, Mahesh, said that *CAS has not been implemented fully. Theoretically, it is good, but practically, it is not applicable in most schools. A*

similar finding is explored by Acharya and Shiohata (2014), as they affirmed the teachers know the fundamentals, significance, and goal of the formative aspect of CAS, but they have not successfully applied it in their classrooms. They have replaced the completion of CAS forms with creating and grading exams.

The teachers always had some reasons for not being able to adopt IA in practice. Some had the problem due to the large class size, and some had to say that due to the poor socio-economic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds of the students, they were not assessing their students accurately. Dinesh shared his inability to check his students' assignments and give informative feedback on the students' tasks. He shared that *there are 100 students in total, and if I check the assignments minutely, I won't be able to check more than 20 copies in a day. I have 6 periods a day because we have a shortage of teachers here.* He meant that in large classes, formative assessment does not work effectively because teachers cannot check the students' classwork and homework because of the large class size.

Teachers believe that the main obstacles to classroom evaluation are slow learners, students' mother language, and family background (Karki, 2021). Some complained about the scarcity of resources like curriculum, sound system, and speakers, which prevented them from giving the internal assessment of the students. Some teachers lack the proper training and orientation to incorporate curriculum and assessment systems. They want to get supported by the MKO. It shows that they are also in the phase of ZPD. Acharya (2023) discovered that more than 50 schools in Bagmati province did not have plans or portfolios of internal assessment; the schools had filled out the form and asked for the project work for the sake of showing only. Some teachers were doing it formally, and they could not even be satisfied with their tasks. According to the self-determination theory, people should be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to change their behavior, but my participants lacked both. Their inability to work completely on IA reflects the discrepancy between perception and practice.

### **Need for a Support System**

Some teachers are not updated with the changed curriculum, and this shows less professionalism of the teacher and ignorance of the school administration. Teaching is a dynamic job, and the teachers are lifelong learners. Albert Einstein once said the day you leave learning is the day you start dying. The teachers with no knowledge of the updated curriculum version are not working on internal

assessments. They follow the old curriculum and assessment system which indicates that they are deceiving the students' future. Like the students, even the teachers need to get help from MKO; they may be the school leader, teacher mentor, trainer, or senior colleague at school. Once, my participant shared that her headmaster continuously supported her as he was more concerned about the assessment system and rooster trainer of the British Council. She also reminded her colleague about the change in curriculum and assessment system. Then, her colleague followed the new assessment format and assessed the students appropriately. Such a sharing culture fosters the learning environment for the teachers, too.

The teachers should get assistance with ICT tools like computers, laptops, internet, PowerPoints, docs, Google Forms, and sheets for conducting internal assessments, which are lacking in the participating schools. Technologically mediated support can be convincing in making e-portfolios of the students and working smartly and quickly, even in large classes. The schools need to support the teachers in blending the technology to customize, personalize, and update the records online rather than on paper.

### **IA as a Tool to Trade the Grade**

The passing percentage in IA is 40% in the internal exam, whereas 35% is allocated in the external exam. IA is not taken seriously by the students, parents, and teachers. Most teachers provide the internal marks haphazardly without actually conducting actual tests, and none receive NG grades in internal assessment. However, the same student fails in the paper-pencil test. The municipal authority conducts BEE exams. The schools provide the internal marks without giving any tests internally. The students obtaining Alpha grades (A+, A) in internal assessment are non-graded in external tests. One of my participants, Mahesh, confessed that there are defects in the languages, even in the native language, but we provided *25/25 in the practical exam*. Similarly, Acharya (2023) revealed that the students receiving 3/4 marks in written tests can receive 23/24 marks in internal assessment. Similarly, Parajuli (2003), reported that the students received 86 percentages on average in portfolio rating, whereas they received less than 60 % in real achievement tests. It questions the internal assessment system's fairness, authenticity and reliability. In the research, Sigdel and Sherpa (2024), declared that the formative assessment lacks openness and consistency in grading due to the absence of clear and exact rubrics.

Internal tests provide learning opportunities for the students with needful feedback and assistance. However, the teachers blindly give marks, which hampers the students' development. Therefore, Saud et al. (2024) concluded internal assessment prioritized evaluation to provide grades over remedial instruction and incentives. Therefore, a fair examination system of internal assessment is needed for the students. Regulation and monitoring from the local authority are also needed from time to time

### **IA as a Hook to Control the Crook**

Internal assessment has a great role in controlling students' disruptive behavior. It also supports the students' reading culture, discipline, and grades. As Dinesh shared, *the students feel shy, don't make a noise, and prepare well if the internal assessment is done. Reading culture is developed.* The students have been serious in study.

Upon assigning the marks on attendance and classroom participation, the students can be regular in school and actively participate in the classroom. The students can submit their homework, classwork, and project work to receive the marks. Similarly, it helps to build up a good rapport with the teachers since 50 percent of marks are in the hands of the teachers. Karuna shared that *as per the discipline and moral conduct of the student, we give the marks in internal assessment and the internal assessment determines the student's results therefore, students are cautious about the internal assessment which helps to have good relations.*

Evidence suggests that building a rapport with a student influences how well they do on the test (Mason, 2018). The students develop their reading habits, and they can study independently. Reading independently helps to enhance the ZAD.

Metacognition is viewed as a higher-order psychological activity in the CA framework. Teachers and peers assist students in making unconscious processes more visible and accessible for future usage by encouraging them to critically analyze their thought processes. One of the main components of the CA is that students have to learn through group discussion, which again adheres to Vygotsky's theory that concepts initially arise in the external or "social" plane before being internalized by the individual (Black & William, 2009). If teachers assess each criterion wisely, following the rubrics in the classroom, the students will better understand and learn the language. They will have the opportunity to progress while getting the proper instruction from the teachers and will not have any phobias or stress about the

assessment. It creates a positive relationship between teachers and students, fostering mutual understanding and good rapport.

### **IA as an Authentic and Empowering Weapon**

Internal assessment emerged as an approach to conceptualize and authenticate the students' learning through Criterion-Referenced Assessment (CRA). According to Linn and Gronlund (2000, as cited in Poudel, 2016), a CRA is a kind of evaluation intended to give an interpretable performance measure within a precisely defined and confined domain of learning tasks. To put it another way, items on criterion-referenced examinations are directly related to the learning objectives that need to be assessed, regardless of whether they can discriminate between students.

A learner needs to be assessed using various criteria throughout the teaching-learning process. It is a continuous procedure that suggests assessing the students while participating in instructional activities in and out of the classroom. According to research by Tunstall and Gipps (1996 as cited in Shepard, 2000), teachers in Great Britain have created more participatory methods of talking with students about their work and standards to redistribute power and foster more cooperative relationships with them.

The teachers are provided with the autonomy to assess the students according to their context and the availability of resources. The students can learn and be assessed simultaneously without being notified of it. This maximizes the learning opportunities and enables the students to learn on their own shifting them from ZPD to ZAD. It is supposed that what a child can do today with help will be able to perform on her own tomorrow. According to Vygotsky (1978), tomorrow's developmental level will be in the zone of proximal development today. A person can imitate only what is within his/her developmental level.

The role of self-evaluation and reflection connects Assessment as Learning to ZAD. By assessing what they can do independently, assessment as learning assists students in understanding their ZAD, guiding goal-setting, and tracking progress. Understanding their ZPD helps them prepare more effectively for future learning and growth, especially when they tackle obstacles that fall inside it.

According to Norris (2012), the primary goal of language assessments is to gather data for planning language support programs that will help students reach higher proficiency levels. Therefore, to support assessment for learning, Cowie and

Khoo (2018) contend that the classroom, school, community, and larger policy contexts must be closely linked. Similarly, acknowledging stakeholders and teachers as key actors is essential to the authenticity of CA (Chongbang, 2021). The cooperative and collaborative relationship among the stakeholders empowers them to authenticate their IA praxis.

### **Conclusion**

Much concern and curiosity have created a huge discourse for the term ‘internal assessment’ in education. Many literatures and reports have presented the inability to incorporate continuous-based internal assessment. My research study on phenomenology presented the lifetime experiences of teachers on internal assessment. This study will be a turning point in the development of educational assessment policies and programs in the future. Since teachers are the ones who initially and explicitly define the purpose of continuous-based internal assessment, this study prioritizes their perspectives and practices. They understand the idea of continuous assessment, which uses a range of evaluation instruments to monitor students' development during instruction. Using IA as a continuous assessment system was difficult, time-consuming, and required additional time for my participating teachers. The teachers are unclear about the rubrics, and the rubrics for participation need to be revised as they are vague in keeping track of participation and assigning marks. The teachers need to get support from the school management team and community. They also emphasize the need to revisit policies, principles, assumptions, and texts to implement changes in practice, culture, and behaviors in the educational system.

The Internal assessment needs a great sense of professionalism in its proper adaptation in classes. Teachers must be self-motivated first to learn and apply new things in the classroom. However, blaming others for not doing something well is not the solution to any issue. The assessment's objective is to help the students learn. Instructors must strongly emphasize in-class activities, informal assessments, and one-on-one student support. However, they encounter several difficulties, such as uneven implementation, heavy teacher workloads, a lack of standardization, potential bias, and inadequate supervision from regulators. To address these shortcomings, more intense training for teachers, more effective use of resources, more precise guidelines, and more monitoring are needed to guarantee that internal evaluations are impartial and reliable tools to enhance students' educational experiences.

Internal assessment is not for the sake of students; it is for the self-evaluation and self-regulation of teachers. Teachers should feel IA empowers them to regulate the students and minimize their burden and workload, leading the students to independent learning. It can be concluded that the dominance of assessment of learning marginalized the assessment for learning and assessment as learning. Therefore, a more balanced approach is needed to maintain the assessment as learning and assessment for learning.

Teachers' planning, preparation, conversations, or meetings about the curriculum's objective, using textbooks, and applying different strategies, tools, and materials are all crucial to effectively implementing CAS. Teachers must ensure that student assessments and grading adhere to the policy document because any negligence or lack of planning regarding using rubrics in internal assessment can harm potential students' future. Besides, the teachers must support the government policy by implementing it at any cost, being self-reliant and dedicated to their profession. They can coordinate with the students, teacher colleagues, parents, school administration, and community to successfully integrate internal assessment and progressive teaching and learning.

The teachers have complained about the difficulty of implementing the internal assessment because of the lack of physical, economic, cultural, and technological resources, materials, and support systems. The concerned stakeholders and the school management committee can visualize how to manage the training and physical and technological resources at school. The school management committee can have meetings, discussions, and planning about the IA implementation and monitor it. The school management team is the first and foremost support system for the teachers and students to motivate, monitor, and bring about positive changes despite the diversity and adversity in education.

### **Reflections**

‘Inner peace doesn't come from getting what we want, but remembering who we are.’ Marianne Williamson

I feel elevated to explore myself and reflect upon my journey in a scholarly platform, writing a dissertation on MPhil studies. The hard-working and dedicated professors and collaborative colleagues in my course have paved my scholarly journey and helped me reach my destination, completing my MPhil dissertation.

Learning is a lifelong process; the teacher needs to inspire numerous students to generate innovative ideas in teaching and learning. After passing my Masters' degree in 2012, I was completely devoted to teaching at school. However, I always thought about adding an educational qualification to my academic hat and updating it with the contemporary thoughts and dimensions in ELT. After 10 years of academic gap, the time and circumstances allowed me to join KU as a research scholar for my M.Phil. Fall batch 2022. The blended mode of teaching fascinated aspiring teachers around the country to join this program under KUSOED. Therefore, I, along with 28 other colleagues enrolled for the course in August 2022. This is the course I have chosen because of my interest in English language education since childhood. The well-organized, apt, and timely entrance examination system in online mode ensured me of timely completion of the course. I could enjoy the virtual classes that began from 5- 8 pm on three days a week. The committed and professional professors always made me feel that I have to be a better teacher for my students and a better citizen for the country. Above all, they taught me to be a happy human being, a critical thinker, and a change-maker for societal contribution through educational excellence.

In the virtual classes, reflection sharing via writing and speech was worth learning and implementing in my class. The professor's assignments, feedback, and grades helped me discover my class status and identify areas for improvement. Similarly, group work, review, class and end semester presentation, peer, and self-assessment were extremely intriguing to explore, collaborate, and critically analyze the issues presented. The courses in the three semesters provided me with the expertise and skills to research hidden issues, prepare papers and critical reviews, and share the scholarship among the academic community. I enjoyed the feminist pedagogy throughout my semester, which ensured inclusive education and emancipation for all scholars.

From the beginning of the course, I was informed about the basics of research and suggested creating a niche in the areas that I wish to explore. Choosing the research agenda was a daunting task for me due to the scarcity of knowledge and resources. However, the continuous guidance and feedback from the professors, practical classes, availability of free online resources, and reading materials accelerated my journey of research. As a result, I could prepare the dissertation proposal in the first semester and defend it by the second semester. I could get

continuous support and inspiration from my supervisors to refine my proposal and dissertation draft.

I chose the internal assessment as my research agenda because it was newly introduced in the school-level curriculum it created a discourse in the school. I was interested in the assessment from earlier. There was a CAS system for formative evaluation, and I had been implementing it at my school as the head of the exam department and a subject teacher. I had to facilitate the teachers, provide the resources, monitor the filling, and analyze the results. I learned that the teachers from other schools were not happy about filling the forms and were doing so for the sake of formality only. It was concluded that the CAS was not successful in school education, and as a result, there came an internal assessment that worked as a continuous assessment. I realized I needed to get to know the views and attitudes of the teachers regarding this issue and practices on the ground. I thought the teachers' understanding and attitude counted much in the implementation of the internal assessment. I searched for them in Google Scholar using some keywords related to internal assessment and went through some literature. However, I confirmed that no research was carried out at the basic level of education, particularly concerning the English subject in my context, Surkhet. I was sure my research would contribute something new to this phenomenon, providing some implications for the teachers, researchers, policymakers, and school stakeholders as I had some ethos, pathos, and logos to convince the readers. Therefore, with my professors' help, I refined the title to 'Teachers' Understanding of Practices of Continuous Assessment System in ELT Class'. The phenomenological study would allow me to learn about real-life experiences of phenomena that reflect and represent similar people in society. At least the story should be relatable to the positionality of people with the same circumstances. Therefore, I chose the participants who had experienced the phenomena. Their real-life accounts with perceptions and praxis on internal assessment guided me to conclude the study. My reflective journals and experiences on the phenomena also supported the meaning-making.

I learned many good things regarding the assessment system from the conversations with my participants and some stakeholders during my research. I heard about sad incidents and moments that resulted from the assessment system. The suicidal cases by students upon getting less marks, and clashes between colleagues in implementing the internal assessment and assigning the marks were some bad news

that I heard in discussions. Similarly, I could solidify my mind about using pedagogical and assessment plans and policies despite the unfavorable situations. I learned to do my best to teach and assess simultaneously and lead by example. Moreover, I learned to make authentic use of the assessment in the active engagement of my learners.

### **Implications**

Upon careful examination of the relevant literature, I can state that Internal Assessment (IA) has been a cross-cutting issue, and it has received great significance and attention in education. Through the participants' accounts of their real educational experiences, it can be declared that internal assessment is challenging, yet there are some implications for the people concerned. I want to underline a few effects of my research journey in light of the interview, discussions, field notes, and document analysis. The following scholars and stakeholders connected to the assessment and education are supposed to benefit from the findings of my study.

#### **Implication for Teachers**

The teachers have been empowered to assign fifty percent of the marks to their students. The teachers must understand that internal assessment is meant to provide opportunities to update with the dynamic nature of pedagogy and match their assessment with their daily instruction. Internal assessment is for learning, and it is a part of the teachers and students' learning. The center of the discussion is the willpower and dedication of the teachers towards incorporating the internal assessment to the utmost level. Appropriate use of rubrics provides transparent results to the students so they can track their progress and prepare for further improvements. Ultimately, this helps students advance academically. In CAS, rubrics can be highly significant, as it will be evident in how students are assessed. Teachers provide students with timely feedback and use rubrics to let them know the learning objectives. Students can also significantly benefit from self-evaluation, peer evaluation, reflection working with portfolios, project works, classwork, homework, group work, etc.

Not the same teaching technique fits all students; similarly, not the same formal assessment tool can work for all kinds of students. Therefore, the teachers can get the insights to create many authentic, informal, cultural, and context-relative assessment tools to facilitate the students' learning along with the evaluation. Teachers can keep an eye on where their students are. If they are facing difficulty in

learning, they can adopt the pedagogical tools to address the issue and offer remedial teaching and support when needed. Different approaches and strategies can cater to individual students' needs, intelligences, and styles. Additionally, this study provided knowledge to the teachers to give prior information to the students about the internal assessment system so that they become well-aware, prepared, cooperative, and active in their learning. When the students are cooperative, communicative, and self-motivated to learn, they become ready to accept any challenge, and the assessment as learning becomes practicable in class. The teachers get the idea to choose the assessment task carefully to present their communicative and creative skills.

### **Implication for the Researcher**

This study sets a benchmark for the research academia by adding some new knowledge to the repository of internal assessment. Overall, my participants' internal assessment experiences are shaped by their childhood experiences and the working scenario of their context.

The perceptions and practices on the criteria, such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and term tests, provide complete perspectives on the internal assessment. The researcher can get ideas on the tools, rubrics, and criteria for internal assessment. The idea is to carry out qualitative research employing a phenomenological approach. Socio-cultural theory is another learning method that clarifies the connection between theory and internal assessment at two levels: ZPD, and ZAD. From my imperative to conduct the research, the researcher can develop a vision of the urgency of executing the research in this area. The ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions, quality standards, and ethical qualities can provide researchers with a roadmap to research similar phenomena. Future researchers who look forward to working in this area will find this research helpful, and they can develop a vision to conduct research in the same area and identify the methodological, contextual, and theoretical gaps.

### **Implication for the Stakeholders of School**

The responsibility of basic level school education is handed over to the local government, municipalities, and rural municipalities. The local government has the authority to make planning, programs, examinations, supervision, and facilitation. The aforementioned conversations and analyses will appropriately benefit the stakeholders and school management committee in determining teachers' instruments to evaluate students.

The school management committee can work to motivate the teachers to autonomy and experiential teaching, which can lead to academic prosperity. My research can guide teachers in getting involved in strategic planning and decision-making meetings, continuous professional development training, and programs. Therefore, this research benefits the stakeholders and school management committee to transform the educational system from conventional approaches to contextual, innovative, and progressive approaches by creating a welcoming, resourceful, and appreciative working environment.

### **Implication for Policy Makers**

Assessment systems are revised to meet global and local needs, as well as applicability, adaptability, and international education standards. Policymakers can have applicable ideas and insights from the research findings to reform and revise the assessment policy. Since my research is based on the teachers' perceptions, practices, and experiences, it aids decision-makers in making decisions based on evidence rather than hypothesis.

The findings from the thorough examination and interpretation of the information from field notes, documents, and in-depth interviews have provided the guidelines for successfully implementing the internal assessment in the Nepalese context. The research finds the gaps in policy and practice due to various reasons like lack of training, monitoring, resources, workload, unprofessionalism, etc. My research bridges the gap, suggesting that policymakers clarify the internal assessment rubrics for the teachers and school management teams. Policymakers should monitor and enhance the quality of education at the school level through internal assessments. They can get feedback from teachers, students, parents, and people concerned about internal assessment. Likewise, policymakers can help supervisors and mentors to guide and support the teachers in successfully implementing internal assessment even in the low-resourced school setting. Using consistent internal evaluations, they can help schools match their instruction to national standards. It makes it possible for decision-makers to determine whether educational results uphold the intended standards.

Disparities in assessment are seen due to caste, location, gender, or socioeconomic status, which can be clarified by research. Therefore, using this data, policymakers can create interventions targeting these disparities and ensure that certain groups are not disadvantaged by internal assessments. My findings suggest

that policymakers should develop measurable rubrics for the participation of students in classes and that the frequency of internal assessments should be determined.

Policymakers can get the insights to supervise the portfolios and IA forms filling and compare the Internal and external grades of the students. Similarly, policymakers learn to make internal assessments more inclusive to serve a diverse range of learners, including those with disabilities or who live in remote areas. This research helps identify the obstacles marginalized students face in internal assessments. Similarly, the study provides a way forward to provide the teachers with full authority to customize and contextualize the internal assessment system.

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## ANNEX

**Appendix A: Consent Form****Kathmandu University School of Education****M.Phil. in English language Education****Consent to take part in research**

**Research Title: Teachers' Understanding and Practices of Continuous  
Assessment System in ELT Class**

1. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
2. I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
3. I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
4. I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
5. I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
6. I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
7. I understand that my identity will remain anonymous in any report on the results of this research. I will change my name and disguise any details of my interview that may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
8. I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in dissertations, conference presentations, published papers, etc.
9. I understand that if I inform the researcher that I or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities. They will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
10. I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

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Name of the participant	Signature of participant	Date
I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.		
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Name of the researcher	Signature of researcher	Date

**Appendix B: Interview Guiding Questions**

1. How was your experience with the assessment during your school days?
2. How did your teachers assess you?
3. Did you like the assessment system of your school days?
4. How do you assess the students now?
5. How many times do you assess the students in a year?
6. What is assessment in your opinion? Why is assessment important?
7. What are internal and external assessments? How do you assess the students internally and externally?
8. What do you have to assess in the internal assessment?
9. How do you assess the LSWR?
10. How do you prepare the portfolios and record keeping of the students?
11. What is the difference between CAS and IA?
12. What are the strengths of IA?
13. What are the challenges of IA?
14. How is your experience with the Internal Assessment?
15. Do you recall any happy/sad moments regarding assessment?
16. What differences do you find between the assessments of this time and your time?

## **Appendix C : Interview Transcription Samples**

### **First Round Conversation with a teacher regarding assessment experiences in school days)**

Date: 2080/9/8 2023/12/23 Time: 2: 30 pm

Setting: a vacant classroom

The school was a secondary school with CCTV surveillance, the school was closed for the preparation of the exam. Only a few students were there to rehearse a dance performance and tuition class after 4 pm. My informant teacher was waiting for me in the canteen outside the school. The informal discussion is based on her experience with the assessment system in her school days in a remote school setting.

#### **Question: When did you start your schooling?**

**Ans:** I started my schooling in class 1 when I was 7 years old. I came first in class 3 and got a uniform and money as a prize. I cried when my uniform was torn and my madam consoled me. When I was going to school, a piece of glass pierced my foot and bled. I still remember the days of struggle and shortage in my time.

#### **Question: Could you please share your experiences with the exams in your school days?**

**Answer:** I don't remember taking a practical exam, I only took the theory exam of 100 full marks. Our teacher did not tell us about the assessment system as we do now. I was not aware of the assessments like internal and external assessment exams. But we give syllabus introduction to the students first.

#### **Question: How many exams were there?**

**Answer:** There used to be 3 types of exams in total. The final exam determined the grade. I am not sure if the marks were aggregated or not. We used to get afraid of the exams. We had less time but we worked hard. We read less but did better even though we remained absent many days and went to school to take exams only. Because we were more practical and used to doing lots of housework and completing our studies. These days students have much time to study but they are not serious about their studies.

#### **Question: Why do you think the students are not serious about their studies and assessment?**

**Answer:** They are not morally good. They do not listen to the teacher. Science and technology have made Ready-made answers. They don't have creativity.

**Question: How were the patterns of questioning and answering in your time?**

Answer: In our time, the students were creative. Textual questions were asked. We had to recall the answers and write.

**Question: What do you think, was it good to recite the lesson?**

Answer: From the students' point of view it was good. They could read, and manage time. But now the students can find the answers from the passage therefore they think they don't need to read.

**Question: Do you remember cheating in the exam?**

Answer: No, I don't think so. It was not in practice. But these days' students copy exactly what the teacher writes in class. For example, if letter writing is asked in the exam, they cheat exactly on the class note given by the teacher in class. Even they copied the same date which was mentioned in the sample letter. Even in cheating, they don't use their common sense. Sometimes the Nepali words are written in brackets to clarify the vocabulary, the students copy the same ditto. Cheating is a technique but they should revise.

**Question: How was the cheating in your time?**

Answer: There was no cheating system. However, at the College level, it was popular. I could see the examinees copying from the cheats that they brought.

**Question: How did you prepare for the exam?**

Answer: We did not have tuition classes like these days. We joined coaching classes with some fees like 100,200 rs. after passing the test exam (class 10). The teachers taught us exam-oriented lessons.

**Question: Why did you choose an English subject?**

Answer: My teacher suggested I read English as a major as I was good at English. My brother helped me study English and he taught me tense structure. My friends used to copy from my notes.

**Question: Did you experience the support of the teacher in the exam?**

Answer: No. I attempted all the questions myself. I attended the exam for 3 hours and finished my exam paper sooner than the other exam. I didn't experience the marks and feedback from the teachers. No chance to see the exam copies.

**Question: Do you have any happy/sad moments about the exams and results? Or you could not attend all the questions and received fewer marks?**

Answer: Once I was late for the SLC exam, I was living further from the center than my friends. When I reached the gate, I started crying seeing the policeman. it was

difficult and delayed to find my seat as the seats were changed each day. The guard had to guide me to find my room but did not. At that time, I was afraid of the teacher and the police. I was sobbing and writing, unfortunately, on the same day the external supervisors visited our hall and I got frightened more so I couldn't do well as I expected in Math. It's all because of being late and my hands didn't move smoothly seeing the exam supervisors in front.

**Question: Did your colleagues pass the basic and secondary level as you did?**

Answer: My batch was good. Most of all passed the SLC. We 8 girls passed the SLC. It was a great number. I passed in the second division. It was of great value to pass the SLC regularly even in the third division.

**Question: Did the people use unfair means in the SLC?**

Answer: Our center was tight therefore none was allowed to cheat in Khalanga school, the headquarters of Jajarkot district. Policemen were at a stand-by. No chance to cheat. But these days' students go to some schools of Jajarkot to pass the SEE easily by cheating. These days also students read here in Birendranagar but go to remote schools to take the exam expecting to pass in the favorable conditions for cheating.

**Question: Did your friends leave school because they failed the exam of English?**

Answer: I could see the students drop out of school but no idea if it was because of English. In our school, 8(6 males and 2 female) students were reading English as a major subject.

**Question: In your time did you practice listening and speaking skills?**

Answer: No. it was not. They just taught us lessons using the lecture method.

**Question: Did you ask for more marks with the teachers?**

Answer; No I did not but these days the students surround me to receive more marks. Once I felt a bitter experience about the marks of my students. I had newly joined this school. The questions were sent from outside. I had not taught the re-arranging type of question in the passage but it was asked. I decided to add 5 marks to each student's total marks. But the first student in the class had already done all correctly and got the full mark of 5/5 on that question. It means he was not to receive the bonus marks of 5 as the others. He was angry with my decision and tore the answer sheets. He had to give me back as we had to store the answer sheets for six months for the record. Others clapped and hooted for his deed. It irritated me so I punished all the students. I was a new teacher here and they did not know I also gave punishment. The next day a

female student's parent visited our school and complained that because of my punishment, her daughter could not move her hands and eat food. She asked if she had sent her daughter to get beaten at school. That was a frustrating moment for me but here we collectively faced the guardians. Our colleagues convinced her saying that no one enjoys punishing the students unless there are some obligations. Then I have become cautious in dealing with the students. I ask about their health first.

**Question: Do your students compare the marks of the exam?**

Answer: Yes, they do. As soon as they receive it, they compare their copies with their friends rather than seeing their mistakes and comments. I snatch the papers if they do so and complain to me about the marks. But giving the marks depends on the mood and attitude of the teacher.

**Question: What do you think it would be if there was a continuous assessment system like this in your time?**

Answer: CAS is meant for a liberal promotion system. It doesn't fail the students because the subject teachers provide CAS marks liberally. In our time there was a pass/fail system. Now in internal assessment, there is again a pass-fail or NG system. Now the internal assessment system is good. Before, there was the provision of giving marks only not letting the students know how they are getting marks, but the assessment is fine these days and students can see their marks. There are criteria with marks; therefore, it is easy to measure the performance of the students fairly and allocate marks to them.

## **Second-round discussion on the Perception and Practice of Internal Assessment**

**Question: How are you teaching and assessing the students?**

**Answer:** My students' level is not so good. I have to write everything on the board. I asked them to copy the board summary. They can recite later, if they don't have creativity and originality. They will fail if I don't give the marks for their copied answers. They copy without comprehending what they are writing. They request me not to teach in English since their background is very poor. They ask for tuition classes and pay attention but not in class. How do they pass English if their performance is zero, therefore, we have to teach tuition classes to those students to enable them to pass the exam. In our time students were self-motivated and disciplined but not these days.

**Question: How do you assess the students?**

Answer: There are forms including topics like attendance, participation, homework, listening and speaking skills. How active are they in the class looking at their performance we give 2 marks in participation? We give exams before each terminal exam and keep a record of the obtained marks.

**Question: How do you give listening and speaking tests?**

Answer: For listening, we play the listening text included in the textbook. We use speakers available at school. We prepare the questions and give the worksheets to the students. We do a listening test 2 times before terminal exams.

**Question: How do you make the result of the first term?**

Answer: We give the terminal exams in full marks 50, and convert them into 5 marks. We prepare the grade sheet but don't give the progress cards. Only the students know their marks in each subject. We show the results in 50. If any student has to transfer to the school, they receive the grade sheet.

**Question: How is IA different from the previously introduced CAS?**

Answer: Yes, Internal assessment is different from CAS. CAS is meant for filling out the form tracking the students' progress daily but in IA we can just assess the students once a term. It's easy to keep the unit record in IA.

**Question: What is the need for internal assessment in listening, and speaking if the students get a chance to see his/ her marks on a paper-pencil test?**

Answer: In the internal assessment of listening and speaking if a student is absent, he/she can take the exam the next day. It's not possible in a paper-pencil test. I mean the students can't skip the internal assessment.

**Question: How do you do reading tests?**

Answer: I do the reading tests, and give marks in the diary. Reading activities help segregate the levels of my students. My students are very poor in reading. I provide rezas as, 1,2,3,4,5, and give the marks under the reading heading. They are asked to read the lesson. If anyone did not start reading, don't get any marks. The students don't reach up to level 4 and 5.

**Question: How do you assess writing?**

Answer: I give project work for writing. For example, if I teach letter writing, I ask for letter writing in the project work. I ask them to make the project work on the A4 paper and present their writing to the class.

**Question: How do you assess speaking?**

Answer: For speaking, there are lots of topics. According to the roll number, I ask the students to talk about general topics like describing their English teacher, describing their class, etc. I need a week to complete speaking in my class. A student is given 2-5 minutes. There are 72 students in a class.

**Question: How many periods do you teach in a day?**

Answer: 5 periods in the day and 2 in the morning.

**Question: How much difficulty do you find in implementing the internal assessment in your class?**

Answer: It's challenging. We need to submit the marks of internal assessment in the municipality as well. We need to update the marks of class 8 in the municipal office. The Municipal education may ask for the record as well. Students are cautious about the internal assessment as per the discipline and moral conduct of the students we can give the marks in internal assessment and internal assessment determines the result of the students.

**Question: How is it guaranteed if the numbers are authentic or not?**

Answer: teachers show the assessment criteria on the board and understand the importance of it. They are careful about their assessment and performance and those who do not understand they are not serious. They think they can pass but the chances are there to fail. If students are absent in the listening and speaking even though the teachers are inviting them, they can fail in the internal assessment.

**Question: What differences did you find between the CAS and Internal assessment system?**

Answer: I newly arrived in this school when the CAS was being implemented in our school. At that time there was a lady head teacher who filled my forms herself. CAS was for improving the students' performance but we couldn't do so. We were overloaded when we did the final at once.

**Question: That's why CAS was a failure. What do you think about it?**

Answer: Yes, I agree. Students were getting marks without any judgment. I also gave the marks by taking references from other colleagues at my school. But internal assessment is good.

**Question: What are the challenges of IA in your class?**

Answer: I am mentally tortured when I am not up to date with IA. I am in a hurry to do it because of a large number of classes. I use my speaker in the class.

**Question: What changes did you find in you while working in IA?**

Answer: I am confident now. I have done the best of all. I am hopeful in my profession.

**Thank you for your time and sharing.**

### **Third-round discussion to get to know the understanding of the IA**

It was recorded in an online Zoom meeting. Audio and video were recorded, and the audio was transcribed and translated into English.

#### **What do you mean by assessment?**

As a teacher evaluation between students and teachers' relation Formative and summative

To measure if the learning is achieved or not? Objectives are met or not

#### **Why do we need assessment?**

As per the system, we have to follow, It is necessary for both teachers and students. The learning achievement of the students determines the performance of both teachers and students. How did the teachers teach, if the students could grasp the teaching or not it is evaluated?

#### **What do you mean by summative and formative evaluations?**

Formative assessment is done in the middle to improve the students' learning. and summative is done at the end to grade the students in the upper level. According to the age and level of the students, they have to meet the objectives and an assessment is needed to check the level.

#### **What is the assessment provision at the basic level?**

There are 50 % internal and 50 % external. Internal assessment is a continuous assessment. External assessment is a summative assessment.

#### **What are the criteria for internal assessment?**

In internal assessment, there is everything to measure regularity, discipline, and skills in the internal assessment of English, 36 full marks are for language skills and the remaining marks are allocated for attendance, morality, and project work. Out of 36, 10/10 marks are for listening and speaking and 8/8 marks are for reading and writing.

#### **How should we assess the listening? Speaking? Reading and writing? Project work?**

Answer: For listening links are on YouTube produced by the education department, and apps are available online after COVID-19. There used to be cassettes before but

these days links can work for playing the listening text. I have downloaded all the apps.

**How do you assess the listening?**

We inform the students before the test. Pre-inform the students and distribute the worksheets. We play the audio 2 or more than 2 times We have developed the questions based on the book. Or by listening to the audio, we can make the questions like fill in the blanks. We play the audio three or more than three times unless the students understand and feel confident to do the tasks.

**How many times to give the listening test in the grid?**

It does not specify the times. There are unit wise listening tests. We give the test as per the time we take term-wise. Sometimes 2 and sometimes 1 for 10 marks.

**Does it mean to give the test regularly?**

Yes, there are listening activities after each lesson but we are exam-oriented. We just take the listening test before the term exam. We check the worksheets and score them.

**What do you assess in the listening?**

Contents are wide text like stories, news, and reports like reading.

**Question: Where do you keep the record of the listening marks?**

Answer: There are mark slips for keeping the record.

There are columns for keeping the marks ledger in the term exam.

**What does the CDC say about the speaking test?**

It says to give 5 minutes for a student to speak on a topic.

**Question: How do you do a speaking test?**

Ans: 5 minutes for a student about Practice: It's quite difficult. We keep the marks slip front and inform the students about their speaking test. We write instructions on the board and call the students roll number-wise. The contents for speaking are, For example, describe yourself, your classroom, school, father, mother, etc. I take 1 week in total. 2-3 minutes for each student. I can do 15- 20 students on a day.

**Question: How to do Reading tests in the curriculum, In the CDC?**

Answer: I have not seen it exactly in reading. I know about the external assessment of reading. I just give reading tests at my convenience.

Reading is very quick. In English medium, most of the students can do but in Nepali, mediums. According to the level in English medium, 5 % can't do. We have marks slip. Nepali medium doesn't do. Who knows they get ticks but cross. For one paragraph/ 2 paragraphs. If they read, they get ticks. We know their level when they

come in front. Some become speechless when they come in front and go back to their seat.

**How to assess Writing according to curriculum?**

What we teach in writing like writing an application letter to your teacher in class. We give the same question as project work and they have to prepare the letter in A4 paper.

**How many questions do you ask for writing?**

One student receives one question. If there are 75 students in a class, 1-15 Essay, 16-31- letter formal letter informal letter, report writing etc. We give one question only.

**What about Participation in the assessment?**

We assess attendance with 2 full marks and 2 marks for classroom activities.

For attendance, the class teacher prepares the results of total attendance in the ledger sheet. The head teacher is proactive and he provides marks 2 as per the formula as he has ideas in calculation. We make the discussion and make uniformity for marks.

**Question: How do you assess the class participation?**

By observing the behavior of the students. We evaluate by asking questions. Home works were submitted or not? Discipline or not? If anyone makes noise, we don't give marks.

Where do you mark and keep the record of attendance and classroom participation?

Answer: There are columns

**Question: Did you take the training for the internal assessment?**

Yes, I did our head teacher orally oriented us. We are not given the training from anybody? We are not included in the training outside because we are mobilized from a local fund. The permanent government paid teachers to get a chance for such trainings but we are oriented by the internal resource person.

**Question: Do you get support from colleagues and school administrators for your assessment?**

Answer: Yes, our school provides the forms. Once a teacher colleague said to the students that there was a paper-pencil test of full marks 75. But I said 50/50. Still, some teachers are not updated with the curriculum

**Question: What do your students feel about the assessment?**

Answer: They are happy. To pass the Maths especially. 2 hours only exam. They are hopeful about it

**Question: What do the teachers say?**

They are happy to invigilate for 2 hours. They get marks easily and good so their GPA is good.

## **Appendix D: Participants' Profile**

**Dinesh:** He is a well-experienced English language teacher at a basic level. He has more than 13 years of teaching experience. He has been involved in teachers' professional development organizations. Being a responsible teacher, he has initiated many programs in his school. He regularly gives extra classes to his students. I approached him because he was open-minded and showed his interest in participating voluntarily in my research.

**Karuna:** She is also an experienced teacher at a public school. She has been working as a rahat teacher at the basic level. She has passed her Master's degree in English subject. She is a professional teacher who likes to participate in professional development programs. She updates herself with the new trends and system of pedagogy. She has availed the resources and materials for her classroom teaching, like mike, speaker, etc., at her own expense. Seeing her enthusiasm and willingness to teach and learn, I chose her as one of my participants and she readily accepted to participate in my research.

**Mahesh:** He has been teaching English for more than 15 years. He is a permanent teacher at the basic level and also teaches secondary-level students 10+2. He is an active and cooperative teacher at his school. His school administration had recommended him. He became my respondent as he happily accepted my proposal to share his perspectives and ideas and contribute to the assessment system.

## Appendix E: Sample Coding

Research question				
1. How do the basic level English teachers perceive the internal assessment system in English Language Teaching classes?				
Question 1. What is assessment?				
Name	Response	Code	Categories	Theme
Dinesh	an evaluation to measure the students' achievement using formal or informal means is assessment. It can be done both in and out of the class. Similarly, it is done in or at the end of the lesson. Weekly, fortnightly, monthly or annually	MARKING	Definition of assessment	assessment in the eyes of the teachers
Karuna	An evaluation of students' and teachers' relation To measure if the learning is achieved or not. Objectives are met or not	MEASUREMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT		
Mahesh	It is the evaluation to measure the learning achievement of the students.  Summative assessment	MEASUREMENT		
Question 2. What is the provision of internal assessment?				
Name	Response	Code	Categories	Theme
Dinesh	We have these criteria ( Shows the grid and explains the marks). We have 50 for internal and 50 for external for class 8. We have internal and external examinations. For internal we have some headings like attendance participation, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. We make terminal exam questions in school	DEMONSTRATION OF THE CRITERIA	Definition of assessment  Update with the internal assessment	assessment in the eyes of the teachers
Karuna	There are 50 % internal and 50 % external. Internal assessment is a continuous assessment. External	UPDATED WITH NEW		

	<p>assessment is a summative assessment.</p> <p>36 full marks are for language skills and the remaining marks are allocated for attendance, morality, and project work. Out of 36, 10/10 marks are for listening and speaking and 8/8 marks are for reading and writing</p>	CURRICULUM		
Mahesh	<p>In class 6 &amp; 7 internal assessment is 40% for CAS and external Assessment is 60%. In class 8 25 % internal and 75% external</p> <p>3 attendance and classroom activities, 8 listening and 8 speaking and 6 marks for term exam. 75 % BLE exam. students have to secure 35% to pass in the external exam and 40% to pass in the internal exam</p>	CAS AS INTERNAL ASSESS MENT		

## Appendix F: Internal Assessment Guidelines

### Subject: English (Grade 4-8)

#### Introduction

This guideline for internal assessment is fully based on the approved English curriculum for Grade 4-8. The main aim of developing the guideline is to assist teachers for effective implementation of the internal assessment provision envisioned by the curriculum. The curriculum has stated the following provisions to be carried out for internal assessment.

S. N.	Assessment area	Weightage
a	Participation (attendance: 2 and students' performance in teaching learning activities: 2)	4
b	Reading and writing (Each skill carries 50% weightage)	16
c	Listening and speaking (Each skill carries 50% weightage)	20
d	Terminal test	10

The curriculum has indicated that scores from formative assessment will be taken as the basis of internal assessment. For this, portfolio of each student should be maintained by the teacher. The portfolio consists of the details on students' performance in different assessment areas given above. The record of student's project work, test papers or other proof of the students' performance should be kept in his/her portfolio. The allocation of weightage under each of the assessment areas will be as specified below:

#### a. Participation (PAR)

Participation of learners is to be assessed on the basis of attendance and students' performance in teaching learning activities. Both carry 2 marks which are assessed based on the following indicators.

SN	Criteria	Indicator	Mark	Obtained mark
1.	Attendance	90% and above attendance	2	
		85% to below 90% of attendance.	1.5	
		80% to below 85% of attendance	1	
		75% to below 80% of attendance.	0.5	
2.	Students' performance in teaching learning activities	Be very curious in learning, have a thorough frequent interaction in discussion, present own creative views and ideas in all activities, complete the entire task oneself	2	
		Be curious in learning, have frequent interaction in discussion, present own creative views and ideas in most of the activities, complete the most of the task oneself	1.5	
		Be somehow curious in learning, have some interaction in discussion, present views and ideas in some of the activities, complete the partial task oneself or completes the task with other's help	1	
		Be less curious in learning, have less interaction in discussion, present partial views and ideas in some of the activities , unable to complete the even the partial task oneself or with other's help	0.5	
Total			4	

### b. Listening and Speaking (LS)

Testing of listening and speaking skills is included in the internal assessment. As per the curricular provision, teachers need to prepare listening and speaking tasks themselves or they can use the tasks from the textbook so as to assess the students' performance. Assessing listening and speaking for internal assessment is an integral part of teaching learning process. It is a part of assessment for learning. It does not assume to carry out a separate and different test. The teacher can design some additional tasks similar to the task given in the textbook and use those additional tasks for internal assessment purposes. However, it is mandatory for the teacher to maintain the portfolio of the students how and through which tasks they assessed students for internal assessment purpose. While assessing, the tasks should cover the learning outcomes of the assessment period. The suggested tasks for testing listening and speaking skills are as follows:

#### Number of Tasks for Listening and Speaking: 5 (5\*4=20 marks)

The teacher assesses the students' progress continuously. However, to ease the teacher in keeping record of internal assessment, the teacher should at least maintain the records of students' performance on five of the following types of tasks terminally so that they can be presented as a proof of the performance. It helps to indicate the progress of the students and do the remedial treatment accordingly. Among 5 tasks, there will be 2 listening tasks, two speaking task; and one integrated task which will incorporate both listening and speaking skills. These all tasks carry 4 marks each.

#### Task Types:

##### Listening Tasks (Any two):

1. Listen and Answer (can repeat if other types are not possible in the particular assessment period)
2. Listen and say
3. Listen and write
4. Listen and Draw
5. Listen and Follow
6. Listen and Act
7. Listen and respond

These are some of the suggested tasks. Teacher can use other types of task as well.

For assessing listening skill, teacher will use two sound files or audios based on which they will design the above mentioned types of tasks. There should be four questions based on a sound file for a task and it will carry 4 marks for responding all four questions correctly. Two sound files and two tasks mean 8 questions which carry 8 marks. The record of the task and students' performance should be maintained in portfolios.

The tasks, assessment criteria, descriptor or indicators and marking guide are given in the table below. According to the task type and criteria, the teacher can use the respective marking indicator. For example, if a teacher has developed 'Listen and answer' type of task to assess students' comprehension, he/she can use the marking indicator of the criteria 'Comprehension' and mark 4, 3, 2 or 1 according to their performance. However, a certain task can be assessed through multiple criteria and a teacher can follow them. In such case, an average is to be made for record keeping of the marks.

SN	Tasks	Criteria	Descriptor/Indicator	Mark	Obtained mark
1.	Listen and Answer/ Listen and say/ Listen and write	Comprehension	Student understands all of the message from the spoken text.	4	
			Student understands most of the message from the spoken text.	3	
			Student understands some of the message from the spoken	2	

			text but not all.		
			Student understands few of the main ideas or details from the spoken text.	1	
2.	Listen and draw/ Listen and follow/ Listen and act	Following direction	Student follows all of the directions/instructions accurately.	4	
			Student follows most of the directions/instructions accurately.	3	
			Student follows some of the directions/instructions but not all.	2	
			Student tries to follow directions/instructions.	1	
3.	Listen and respond	Response	Student gives completely appropriate and full responses.	4	
			Student gives mostly appropriate responses.	3	
			Student gives somewhat appropriate responses.	2	
			Student tries to give responses but responses are not appropriate.	1	
		Total			

#### Speaking Tasks (Any two)

1. Picture description
2. Topic Description (People, place, object)
3. Interview
4. Narrating past events
5. Retelling stories
6. Act out/Role play
7. Presentation of a project work

These are some common and suggested tasks. However, teacher can use many other types of tasks as well

For assessing speaking skill, teacher will design or use any two of the above mentioned type of tasks maintain the record. One task will carry 4 marks and it will be assessed based on the given rubrics.

SN	Tasks	Descriptor/Indicator	Mark	Obtained mark
1.	Speaking task and project work presentation	Pronunciation is clear and appropriate. Speech is smooth and the speed is normal. Vocabulary is correct and appropriate to the context. Grammar is accurate.	4	
		Pronunciation is mostly clear and appropriate. Speech is mostly smooth and the speed is normal. Vocabulary is mostly correct and appropriate to the context Grammar is accurate most of the time and does not affect understanding.	3	
		Pronunciation is somewhat clear but needs improvement.	2	

		Speech is somewhat smooth with some pauses. Vocabulary is somewhat correct and appropriate to the context. Vocabulary is limited and often inappropriate to the context.		
		Pronunciation is inappropriate. Speech is slow and contains several pauses. Vocabulary is limited and often inappropriate to the context. Several grammatical errors make speech difficult to understand.	1	
Total				

### Integrated Task (One)

This task includes talking or having conversations in relation to the language function or real situation including situational role play, act out, etc. For this, teacher should design such tasks in which two or more students talk (listen and respond) in relation to created situation for using the exponents of a language function. This tests both skills of both students at a time. Therefore, this task should incorporate both listening and speaking skills. The following indicators can be used for marking students' performance in this type of task.

Task	Criteria	Descriptor/Indicator	Mark	Mark Obtained
Integrated task	Listen, ask and respond	Student listens, initiates questions and gives completely appropriate and full responses.	4	
		Student listens, initiates questions and gives mostly appropriate responses.	3	
		Student listens, initiates questions and gives somewhat appropriate responses.	2	
		Student listens, tries to initiate questions and tries to give responses but questions and responses are not appropriate.	1	
Total				

The tasks should cover the learning outcomes of the assessment period. The teacher should design the appropriate tasks themselves or make use of some of the tasks from the textbook. The suggested tasks for assessing reading and writing are as follows:

Number of Tasks, Reading and Writing: 4 (4\*4=16)

### Task Types

#### Reading (Any two):

1. Reading aloud a text of about 100 words ( for fluency and accuracy)
2. Reading comprehension and vocabulary (oral and written)

Teaching reading aims to develop different sub-skills of reading. Therefore, different aspects like accuracy, fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension are assessed in terms of reading. An English teacher can

design tasks to assess these aspects and skills of reading. Any task a teacher designs should have four questions so that it can be marked 4.

To assess the skills of fluency, accuracy, vocabulary and reading comprehension, teacher will select a reading text grade appropriate to the level, and design 4 questions based on it, which will carry 4 marks. The reading comprehension test can be designed based on the different types of reading text: story, brochure, biography, notice, letter, news stories, etc. The questions' types can be short answer questions, true false, matching, fill in the blanks, multiple choice, ordering, etc. The questions should cover literal comprehension, reorganization, inference and evaluation skills.

The general marking guideline is given herewith. The teacher may decide which aspect he/she will be assessing in students and use the marking guideline accordingly.

SN	Tasks	Criteria	Descriptor/Indicator	Mark	Obtained mark
1.	Reading aloud a text of about 100 words	Fluency	Reading is smooth with appropriate expressions.	4	
			Reading is mostly smooth with some expressions.	3	
			Reading is somewhat smooth with limited expression.	2	
			Reading is slow with several pauses and no expression.	1	
2.	Reading aloud a text of about 100 words	Accuracy	Student can read all the words in the given text accurately.	4	
			Student can read most of the words accurately.	3	
			Student can read some words accurately but not all.	2	
			Student is unable to read most of the words accurately.	1	
3.	Reading comprehension (oral/written)	Comprehension	Student is able to understand all the information in the given text.	4	
			Student is able to understand most of the information in the given text.	3	
			Student is able to understand some parts of the text but not all.	2	
			Student is able to understand very little of the text.	1	
4	Reading comprehension and vocabulary	Vocabulary	Student is able to understand all the words used in the text.	4	

	(Vocabulary)		Student is able to understand most of the words used in the text.	3	
			Student is able to understand some of the words used but not all.	2	
			Student is able to understand very few words used.	1	
Total					

#### Writing Tasks (Any two)

1. Controlled/guided writing (Developing story, form filling, dialogue, description of table, graph, diagram, etc.)
2. Free writing (Paragraph, letter, application, news story, essay, etc.)
3. Writing project work

There will be two writing tasks: one controlled/guided writing and second free writing. The types of writing will be as per the types dealt in the teaching learning process during the period. Students writing should be assessed in terms of content, structure and organization, vocabulary and grammar, and spelling and punctuation.

The following guideline can be used for assessing students' writing:

SN	Descriptors/indicators				Mark	Mark Obtained
	Content	Structure and Organization	Vocabulary and Grammar	Spelling and Punctuation		
1.	Writing has relevant and sufficient content.	Writing has a clear structure and logical organization.	There is use of grade-appropriate words. Grammar is accurate throughout the text.	There is an accurate use of punctuation and spelling throughout the text.	4	
2.	Writing has mostly relevant and sufficient content.	Writing has mostly clear structure and logical organization.	There is use of grade-appropriate words. Grammar is accurate most of the time.	Punctuation and spelling is correct most of the time.	3	
3.	Writing has some content but needs improvement.	Writing has some structure but the organization needs improvement.	There is the use of some grade-appropriate words. Grammar is mostly inaccurate.	There are some errors in punctuation and spelling.	2	
4.	Writing lacks sufficient content and relevant ideas.	Writing lacks a clear structure and is difficult to understand.	There is the use of limited and often inappropriate words, grammar is inaccurate.	There are several errors in punctuation and spelling.	1	
Total						

It is mandatory for the teachers to maintain the record of the tasks used for assessing students' performance so that it can be presented as portfolio or evidences when asked later.

#### **d. Terminal Test**

Terminal test carries 10% marks of marks in the external assessment. At least two terminal tests should be administered and its record should be kept for the external examination. The full marks and weight of written examination of reading and writing (including grammar) will be as per the specification grid developed by Curriculum Development Centre. However, it won't be mandatory to include all the writing and grammatical items if they are not taught or introduced at the time of terminal test. The marks obtained in the terminal test should be converted to 10% and kept record for the final examination. If there are two terminal tests, each terminal test will weigh 5 percent. If there are more than two terminal tests, number of any two terminal tests will have to be calculated for the final examination or grade sheet.

#### **General Considerations in Internal Assessment**

Internal assessment will be done as a part of teaching learning process. However, for the record keeping purpose, the above mentioned number of tasks should be done at least once during the timeframe of each terminal examination and obtained marks should be recorded in the portfolio. For example, in the duration of first terminal examination, 5 listening and speaking tasks, 2 reading tasks and 2 writing tasks as specified above should be used to assess students' performance as an internal assessment. If more than once is done during a terminal, an average mark for each assessment areas should be made.

Students' performance in the internal assessment can be recorded as follows:

First/Second Terminal							
SN	Students Name	PAR (4)	LS (20)	RW (16)	Terminal Examination (10)	Total marks obtained	Obtained Grade

The grade sheet should be prepared as per the Letter Grading Implementation Support Manual 2079.