

BECOMING ART-BASED ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
TEACHERS: AN AUTO/ETHNOGRAPHIC INQUIRY

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A Dissertation

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## AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of Sikha Gurung entitled *Becoming Art-Based English Language Teachers: An Auto/Ethnographic Inquiry* presented for the degree of Master of Philosophy in English Language Education on 30 July 2021 has been approved.

Abstract approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Prof. Laxman Gnawali, PhD

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Despite various opinions and studies about the significance of Art Based Language Teaching in the existing literature, any documented research about the same, particularly, in the ELT classrooms of Nepal seems missing. Hereof, with the objective of showing art forms as effective tools in ELT, this research work aims to unravel the journey of becoming ABLT teachers by exploring the creative ABLT methods in their practices. In efforts to this, first of all, I reflect upon my own experiences through the study of 'self' and then delve into my participants' teaching contexts through an ethnographic study. The multi-paradigmatic approach of its theoretical reference to 'Transformative Learning Theory' propounded by Jack Mezirow helped me unfold the process of 'Becoming.' I have double roles played in my research: the researcher and the researched. Besides, there are other two primary ELT teachers of Kathmandu selected purposively who represent the community of practice. I collected the information through methods like observation, interview and field notes. Some significant themes are taken out, analysed and discussed.

This study of self and others makes me reflective to my own transformative learning explained with the metaphorical transformation from an egg to a butterfly. I sense that I am in a process of becoming and that is continuous. In this process, I

discover that various professional development platforms, teachers' passion for self-development, the application of their knowledge and critical view of their own practices are the essence of knowing and growing towards the process of 'becoming.' Similarly, the journey of practice to becoming ABLT teachers witness and discover the common ABLT methods with the use of various art form like music, storytelling, drawing, thinking marks and images/pictures/videos used as tools by me and my participants as creative tools to facilitate our teaching-learning process. These discoveries are the key essence of adult learning of Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory, where in the process of adult learning, we raise questions, engage in premise reflection and transform.

Consequently, I can sense the implications of my research on myself: personally, academically and professionally. Currently, I feel being in the stage of Aristotle's Phronesis: gaining wisdom from my practical actions and sense the rise of a Pedagogical Activist inside me, who advocates for the use of Art in ELT. Similarly, the early grade English teachers can find my research resourceful of ABLT methods to make their classroom engaging and the urge for continuous professional development can be motivated too. Finally, the future researchers who would like to pursue research in the similar areas can find the information of my research referential and fill in the gap left by my study through their research.

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30 July 2021

Sikha Gurung

Degree Candidate

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## DEDICATION

*T for TRILLION things they teach us*

*E for the valuable EMOTIONS that they invest on us*

*A for they are real ARTISTS*

*C for the CHERISHED memories we create with them*

*H for the HEART as pure as gold*

*E for their EVERLASTING motivation*

*R for they hardly take any REST.*

*Put them together, it makes TEACHER, they mean the WORLD to me.*

To all my wonderful teachers who have made significant differences in my life with their precious teachings

## NOVELTY IN CREATIVITY

I hereby affirm that my dissertation is an original piece of work to the best of my knowledge and capacity. I am sure that my study does not plagiarize anybody's idea, nor it has presented anybody's work like quotations, pictures, tables, sentences, or words without any clear acknowledgement. Hence, I am the sole author of this dissertation, and it has not been published or submitted for any publication.

30 July 2021

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This Master of Philosophy in English Language Education dissertation titled *Becoming Art-Based English Language Teachers: An Auto/Ethnographic Inquiry* was presented by Sikha Gurung on 30 July 2021.

APPROVED

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I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Kathmandu University Library. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request for scholarly purposes.

\_\_\_\_\_ 30 July 2021  
Sikha Gurung  
Degree Candidate

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Next, my family's role is colossal in believing in me and taking care of household responsibilities whilst my thoughts and time were occupied by my study. My husband's availability at any time to drive me all the way to the university from Banepa and take me back after working for long hours in the library is incredible. My son's maturity to look after himself well while I was away from home most of the time also aided my concentration. Likewise, my mother, sister and brother's motivation always helped me go forward with positivity.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

ABLT	Art-Based Language Teaching
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
ECAs	Extra-Curricular Activities
ELT	English language Teaching
ELLs	English Language Learners
IATEFL	International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
IGNOU	Indira Gandhi National Open University
ILF	Interactive Language Fair
KUSOED	Kathmandu University School of Education
MDS	Multiparadigmatic Design Space
MoE	Ministry of Education
NELTA	Nepal English Language Teachers' Association
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
SSRP	School Sector reform Plan
TERSD	Transformative Education for Research and Sustainable Development
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of other languages
TL	Transformative Learning
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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## TO THE VALUED READERS

Dear Readers,

You might be aware that every dissertation has own style of presentation of its information, experiences, evidences and their analysis reflective of the researcher's intent. Most of them follow the structure of the standard of dissertation writing while some find their own ways. So, I am writing this preface to give you a quick tour into my research's style and the reasons of the choice so that



*Figure 1.1: Symbolic direction to my readers*  
(Source: My photo gallery)

you know what to expect while reading it. Therefore, this platform is to orient you about the choice of this dissertation's writing style in order to ensure that you know what's going on in it the course of reading it.

I would like to start by informing you that as an auto/ethnographic inquiry, I have chosen to write my dissertation in a 'highly personalized style' drawing on my personal experiences of art-based teaching to extend an understanding of a societal phenomenon (Wall, 2006) and thus deviating from the mainstream writing that follows a linear process. I have adopted a multi-paradigmatic approach to interpret and make meaning of my/participants' experiences of teaching English through ABLT methods. To do so, I have used multiple genres of expression like story, poems, dialogues, plot, reflections, metaphors, images and normal paragraphs. Furthermore, following the multi-paradigmatic approach, every chapter has multi-

expressions used to unveil the experiences of becoming. A short story sets the stage of each chapter relevant to their content. Those stories in the beginning of the chapters should be taken as an introduction of its content told in the form of a subplot. The contents of the chapters are then restated by the chapter wrap up at the end. Similarly, the prologue is borrowed from the elements of novels to give the background of the researcher's becoming ABLT teachers in an artistic way. Talking about the metaphorical headings of each sub-titles, they are consciously kept in such a way to maintain the theme of the research: art-based, the metaphors have been explained though.

Next, keeping the essence of auto/ethnography at the centre that tells the "stories of/about the self through the lens of culture" (Adams, Jones & Ellis, 2015, p.1), the dissertation flows with the dialectic between the researcher as one of the participants and her participants. Or in other words the researcher's experiences as a participant is followed by other participants' or vice versa some times. Particularly, chapter four and five are the answers to my research queries on growing and practicing ABLT respectively in the process of becoming. They juxtapose me and my participants' experiences of knowing about and the practices of ABLT in our classrooms. Simply put, chapter four first explores my journey of growing or knowing about ABLT followed by my participants' and chapter five explores my journey of practicing ABLT methods followed by my participants' or vice versa. The experiences are then followed by the reflection of the practices as a researcher to draw the insight to the experiences in relation to the theme of becoming art-based.

Another important thing to consider while reading this dissertation is my dual role: as a researcher and a participant. As a researcher, I am an outsider who goes into the world of my participants to explore their journey and practices. Whereas, as one of

the participants, I am the insider as well; an ELT teacher who belongs to the community of practice. The use of the metaphor of a 'traveller' in the beginning of the first to the last chapter represents my role as the researcher who, like a traveller travels, learns, explores, applies, learns, reflects and transforms and which is the heart of transformative research.

## CHAPTER I

### THE INCEPTION

*'I am an ABLT traveller and here I embark upon my/my participants' journey of becoming ABLT teachers. I start it by setting the scene, where I trace the background of my life starting from my childhood days to a researcher that shaped me into the thinker that I am today. After that, I introduce the fundamental elements of my exploration: rationale behind my study, statement of my research problem, objectives to be fulfilled' research questions to be answered during the study and the delimitations of the same.*

#### **Setting the Scene: The Shaping**

*The Shaping*

*The shapeless, the colourless*

*into a vessel white*

*shaped and coloured alike*

*The shapeless, the colourless*

*into a pot red*

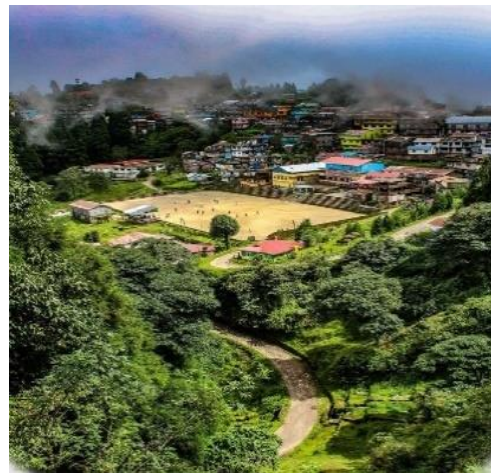
*turns round, of the shade*

I always feel that my village where I grew up, the family that nurtured me, and the school that educated me have the fundamental roles in shaping my personality, nature and thoughts. My extrovert personality, playful nature and attraction towards creativity perhaps have their roots in my childhood experiences of growing up. Firstly, my village, Maney Bhanjyang that is in the lap of beautiful nature exposed me to multiple opportunities to explore the world of learning with fun: formal and informal. It was like a big playground like a platform for any game I wanted to play

and grow with my friends. Secondly, my family is of mixed culture coming from mother and father of two different ethnicities, nationalities, cultures and religions. Their equal treatment to all the children in our family gave me freedom enough to speak, think and perform in the way I liked. Such a conducive environment to learn in my affectionate family made me happy and active ever. Lastly, my training in a small yet creativity-driven school with pedagogy similar to ABLT enhanced my confidence and free thinking through its numerous constructive activities. So, I have this reflection of where I grew up, who nurtured and educated me.

### **Down the Valley**

I spent my childhood in a small, yet beautiful valley in the district of Darjeeling called Maney Bhanjyang, situated on the lap of two hills called Simana and Chitray. I lived with my mother, father, younger brother and elder sister. Everybody knew everybody there. The lush forests, rivers, trekking routes, public playground and family like neighbourhood gave me a lot of



*Figure 1.2: Maney Bhanjyang (Source: My photo gallery)*

space for the outdoor explorations and adventures and helped me create golden childhood memories to be cherished forever. We used to go to a river flowing through the village to wash our clothes every Saturday. It was just like a dry picnic. When our mother washed clothes and my elder sister helped her, my younger brother and I enjoyed doing our home and project work on a bed sheet placed on the grass beside the river. Science projects were the easiest because the raw materials were easily accessible. I remember plucking and pasting different types of leaves from trees

around for a project named, 'Types of Leaves.' Other games and adventures with school and home friends in the village include marbles, chungu (rubber game), gatti (pebble game), hide and seek, chor (thief) – police, fishing, wild fruit hunting, trekking, and cutting woods in the forest. These kept us active and energized.

Therefore, when I look back at the memories so fresh even today, I realize that even though a small village, Maney Bhanjyang was a platform to learn various creative life skills. We learnt team-management, counting, singing, dancing, and much more.

Thus, creativity and fun had perhaps become the desire which I enjoyed and craved for as a student. Later, naturally I wanted to use them in my teaching to add to the fun learning experience for my learners. The subconscious desire for active learning coming from the exposures in my village might have hence stimulated the desire to become an ABLT teacher.

### **The Fun School**

My parents helped me complete my primary to secondary education in the then one and only English school in Maney Bhanjyang named Rhododendron Integratus Boarding School. The school as it grew bigger had two rented buildings with the maximum of ten students in each class coming from the same and the neighbouring villages and even the town of Darjeeling. It was located in a peaceful environment with the basic infrastructure like blackboards, tables, benches, a small playground, table tennis room and some donated computers. Along with reading books in the subject of 'English Literature' and a few books in a small library-like place, we could read story books when we stood first, second or third position and got rewarded with story books like Cinderella, Snow White, Red Riding Hood etc. I used to be motivated to excel academically to get such rewards.



Furthermore, the enthusiastic school teachers with backgrounds of some of the finest schools in Darjeeling and the creative school management perhaps contributed significantly to hone various skills in me. The school gave me an exposure to varieties of creative activities like dance, song, music, art and craft, drama, drills, parades, etc. We were taught by eager and experimental teachers. Especially, the language teachers taught us in a creative environment. I remember playing different roles in English and Nepali plays; singing English, Nepali and Tibetan songs; and dancing in cultural songs in stage and huge grounds of different schools during big programs. Especially in English classes, we performed role-plays, recited poems, sang English songs and so on. I remember that particular class when my English teacher in one of my primary grades had taught us about noun and pronoun with an amazing role play. All the students had taken turns to perform as nouns and pronouns in pairs. I had role-played the humble pronoun (csf chapter four for the details). Those activities probably developed in me a habit of learning English creatively and I was perhaps getting perhaps getting moulded into the shape of the creative and colourful vessel, the fun school.

### **A Member of a Multi-Cultural Family**

The sociological theory advocates that family plays a very important role in shaping one's personality and nature, so did it for me. Born to an inter-caste, inter-ethnic and inter-cultural parents of Gurung father and Chettri mother taught me the multi-perspectives of life. Similarly, different circumstances of my family helped me learn diverse ways of life. My father's unlimited and spontaneous jokes about 'Humjayega' <sup>1</sup> cultivated the love for fun and entertainment and his values about education made me ambitious. And after his untimely death, the struggles of my

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<sup>1</sup>A famous character of local jokes in Darjeeling

mother made me mature and strong at a very early age of teen. Nevertheless, her single-handed nurture of three children as a young widow made me believe in women power. Similarly, her unbiased up-bringing of we two sisters and a brother inculcated freedom of thoughts and actions inside me. Later, an inter-caste love marriage to an equally supportive partner helped me not only continue my dream but also let me be who I am: an extrovert fun-loving performer of my life. I pursued my studies and career of my choice. So, perhaps the creative liberty was the best thing my family nurtured me with in totality that I have been craving to live with in every aspect of my life: work, education, research since the time I remember. Indeed, we are where we come from.

### **Rise of an ABLT Thinker**

The idea of creative teaching-learning with various art forms had perchance made a significant place in my subconscious mind by then. I pursued my higher studies after plus two (+2) in Kathmandu. In my college days too, as a literature student, I loved listening to the ideas about critical and creative thinking and the teachers' encouragement to think out of the box through the literary texts. Even though the classes were mostly through lectures, I loved interpreting poems, drama, paintings and sculpture that perhaps grew my inclination towards various forms of art. I used to get happy to learn about poems, novels and drama, which deviated from the tradition and had subjective interpretations. The deep philosophy of Socrates and Plato and abstract painting of Picasso fascinated me. Perhaps, the significance of creative art forms had become comparatively clear by then.

In 2012, after my Masters, as a novice teacher, I hardly knew how to teach. But somewhere in my mind I had a vague philosophy of 'teaching to make a difference.' I wanted to teach creatively but I did not have clarity about it. In the

initial years of my teaching, I thought explaining the texts through actions, acting and literally jumping around was all that was meant by creative teaching. I continued teaching with jokes and stories to my learners. I liked when I saw them laughing when I taught. Fortunately, as a progressive school English teacher since the beginning of my career, I have got a lot of platforms to get trained and learn a variety of teaching methods. Moreover, the expectation of the schools to teach creatively rather than in a lecture method added to my awareness about creative teaching and moulded me eventually.

The learning and interest so far got its wider platform in KUSOED after I joined as an MPhil research scholar. I started learning about different trends and issues of ELT from my professors, batch mates, books, articles, videos and university fellows. Additionally, participation in training programs given by the university and in different conferences like NELTA, TESOL, IATEFL and their webinars widened my horizon. I remember attending one of the monthly webinars by IATEFL about the use of song and music to teach different skills of English language which made me contemplate and explore more on these aspects. Along with other issues, I learnt about using different art forms like music, drama, painting, storytelling, drawing, etc. to teach English language. By then, I had understood that these art forms play a vital role in the field of ELT. I heard scholars, professors and researchers presenting, discussing and conducting workshops about how various art forms can enhance and make ELT pedagogy engaging, effective and learner-friendly and got aware that art-based methods were among the contemporary issues in ELT. I got more fascinated to the issue.

It was by the end of first semester during the time to write a research proposal when I decided to write about the use of literature in language classrooms because I was inspired by Lazar (2003), Hall (2005) and Badheka (2014) while doing the assignments in my MPhil classes. Nonetheless, by the end of the third semester while we were deciding on the final topic for the study, I remember one of my professors' advice. He told us to think out of the box to research; on something creative or something related to past experiences, which I had interest and experience in. During the classes of dissertation writing in the third semester of my MPhil classes, he helped us brainstorm and modify our research issues in groups. Engaged in deciding the topic made me reflect on various aspects about my life: learning, teaching and researching. In this course, I heard somebody talk about art-based research methodology while sharing the ideas in groups. It kindled the idea that the term art-based could be an umbrella term which could shelter under it all the creative art forms that I had learned and explored by then. So, I finally coined the phrase '*Art-Based Language Teaching (ABLT)*' as the issue of my research. Instead of following the trend of using it a methodology, I wanted to use the phrase, ABLT as one of the creative methods in ELT. I was very happy to have decided to study something that I loved and enjoyed since my school days. I was even happier to conduct an auto/ethnographic research as suggested by him, where, along with my participants' practices, I could reflect upon my own evolution from a usual teacher to someone in the process of becoming an ABLT teacher today.

**Reflection: I am Born**

*I am born*

*My name is Learner,*

*And I am alive*

*I like to dream, imagine and say.*

*Songs, dance, play;*

*colours, paints, clay;*

*videos, images and music make me gay*

*I engage and do*

*to learn and remember the issue*

*I am born*

*My name is Teacher*

*And I am alive*

*Started a novice*

*I teach and learn*

*Training and exposure*

*To know more*

*For faces to light to turn*

*For faces to achieve more*

*I am born*

*My name is Research Scholar*

*And I am alive*

*Reading, presentations, assignments, discussion*

*Training, conferences and more*

*ELT issues I explore*

*ELT with song, dance, play,*

*colors, paints, clay*

*videos, images and music*

*make me gay*

*I am born*

*My name is ABLT*

*I am the issue*

*And I come to life*

### **The Rationale**

It's a general truth that every learner likes to learn in a creative and fun environment. Similarly, every teacher likes to see their learners engaged and active while learning and every school likes to have a creative environment. My experiences of teaching for some years makes me think so too. ABLT caters to this goal of stimulating interest and fun while learning English. Additionally, art has a lot of practical implications in education and English language education for my research. Along with its creative impact on the learning, it improves the overall school engagement, academic, social and cultural learning (Perso, et. al. 2011). Therefore, everyone: teachers, parents, school management, book writers, researchers will benefit from my exploration of ABLT.

As an evident example, the State Education Department (2010, p. 3) confirms that art is a tool for the teachers of English language learners. They elaborate their claim that by placing art within the context of the lives of ELLs and enabling them to express their ideas visually as well as by speaking and writing, teachers can: build on prior knowledge; scaffold instruction; create a bridge between written and spoken language; make learning relevant and meaningful; help students develop self-esteem;

foster creativity; develop an appreciation of the past; highlight similarities and differences; foster higher order thinking skills; promote high levels of analysis, reasoning, and questioning; support creative thinking; model problem solving; emphasize interpreting and communication of ideas; enhance students' ways of observing, responding to, and representing the world. Thus, art does cater to the variety of need of ELT.

Therefore, as this research is centred on the effects of ABLT on English language teaching in Nepal and has discovered many interesting art forms, it can contribute to a number of areas. Firstly, considering the important fact that ABLT can stimulate interest in learners and teachers, it can add to the effectiveness of language pedagogy, particularly in Nepal. Secondly, it can be a meaningful contribution for the differentiated instruction because it helps teachers address the needs of diverse learners in their classrooms. Thirdly, as it is a documented study about ABLT, its small but significant theoretical contribution to the field of ELT can be a significant addition to the already existing ones. It can motivate English language teachers to teach English through art as well as continuously develop through professional development platforms. The future researchers too can get research on similar ELT issue and fill in the gap that mine could not address. Lastly, like any other innovations on trends and issues in the field of ELT like project-based, activity-based, content and language based, ICT and so on, the practice, exploration and inclusion of ABLT can be a revolution too.

### **What Was My Headache?**

As the statement of my metaphorical headache, or the problem of my research, in this section, I discuss the agenda of my research; the way it is understood in my professional arena; the gap between the two and the way my research aims to fill the gap. To begin with, the agenda of my research is the exploration of the journey of ABLT teachers in Nepal. Elaborately, the study aims to see how the English teachers of Nepal get the knowledge of and practice the ABLT methods in their classrooms in the process of becoming ABLT teachers. I start by exploring how my research issue is understood in my professional space.

My interactions at the conferences, webinars and other professional development spaces including books and articles related to ELT have given me an overview and perception that art and its various creative forms have a vital place in the teaching-learning process. Use of art in ELT classroom can be stimulating and leading to a wide variety of activities, provide a change of pace, develop language skills in the real world and be motivating (Brunetti, 2020, para. 11-14). Teachers, educators, researchers and academicians have talked and written about its relevance in teaching-learning process. Many books, articles, research study, workshops and presentations in teacher conferences have been written, carried out and conducted around the world. Even in Nepal, I have seen those people talking about practicing and teaching English with art and its forms as significant tools that can enhance ELT pedagogy.

Nevertheless, I have not come across any substantial documented research carried out about the use of art in Nepali English language classrooms so far. Despite the theoretical claims, discussions and agreements about art and the creative effect it has in teaching-learning process, the researches documenting the same seems missing.



Hence, my research aims to fill in the gap between how art in teaching a popular topic in conferences, books, articles and research in many countries and the need for a proper documentation of art-based language teaching has been, particularly, in the ELT classrooms of Nepal. I remember taking the following note in TERSD Conference where the keynote speaker, Mr. Taylor, talked about the significance of Art:

*Arts education...*

*creativity - innovation, ingenuity, imagination*

*aesthetics – beauty, sentiment, contemplation*

*ethics – virtues, human rights, justice*

*rhetoric – expression, representation, persuasion*

I feel the need of connecting this idea to provide more detail to my understanding that art and its significance in education is a popular topic theoretically. When I started attending teacher conferences like NELTA, TERSD and IATEFL from the year 2016, apart from the academic contents, I noticed one peculiar thing among the presenters and participant teachers; most of them get attracted to or get impressed by creative presentations, workshops, plenary or key note lectures. I have noticed them encircling the topics with creative presentations in the conference proceedings that they would attend in the duration of the conference. Additionally, when any presenter or key note speaker presents the idea through various art-forms like images, videos, role-play,



Figure 1.3: Significance of art (Source: Peter Taylor's presentation at TERSD Conference, 2018)

music, dance, song etc., I noticed participants getting more involved with and even meeting the presenters afterwards to inquire more about the idea. I too enjoy such presentations and always wish to apply those creative teaching strategies learn from those conferences in my classroom. I have various such experiences in some conferences which have helped me understand teachers', particularly ELT teachers' inclination towards various forms of art. Thereby it gave birth to the issue to my research to find out whether or not such teachers use art in their classrooms. If they do, my research finds out how.

My memory related to such experiences takes me back to October, 2018, during one of the keynote speeches in the Second TERSD Conference, where Mr. Taylor began his presentation with the following quote in the image. It was replied in acceptance by the audience with a huge round of applause and their faces looking at one another either in realization of the significance of art or affirmation of their preconceived belief on the same. It was followed by some interesting pictures portraying the role of art in the world, society and in our classrooms. Then, he furthered his vision for education integrating the Arts and Sciences to develop higher-order abilities such as creativity, critical reflection, ethical astuteness and connectedness, which are essential capabilities for living and working sustainably in the complex, diverse and contested world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Consequently, I along with all other teacher participants got amazed by our own realization of the significance of art everywhere and applauded in agreement. On a closer look, I noticed the sparkle in the eyes of the teachers reflecting their interest to learn from the following innovative idea given in the presentation. Thus, I was a teacher participant of the conference to professionally develop myself and who eventually comprehended through their expression and interest that teachers love to

talk and know about art and its creative methods in the process of teaching and learning. In the same conference, I remember ELT teachers rushing to acquire a seat for themselves in one of the creative workshops about using scribbles as an art form to learn and teach writing stories. I and my friend too were attracted by the artful workshop and that made me assume that other participant teachers might have also been there to learn the uniquely creative method of teaching to write story writing to their learners through one of the art forms, 'scribbles.'

In the similar way, when I attended the recent TESOL-NELTA Regional Conference, 2019, I witnessed some prominent academicians' claim on power of the art. I observed that out of many plenary and keynote speeches, the one which attracted the teachers' interest and participation the most and which added to the sudden liveliness of the environment of the conference were two. First was the key note speaker Mr. Brux who entered the stage in a unique theme-based attire and gesture. He wore camping attire and entered the stage blowing the whistle which immediately caught everyone's attention followed by his artful presentation with music and video and a camping song sung and performed by his fellow presenters, "*I'm glad I'm a Camper, there's nothing I'd rather be...*". In the same way, Ms. Borch's keynote speech entitled *Courageous Classrooms in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Daring Greatly to Bring out the Best in our Students* where she urged the teachers to become daring teachers and cultivate classroom culture by taking risks: think outside the book, try new activities, get active, get artsy, get messy. In other words, she demonstrated and suggested to the audience English teachers how to get 'frizzy' like Miss Frizzle, a popular fictional teacher in an American book and TV series and even video games. Her reference to the famous book, television and video game character Miss Frizzle, the unconventional science teacher, who teaches Science magically really made

everyone realize the significance of creativity in our classrooms and the need for being creative teachers.

Hence, being a part of such conferences and some other and attending their annual conferences since 2016, I have witnessed the teachers' love to share, present or conduct workshops on creative ELT issues. Not only the presenters, but I also see the craze for creative, innovative or inventive ideas among the participant teachers who spend their time and money. I love to see when teachers encircle their favourite presentations titles in the conference proceeding given to them along with other academic materials. They do this while going through some catchy heading and the welcoming summary. Mostly, when they might have identified the artistic items that they would attend throughout the conference, they rush to secure their places and to learn the new ideas that would better them as teachers.

From the afore-mentioned experiences of witnessing the significance of art-based teaching, it seems to me that art has a special relationship with teaching, particularly, ELT because the anecdotes above come from ELT Conferences. This stimulates me to further explore about it in books. Many writers appear to be aware of and interested in exploring and writing about the use, significance and role of art and its forms like drawing, painting, craft, music, dance, role-play and so on in teaching and also in language teaching. To start with, Smith (2003) affirms that arts respect diversity. She further claims that arts tend to draw people together. They foster cooperation, group, and helpfulness to promote a deeper understanding of other civilizations, religions, and cultures. Diversity is prized in the artist's world. Differences are not only okay but are welcome. Our schools, too, must learn to treasure differences. Children with learning disabilities must learn that *different is not*

*bad* and that their differences often make them interesting and talented (p.7). This enables me to see the connection between art and ELT too.

Furthermore, there are some researchers who have delved into the studies about the significance of art-based methods in education and particularly in English language teaching. To point first, basing their assumptions on previous theories of learning and development and research finding, Chemi and Du (2017) have investigated the importance of art-based encounter of children and young people from a global perspective: research of various writers from various parts of the world like UK, India, Japan, Northern Ireland, US, Iceland, Denmark and Scotland in ten different chapters on art-based methods like drama, music, accordion book, pictures and so on. Similarly, advocating art education's role in enhancing literacy, The State Education Department (2010), puts forth the approaches to integrating arts in instruction, strategies to integrating arts in instruction and arts integration project models. It thus illustrates through many approaches and strategies that art can be a significant tool for teachers of English language learners. Likewise, talking and elucidating the impact of art in English language teaching, Farokhi and Hashemi (2012) conclude their article with an affirmation that by placing art within the language classroom setting enabling their learners to express their ideas visually as well as through speaking and writing, teachers can build on prior knowledge, scaffold instruction, create a bridge between written and spoken language, make learning relevant and meaningful, help students develop self-esteem, foster creativity, develop an appreciation of the past, highlight similarities and differences, foster higher order thinking skills, promote high levels of analysis, reasoning, and questioning, support creative thinking, model problem solving, emphasize interpreting and communication

of ideas, enhance students' ways of observing, responding to, and representing the world (p.926). Hence, art does have significant role to play in ELT.

Moving forward, various studies have been conducted to find out the role and impact of art in education. Academicians choose to research on this issue as an important factor in language teaching. Thus, it is quite apparent that art has a major role to play in education, language education and English language education as well. Mandell (2018) after having carried out an action research, has found out three major teaching strategies: small group collaboration, large group collaboration, and choice based art making to be effective in supporting language acquisition and communication skill development of English language learners. She has in detail analysed these three strategies and advocated the value of art in language teaching.

From the above discussion about the relevance of art, it is clear that art is quite popular among teachers, educators, researchers and book writers, which is evident through their inclination towards it. Art has been proven by many such people as an effective tool to facilitate creative language teaching in many ways. Nevertheless, this significance seems to be missing in the educational documents of Nepal. There seem to be only talks and discussions by the teachers and scholars about the use of various art forms in ELT but there is no research till date to explore and document the relevance of this burning issue in the field of ELT. There are important questions about this creative method to be answered through academic research and documented for the concerned people to refer to, learn from and apply in Nepalese classrooms to enhance overall ELT pedagogy in the country. The questions are: a. Do the English language teachers of Nepal practice ABLT? b. If yes, what different art-forms are used by them? c. How do they use these? d. Where did they learn about ABLT from? e. What are the benefits of using ABLT in Nepalese English language

classrooms? Hence, my research was conducted to find the answers of these kinds of questions which can bring improvement in ELT pedagogy of Nepal.

### **The Motives of the Inquiry**

This research had a two-pronged motives or purposes: to reflect and explore my/ others' journey of growth and practices of ABLT in the process of becoming ELT teachers.

### **The Queries**

My overarching inquiry query was: How have I/others become Art-based English language teachers? The sub-queries are:

- a. How have I/others grown to become art-based English language teachers?
- b. How have I/others practised art-based methods, if we have, in the process of becoming ABLT teachers?

### **The Fences**

There are some important metaphorical fences that delimit my study. Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018) define that delimitations are concerned with the definitions that the researchers decide to set as the boundaries of their work so that the study's aims and objectives do not become impossible to achieve. In this context, as the delimitations of my study, I explain "why I did not do it like this" rather than "why I did this" (p.157). Relatedly, the limitations explains why I conducted it not the other ways.

Firstly, I consciously avoided to study the available wide range of significance art in almost every field: media, technology, films, drama, sports as well as upcoming realizations of its significant role in science and mathematics and decided to explore its undocumented relevance in Nepali ELT classrooms relevant to my interest towards creative ELT teaching as an ELT professional as well as ELT research scholar. In

doing so, I delimit the definition of ABLT to the one I have coined for myself and my study due to the fact that it is comparatively a newer concept in ELT with no single pioneer. I decided to put all the art-forms that are used in ELT classrooms to my knowledge coming from reading articles, attending conferences and observation of my participants' classroom under the umbrella term 'Art-Based Language Teaching' as, 'A creative method of teaching by using various forms of arts as tools like painting, drawing, drama, song, music, craftwork, poems, stories, etc., to facilitate the active involvement of the learners in the classroom.'

Secondly, I have delimited my study to the experiences of only three research participants and one school in Lalitpur as a research site. I am the first participant in order to explore the journey of the self and the other two female primary English teachers to view the culture of others. In the general context of Nepal, the primary teachers are female and that is the logic behind having them as my research participants. The choice of primary teachers has two reasons. First, the organic meeting with them in a professional development program, where I witnessed their creativity. Second, my opinion that mostly primary teachers practice creative methods. Similarly, my study is limited to one of the progressive schools in Lalitpur as a research site considering the convenience and time constraint of my academic research.

Finally, as a research methodology, I have not chosen methods like case study which studies a case (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005); action research, which is the combination of action and research (Chohen, et al., 2007); or neither only ethnography, which aims at describing and analysing the practices and cultures, not limited to ethnic groups but can be related to any 'bounded units' (Dornyei, 2007, p. 130). I carried out auto/ethnography because of the fact that ABLT got organically



realized and came into existence from my own experiences of teaching English for about a decade. I wanted to explore my experiences with ABLT in the realm of ‘others’ to see if it really existed and if it did, how it was practiced.

### **The Emergent Chapter Division**

This dissertation is a reflection of my ‘self’ and ‘others’ exploration of the use of various creative art forms as tools in English language classrooms. In other words, as a researcher as well as a participant, I have unravelled our stories in the journey of becoming ABLT teachers in Nepal.

The first chapter sets the stage by introducing the fundamental elements of the study. Elaborately, it explains the rationale behind conducting this study; states the problem which brought this study into action; clarifies the purposes; frames the research questions to be answered in the latter sections or the main body of the research, and finally sets the delimitations to reveal the focus of the same.

The second chapter entitled, ‘Echoes of Literature’ explores the various literatures to conduct reviews on themes, theories, policy and previous studies. The review enabled me to find out the visible research gap of the previous researches to be filled in by my research and that also adds to the novelty of my issue in the field of research on English language teaching and thereby make the issue of my study researchable.

Next, the third chapter explains the research methodology undertaken to conduct this study. It illustrates the philosophical assumption; research paradigm; methodological consideration; research site and participants; data collection and data analysis process; quality and ethical standards; and finally the summary of the whole chapter.

Further, the fourth chapter unravels my/my participants' journey of knowing about ABLT followed by the fifth chapter that explore the journey of practicing ABLT. They are the answers of the two queries that I set in the first chapter and that which helped me explore the overall journey of me and my participants' becoming ABLT teachers.

As a final chapter, chapter six winds up the dissertation with reflections, insights, implications, participants' voices, stimulated sense of giving back and limitations. As a reflection, I look back at my journey with Transformative Learning Theory and Auto/Ethnography. Next, for drawing insights, I unpack the discoveries from chapter four and five. Further, I display the implications of my study on me, early grade teachers and the future researchers. And then I unpack my participants' voices collected through member checking and thereby reveal a small but significant theoretical contribution of my research. Finally, I disclose the limitations that justify the reasons for my study being the way it is and not any other many possible ways.

### **Chapter in a Wrapper**

Chapter one as the introduction of my research commenced with setting the scene in the prologue: my village, school and the novice idea of ABT. Then the context of my shaping into an ABLT teacher was expressed by a poem. I discussed and presented the research issue followed by the statement of the purposes and framing the research questions that sought answers through the research. Almost at the end of the chapter, I set the delimitations of my study. Finally, I gave the synopsis of each chapter one by one from chapter one to six in the chapter division

## CHAPTER II

### THE ECHOES OF LITERATURE

*... Now I set out to explore ABLT, but very less know what others have said or opined about my topic of exploration. So, to unravel the existing knowledge, I tread upon a sub path of 'literature review'. I then continue exploring and reading various literatures to know other's views about my research issue. Thus, I explore the 'echoes' or the 'voices' of the literature related to the two major concepts of my research: 'ABLT' and 'Auto/Ethnographic Inquiry.' I start with the review of themes followed by the discussion of theoretical review which illustrate the foundation of my research. Thirdly, the section of policy review presents the policy about art-based teaching and English language teaching in Nepal. Then I explore other research works carried out in this area to find out a convincing research gap which authenticated the novelty of my research. Finally, I wrap up this part of my journey at the end.*

#### **On Reviewing Literature**

When I began my research with writing a proposal for it, I decided not to keep a separate chapter for literature review, which is generally chapter two. I was inspired by some of the then latest ideas in Kathmandu University School of Education from some of my professors and university fellow scholars. I had a vague idea that it should not have a separate chapter; it could be done throughout the dissertation instead. I thought I understood the novel idea and could do it. But later, when I started my research, I found out that most of the research works I read in the library had a separate chapter for literature review for some important reasons. Similarly, I discovered some major significance of conducting a literature review in a research or

the rationale behind it. Badewi (2014) lists out three critical reasons for conducting literature review in research: to locate the space of our research issue in the knowledge body thereby finding a ‘Knowledge Gap’ and framing the research questions that guide our research further based on the knowledge gap; developing conceptual framework; and developing theoretical framework. The reason for my decision later to keep a separate chapter for literature review is thus the logic behind doing it.

Hence, now I feel that literature review is an integral part of my research as I have to first of all find out where my research issue, ‘ABLT’ stood. Then to find the research/knowledge gap to eventually convince my readers about the novelty of my issue or how my research question based on that knowledge or research gap I had found out had never been answered before. In other words, I wanted to show how the concepts used in my research: art-based language teaching and auto/ethnographic enquiry were different from the previous researches and how it could contribute to the knowledge body after its completion (Badewi, 2014). The theoretical contribution of my research can fill in the gap too.

As mentioned earlier, I came up with the phrase ‘Art-Based Language Teaching’, after having thought, discussed, explored and brainstormed in one of the classes of MPhil third semester. Nevertheless, I was made aware of the challenges I would have to face while finding the literature during the research, since it was apparently a new topic. Later, I realized that it was indeed ‘*a road which was grassy and wanted wear*<sup>2</sup>’ when I started looking for literature to write my proposal. With blur ideas, I tried explored related articles and book with the title art-based methods in English language teaching online and in the library. I noticed that there were only few

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<sup>2</sup> The Road not Taken: Robert Frost

books and articles available, so I consulted with my research supervisor. He suggested me to first define 'Art-Based' and the methods that fall under it and then look for literature related to them one by one. So, I defined art-based method as '*An ELT method that has various creative art-forms like drawing, painting, craft, origami, clay work, dance, song, role-play, storytelling, puppetry, pottery, and music as tools to engage the learners through their active involvement.*' It is different from the usual lecture method practiced in our classrooms.

Hence, as I was set for the exploration of literature, I remembered reading the first book I came across about such teaching methods in my MPhil first semester class of 'Foundation of Education.' I read *Diwasapana* by Gijubhai Badheka as an assignment which had perhaps struck the first match of my inclination towards art-based teaching. I read it again, that time for my research. It is about an experimental teacher Laxmiram who goes against the traditional methods of theoretically ideal teaching and introduces his creative and exciting pedagogy by engaging the unmotivated learners in plays, story-telling, games and so on.

The experiment is already on, Sir! It is my personal experience that the story is a wonderful magic pill that helps to establish rapport between the pupils and the teachers. Those very boys who were not prepared to listen to me on the first day and who had unnerved me with shouts and catcalls, have become quiet since I started telling them a story. They now have a sort of affection for me. They listen to me and sit as I ask them to. I don't have to shout at them to keep them quiet. And they don't leave the school even after it is over!

(Badheka, 2014, p. 7).

I read that the teacher used the two art forms: story-telling and song to motivate the learners who were at first not ready to listen to him. Hence, it was a kind

of affirmation for me to follow my professor's advice to find literature that talked about other art-based methods to find a place for my research topic in the wider realm. It motivated me to explore further the literature that discussed other art forms, particularly, the previous researches carried out in Nepal.

### **Building Familiarity with Research Agenda**

In order to understand my/my participants' growth and practices of ABLT as mentioned in the purpose and research questions of my research, it is fundamental to understand the pre-dominant theme: 'Art-based Language Teaching' in the light of the existing literature. The theme has been further divided into three sub-themes: Conceptualizing ABLT; Tenets of ABLT; and relationship between art-based methods and English language teaching for the clarification of its philosophical underpinning.

### **ABL: Its Face and Body**

The metaphorical face and body refer to the main concept and elements of ABLT respectively. ABLT is an abbreviation of Art-Based Language teaching that I have coined for my research. It's an umbrella term for the method which has various art-forms: drawing, painting, music, dance, song, origami, craftwork, and puppetry used as tools to facilitate effective ELT pedagogy. It can be understood in the light of the significance of art in human lives as a whole. Smith (2001) does the same while going back to the historical background and significance of art and claims that it serves as a vehicle of communication for human beings. For example, the Lascaux Caves shows us the fears and aspiration of ancient man. Rain dances performed by the Native Americans demonstrate the hopes of people and their magical spirit to make things to happen. Shakespeare's works tutor us all in the way of human beings; in addition to being a great literature, dramatic works teach us about psychology,

sociology, anthropology, and philosophy. The arts reach beyond the human beings who perform them and capture the spirit of the times. They become part of civilization. Based on the above historical background and significance of art forms as learning tools for real life education by the Lab School, for my research, I have defined ‘ABLT’ *‘An ELT method that has various creative art-forms like drawing, painting, craft, origami, clay work, dance, song, role-play, storytelling, puppetry, pottery, and music as tools to engage the learners through their active involvement.’*

### **ABLT and ELT: The Connections**

As discussed in some of the sections above, we can see a kind of symbiotic connection between ABLT and ELT. In this context, Maley (2015) talking about the creative nature of human beings explains that the human species seems to be hard-wired for creativity. They are innately curious about their environment, which they explore tirelessly. Put in a maze, we will find our way out, but unlike rats, we are also capable of forming the concept of a maze, and of designing one. Further, he emphasizes that linguistic creativity in particular is so much part of learning and using a language that we tend to take it for granted (p. 9). Similarly, he also claims that creativity is necessary for survival and to deal with the change. In the learning context, it stimulates, motivates, engages, satisfies in a deep sense and helps develop self-esteem, confidence and self-awareness in the learners. Art and creativity hence seem interrelated to me. Art helps ignite the learning process and addresses the aforementioned faculties in children (Smith, 2001, p.1) too. In this rapidly changing world of education with the learners of the Generation-Z coming from different backgrounds, it is difficult to imagine our classrooms without creative pedagogies to enhance students' active participation, interaction and involvement in teaching – learning processes. As teachers, we must update our knowledge and address to the

needs of our learners and demand of their parents. The teachers, thus, cannot stop applying learners' active engagement in effective pedagogy to keep them intact. Only after their direct involvement in teaching –learning processes, learners become confident individuals in the long run. ELT is no exception.

In this backdrop, it is important to explore the direct relationship between art and ELT. I have a belief that ABLT with its variety of art forms as tools is a creative method that facilitates the active involvement of the learners in the classroom. It is different from our traditional way of teaching in the sense that it uses art forms as tools and more significantly, the learners act more than the teacher, unlike in the existing method where the teacher speaks a lot while the learners passively listen to her/him. When the students actively participate in art-based activities in their classroom, almost all their sense organs get activated as they will be listening, watching, doing and understanding their learning experience themselves. In this regard, Phillippe (2013), has stressed that the use of art in English language learning or in any other language develops learners' receptive and productive skills as it uses visual materials which with the medium of visual language facilitates language learning. Thus, art is indeed an integral part of ELT. Furthermore, I have explored and understood that art-based language learning stimulates the creative skill in the learners as they are involved in many such activities such as making story wheels, performing role-play and theatre, drawing or painting. Similarly, Rooney (2004) elaborates that the art- based teaching methods offer learning and teaching through visual, theatrical, poetic and other forms of art. The art- based pedagogical methods explicitly use artistic and aesthetic medium of work of art as it facilitates an aesthetic encounter; thereby an active and awakening educational experience is created in learners.



Art-based pedagogy therefore is relevant in generating a creative learning environment and better understanding. This can be visible in the exploration of Chung and Anderson (2011) on how creative works like stories, songs, paintings, film etc. can be incorporated into language teaching programs and also how they could be used as a stimulus for learners' creativity. They have found out that the creative art-based teaching helps in making the learners creative as it enables seeing new or other possibilities, active participation in a collaborative process of generating, shaping and evaluating ideas, personal investment and self-expression and pursuing meaningful goals and presenting to others (p. 7). Art-based teaching has a lot to offer to the children. Affirming to such contributions of art in language teaching, Eubanks (1997) concludes in her article that art is a visual language, with receptive and expressive components, in which ideas are both spoken and heard (p.34). This perspective can lead to understanding that art can become a valuable partner in language development. Finally, as one of the major tenets of ABLT in my research, drawing acts as a pictorial language that allows children to find concrete visual means of representing their thoughts (Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in Adoniou, 2012, p. 4). The second tenet: use of images/pictures in Zull's words can stimulate visualization in memory as our minds and memories work principally in images because vision and visualization account for over 50% of our brain's activity (Dummet, 2017, p. 145). Thus, art forms like music, dance, drama, filmmaking, collage, printmaking, architecture, etc. are the learning tools for creative learning experience (Smith, 2005, p. 5-11). This symbiotic kind of relationship between art forms and ELT motivates me to explore and discover some significant art forms used by me and my participants as important tools to facilitate ELT.

### **The Embryonic Theoretical Reference**

As a multi-paradigmatic research (cf. chapter 3 for detail), I started it with a framework in my mind that various theories will be referred to in the course of its study and writing over the time. In other words, I kept it open-ended for theoretical references. The tentative plan in my mind about the theoretical reference turned out to be true. I discovered the theoretical references in the process of writing. The theory of ‘Transformative Learning Theory’ and its major tenets for adult learning seemed to guiding my research when I was writing the fourth and fifth chapters: growing and becoming. The realization that this theory could be my theoretical reference came to me during my writing process. It was amusing to me that my introduction to this theory had its foundation in my MPhil classes which proved meaningful for my research much later. Maybe it was because of the application of the theory into practice. It is thus an embryonic theoretical reference of my research.

#### **Transformative Learning Theory**

*Dear Caterpillar,*

*bound in a cocoon.*

*What exposure?*

*What idea?*

*Is making you reflect,*

*or*

*is it the pain and discomfort,*

*making you your cocoon shatter?*

*Are you transforming into a butterfly?*

The transformative metaphor of a caterpillar into a butterfly referred to in the poem above is the core of my research as it explores the ‘Hows’ and ‘Whys’ of the

becoming of me and my research participants. As said earlier, this theory became visible to be guiding my research to me when I was answering my research queries on 'growth' and 'practices' in chapters four and five respectively. The major tenets of 'Transformative Learning Theory': critical reflection of/challenging assumptions through 'rational 'discourse' for 'perspective transformation' can be seen in chapter four and five because I have discovered that my fellow participants and I have grown with the knowledge about ABLT from different professional development platforms and exposures in chapter four and practised the knowledge in their classrooms in chapter five in the process of becoming ABLT teachers.

Given the background, Transformative Learning Theory about adult learning was propounded by Jack Mezirow in 1978 having its foundations in the ideas of Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire and German Jürgen Habermas. Additionally, it was in major connection with women's adult education in the US that he discovered was a wide ranging kind of learning, reaching right into changes of the identity (Mezirow, 2009). Further, while talking in an interview, Mezirow (2015) clarifies that he seems to see a direct connection between Marx, Freud, Freire, Habermas and Socrates for his ideas because the central concept that he is really interested in, is the context of adult learning that has to do with critical reflection of assumptions. It also seemed to him that singing that out is central and that's what Freire was talking about. Adults seek the meaning of their experience; have a sense of self and others as agents capable of thoughtful and responsible action; engage in mindful efforts to learn; learn to become rational by advancing and assessing reasons; make meaning of their experience; accept some others as agents with interpretations of their experience that may prove true or justified; rely upon beliefs and understandings that produce interpretations and opinions that will prove more true or justified than those based

upon other beliefs and understandings; engage in reflective discourse to assess the reasons and assumptions supporting a belief to be able to arrive at a tentative best judgement; understand the meaning of what is communicated to them by taking into account the assumptions of the person communicating as well as the truth, justification, appropriateness and authenticity of what is being communicated; imagine how things could be different; learn to transform their frames of reference through critical reflection on assumptions, self-reflection on assumptions and dialogic reasoning when the beliefs and understandings they generate become problematic (Mezirow, 2009, pp. 103-104). Considering the afore-mentioned attributes of transformative learning theory, we can infer that teaching is a life-long learning process: an adult learning, where the teachers, through various exposures get to know new ideas about the diverse issues and trends of teaching. These exposures first of all make them use reasons to understand the implications and effectiveness of the trending ideas. Then, they reflect critically upon their own practices with the old ideas, which makes them realize the loopholes of the same. The loopholes make them uncomfortable in the sense that their learners might be suffering due to their less-engaging and less impactful teaching or also make them feel pain that they have not been teaching in more productive ways. Finally, these kinds of realization make them feel the need for change for the better; the need to update and facilitate their learners in the best possible ways. In other words, the new discoveries do not fit into the existing which leads to discomfort and dissatisfaction and thereby leading to perspective transformation.

### **Transformative Learning Theory and ABLT: The Connections**

The tenets of the mentioned transformative learning theory of adults are similar to the problem of my research. This theory is concerned about critical

reflection through rational discourse for perspective transformation of the teachers. The insights of my research suggest that various art-based tools like story-telling, drawing, song, music, videos, etc. are the new ideas that the researcher as one of her participants and her two other research participants have acquired from exposures to different conferences, webinars, workshops, seminars, professional development training, online resources, books, articles etc. When they got to know about these creative tools, they felt a need for the change in their teaching culture to address engagement of their learners and eventually effective teaching. They critically reflected upon their own teaching culture with rational reasoning of the significance of ABLT and are in the process of perspective transformation and thus in the process of becoming ABLT teachers.

#### **How does Policy Voice out ABLT?**

Various documents related to the policy about teaching methodologies are available like SSRP, SSDP, UNESCO and so on. When I started the policy review, I read and found from these documents do not directly talk about the policies about art-based methods. However, they do have some set policies related to its characteristics like creativity, learner-centred and interactive pedagogy, active learning, interaction, quality, cognition, holistic and other language skills development, experiential learning and so on.

To begin with, SSRP, 2009-2015 aims to foster children's all-round development laying a firm foundation for basic education This all-round development includes various other skills in order to the four basic language skills. However, despite many achievements of SSRP and earlier plans and programs, the quality of education remains low at all levels of education. The quality objectives of the SSRP were not fully met, particularly in terms of improved learning outcomes. The quality

of education is affected by many factors including the ‘pedagogical approach’ of teachers in schools. Despite many efforts to change approaches to teaching and learning, many classrooms remain textbook and teacher-focused with didactic teaching methods that emphasize rote learning and the uncritical absorption of facts (MoE, 2009, p. 7). The joint evaluation of SSRP by Poyck et al. (2016) noted that although teachers were being trained, new learning methods had not been transferred to classrooms. This is a major reason for learning outcomes remaining low (MoE, 2016, p. 22). Here lies the gap between professional development platforms and teachers’ growth and it is filled in by a small contribution of my research; passion is a significant additional factor that push teachers to initiate actions and applications for self-growth.

Therefore, the above challenges and the justification of reasons behind them hint to the need of application of the acquired knowledge about newer, better and learner-centred methods. It’s high time the learners are helped to learn by doing and experiencing rather than forced to listen to long and boring lectures. Nevertheless, the skills for all-round development mentioned about SSRP seem to be specified in the learner attributes set by UNESCO for global citizenship as in the pictures below:

Among various learner attributes illustrated in the first picture like social, behavioural, communication and other skills, cognitive skill which implies critical and creative thinking skills are related to art-based

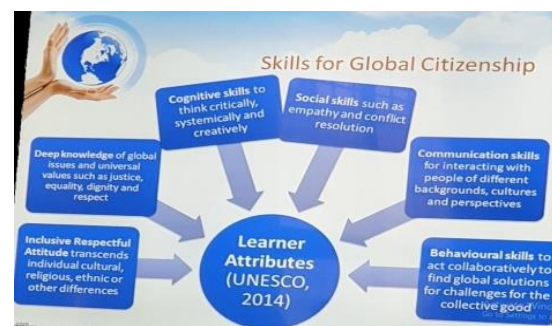


Figure 2.1: Learner Attributes (Source: Heidi Faust’s presentation slides at TESOL-NELTA Conference, 2019)

methods which is depicted by the second picture above about Global Citizenship

Education Framework where head, heart and hand work together to create something new. Furthermore, SSRP also has set forth its major objectives of ensuring equitable access of quality basic education for all children (aged 5-12 years); expanding access to Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) services for children of 4 years to facilitate their holistic development and to prepare them for basic education (Poyck et al., 2016). In these objectives, it is quite apparent that quality education for holistic development is the target.

Similarly, SSDP (2016) also by focusing on the quality of education agenda recommends the promotion of child-friendly, learner-centred interactive pedagogy for active learning and the development of skills, with more emphasis on experiential learning in ECED/PPE and better-qualified teachers. It therefore seems to encourage creative and fun activities to ensure learners' involvement like various art-forms are meant for. The objective is to help the learners gain the knowledge about the subject matter with memorable learning experiences rather than one-way lectures.

### **Hiking on the Empirical Trail**

I use the word hiking in the title of this section to mean that along with the existing scientific observation in the process of exploring the literature, like hiking, it was an emotional sense making as well as an emotive observation. The decision to conduct a research, its methodology and the guiding theories require the knowledge of the research carried out in the past in order to assure the novelty of one's research issue. Hence, this section of my research explores the empirical trail of the issues related to my research. I explore them through various sources like the library of Kathmandu University School of Education and online sources to find out that some studies have been conducted on the similar domains in terms of some forms of art-based teaching and auto-ethnography but not the same. Hence, excavating the

empirical trails lead me to the discovery that the exact study about ABLT in ELT in Nepal is yet to be explored and documented, which confirms the originality of my research issue.

Ghimire (2012) carried out arts-based rendition of the holy book Bhagwat Gita wherein he has employed arts-based writing as an interpretation methods. In doing so, his arts-based inquiry has arts-based methods like storytelling, poems, plot, characters, dialogues and so on to find out the educational meaning and implications of Bhagwat Geeta. So, his study differs from mine in terms of methodology. He has used arts-based methods for inquiry while I intended the study about the similar methods as the research issue.

Furthermore, Thapa (2008) has explored and found out some interesting methods of active learning in language classrooms based on the observation of her action research. She finds her class lively when she uses active learning methods like guessing games, jigsaw tasks, finding out the differences, fun with grammar, drinking story, activity-based story, and poetry and so on. Thus, the issue of her research: active language learning is one of the objectives of my study on art-based language learning. But she has carried out action research which contrasts with my inquiry of self in the dominion of others.

Similarly, in the process of reviewing the existing literature on art-based language teaching, I explore some studies online. I find some works on similar issues but again with many differences which suggested to me that art-based English language teaching is relatively new in the field of research and therefore has to be explored and documented. To start with, Rovers (2007) examined the student attitudes of one Ontario, Canada grade nine core French as a second language class toward learning French through the arts. Her study finds out that her participant students



learned French through some art forms like visual art, music and drama. Moreover, their motivation to learn and speak French in the classroom increased as a result of arts-based instruction. Hence, her research is different to mine as she has studied about French language through some art forms though.

Similarly, Adoniou (2008) also has carried out research on the use of one of the art forms drawing to discover whether writing outcomes are improved when children are asked to draw before writing. So, this research's focus is on writing unlike mine which looks into all the aspects of English language teaching.

Next, Philippe (2013) has examined the role of visual material, and especially the visual arts, in English language teaching. This study deals with films, photographs and paintings in the English classroom with an integration of findings and theories from the field of art education with English language teaching. But my research examines the role of various art forms which could include the ones under focus in the study but still the context remains of Nepal and not a foreign country.

Chi (2017) has conducted research to investigate whether including arts activities contribute to better outcomes for the students who are working to improve their language skills. The study finds out that arts serve multiple purposes: stimulus, refresher, guide and facilitator in English language learning. In addition, arts also act as cohesion of the class, contributing to learning English. Hence, despite having studied the usefulness of art in English language teaching similar to mine, the approach of the study is a case study of EFL learners in a Canadian University. Nevertheless, unlike mine on becoming art-based teachers, the focus is on learners.

Finally, Mandell (2018) has carried out a study to determine the impact of different approaches to art-making on language acquisition and communication skill development in urban, public elementary school English Language Learners (ELLs)

who speak a variety of languages. She has explored the art forms like soft sculpture, stop motion animation video, stop motion film and author found all three strategies effective in supporting language acquisition and communication skill development in public, urban, elementary school ELLs. This study too is different from my auto/ethnographic inquiry because it is a ‘case study of three groups: small group’s collaborative art making, large group collaborative art making, and choice-based art. My research on the other hand explores more than three art-forms through the exploration of self and others in English language classrooms of Nepal.

### **The Hole in a Sole**

From the discussion and review of the previous studies in Nepal and some foreign countries, I found that the research issue of ABLT in Nepali English classrooms through auto/ethnographic inquiry has not been approached yet. And that is the metaphorical hole or the gap they have left for me to fill in with my study. The empirical study above implies that there have been studies similar but not same as mine. The studies have similar issues as they deal with exploring the use of different art-forms in a language classroom but they differ mainly in methodology and research context. Nevertheless, unlike the methodology of my study, the studies are of different types like action research, art-based research and case studies but auto/ethnography. Next, my study’s context is Nepali classrooms which are different from theirs that are mostly abroad.

The similar issues that are addressed by the studies are artful journey (Paudel, 2010); active learning (Thapa, 2008); learning French through arts (Rovers, 2007); using drawing to better writing (Adoniou, 2008); visual arts (Phillippe, 2013); three art approaches (Mandell, 2018) and art-based as a method of research (Ghimire, 2012). Hence, I conclude that the afore-mentioned studies echoed similar voices that

my research has but not the same and the gap is obvious which needs to be filled by my study. The gap of the previous studies is hence visible that no one has explored on the journey of becoming art-based English teachers of Nepal. Some explored art but in foreign classrooms and context while some had explored some tenets of art-based teaching like drawing. Hence, my research has a new issue to be explored and documented for future use of scholars and researchers.

### **Chapter in a Wrapper**

To put it in a nutshell, this chapter explored, discussed and reviewed various literatures related to the issue of my research: the theory that my research uses as reference, themes, policy, and other previous studies. The main aim was to find out the research gap from which I was able to generate my research questions and set the purpose of the same and which also would add to the originality of my study. While doing so, I commenced this chapter with the confession of my dilemma on whether keeping or not a separate chapter for literature review. Then I proceeded on with the presentation and analysis of the related literatures. Furthermore, I reviewed the literatures on the various themes of my research that came up after data transcription. It was then followed by the review of literature on the two theories that guided my research: visual literacy and multiple intelligences theory. After that I gave a concise review on various policies about English language teaching. In this part, because I did not find any exact policies on art-based language teaching, I went on to explore its tenets like creativity, learner-centred education, quality education and so on. Then, I reviewed some of the previous researches and found only those works that fall under the similar domain of mine but the same. That led to the finding of the research gap in the final section of this chapter.

### CHAPTER III

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

*.... My journey further takes me to the time when I unravel the methods of conducting my journey. I tread on the path of auto/ethnography, where I reflect on my 'self' and go to the realm of 'others' to view ABLT from the lens of 'their' culture. 'I' start with the reflection of my experiences as a learner of English language with some of my artful teachers who inspired me to become one such English teacher.*

*Next, 'I' journey through my own experiences as an English teacher since 2012 to explore how I began as a usual teacher to eventually realize the usefulness of art-based language teaching and thereby apply all those that I had learned and used for my learners while in the process becoming an art-based language teacher.*

*Then, my artful experiences of teaching English help me position myself in the dominion of 'others' as one of the research participants when 'I' observed, interviewed and interpreted the culture of art-based language teaching as a whole.*

#### **Philosophical Assumptions**

As the brief history of qualitative research demonstrates, deciding how to study the social world has always raised a number of key philosophical debates (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 11) like ontology, epistemology and axiology. Moon and Blackman (2017) explain that philosophical perspectives is a system of generalized views of the world, which form beliefs that guide action stemming from ontology (what exists for people to know about) and epistemology (how knowledge is created and what is possible to know). Hence, my study is guided by the same as a qualitative research to explore the practices of teaching English which takes place in the social context by the English teachers as social beings. As an ontological stance, it

represents the multiple reality of my participants as different individuals coming from different backgrounds. Epistemology is my experience as an English teacher as well as my knowledge about the issue from the ethnographic study of my participant English teachers' teaching context with art-based methods. And axiology shows the embodiment of my values as a researcher while carrying out the research.

### **The Multiple Realities**

Aristotle called ontology the first philosophy originating from the Latin word 'Ontologia' as well as from the Ancient Greek word for 'to be.' In research, ontology refers to the researcher's beliefs about the nature of reality. Or in other words, does the researcher believe in (a) one reality that is context-free and can be discovered? Or (b) multiple mental constructions of reality that are bound by context? (Killam, 2013, p. 7). My participants come from different backgrounds in terms of age, ethnicity, caste, education, culture, family, society and so on. Hence, while conducting my research, I considered that they might be viewing the world of teaching in their own ways. And their context determine their mental constructions which leads to the reflection of multiple realities about my research issue.

Further, the ideas, opinions, perception, vision, approach, practices and so on differ from participant to participant determined by the differences in their background and experiences and due to the most important fact that they are different 'individuals'. Hence, I see my research being guided with the ontology of multiple realities generated from multiple perspectives, since the existence of single reality seems quite impossible. Hence it confirms the issues related to 'ontology' as the beliefs about what there is to know about the world. Within social research, key ontological questions concern: whether or not social reality exists independently of human conceptions and interpretations; whether there is a common, shared, social

reality or just multiple context-specific realities; and whether or not social behaviour is governed by 'laws' that can be seen as immutable or generalizable (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 11). My study says, yes, it does.

### **The Multiple Ways of Knowing**

As the ways of knowing, Killam (2013) traces the origin of the word epistemology to be coming from Greek. It is derived from two Greek words: 1) episteme, meaning knowledge and 2) epistanai, meaning to understand or know (p. 8). It examines the relationship between the knowledge and researcher during discovery. It therefore, refers to how we came to know what we know. I know about ABLT and its impact in ELT from my exposure in training and conferences and their eventual application in my teaching context in the past and present. The knowledge for the study of others for ethnographic information has been acquired from the observation of my participants' classrooms. There I saw them teaching English with various art-forms as tools as well as interviews, where they shared their growth as ELT teachers and their teaching experiences.

### **Multiple Values and Subjectivities**

Harts (1971) states that the term Axiology stems from two Greek words- 'axios' or worth, and 'logos' or reason. The problem and issues axiology investigate have been with us from the moment human began to reflect upon conditions of his life, the structure of reality, the order of nature and man's place in it. In all probability the quest for values, for things, and events which are conducive to survival and the enhancement of life, engendered the quest for knowledge of reality. Hence, axiology philosophically considers value and in a qualitative research, the axiology is value-laden theory qualitative researcher. Similarly, as a qualitative researcher, I stress on the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between me and my

study, and the situational constraints that shape the inquiry. Therefore, the axiology of my research is value-laden (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) as I believe that every participant of this study including me had our own values regarding the use of art-based methods in language teaching. We all are different individuals.

### **Multiple-Paradigms for Auto/Ethnography and TL**

Aliyu, Singhry, Adamu and Abubakar (2015) inform that paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs that deals with ultimate or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines for its holder, the nature of the “world”, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts (p. 2). Looking back at the beginning of my study, I remember I had started it with an interpretive research paradigm in mind. However, its progress after a certain time demanded a wider or multi-paradigmatic approach. Hence, the use of multi-paradigm in my research is for multiple-knowing to represent multiple perspectives, subjectivities or multiple knowing. As a transformative research, I draw on the alternative research paradigms: interpretivism, criticalism and postmodernism, particularly for their new logics and genres. I use them to conduct inquiries that are as much transformative of me as the researcher as they are of the participating other or my participants and of the social system in which self and other are embedded (Taylor, Taylor & Luitel, 2012, p. 10). The methodological choice of Auto/ethnography is also cohesive to my transformative research paradigm and I want to have the liberty of a wide range of flexibility to operate within holism using multi-paradigmatic design space too (Luitel, 2012, p. 102). I want to be creative in presenting the creative ABLT methods.

I realized the need of shifting the paradigm from interpretive to multi-paradigm, particularly, interpretivism, criticalism and postmodernism during the

process of writing it. Interpretive paradigm helps me explore the ‘whys’ and ‘hows’ and in the contextual meaning making from the evidences in the form of experiences and practices of the participants. As the name suggests, interpretive paradigm is used to interpret the overall phenomenon of becoming through writing. Next, the critical paradigm helps me unravel the transformation of new knowing and questioning. And the use of metaphors, symbols, poems, stories, images, dialogues and sub-plots are the aesthetic ways of viewing my/my participants’ world of me under a postmodern paradigm. In other words, the fact that it is an auto/ethnographic research carried out to excavate my/my participants’ journey of becoming art-based ELT teachers or the transformation made it multi-paradigmatic. I draw on the interpretive and critical paradigms and use literary genres like poetry, storytelling, reflections in meaning making process to examine my real-life experiences as a learner and practicing teacher. In particular, I excavate and critically reflect on my past experiences of and beliefs towards art-based teaching. I interpret my participants’ practices collected through observation and stories told and reflect my past experiences of becoming or transformation through poems (Taylor & Medina, 2011, p. 11). Hence, it is multi-paradigmatic.

Auto/ethnography is a transformative paradigm that embraces a diverse range of data referents within MDS through narratives, art-based and imaginary forms of expressions, multiple logics and genres. It provides new ways of seeing, feeling, observing, knowing, expressing and re/presenting that appears to be highly powerful way of exploration of self and beyond to experience transformative learning (Qutoshi, 2015, p. 166). Therefore, if my dissertation gives a literary tang while reading with its narrative or storytelling, the two main reasons for doing so must be taken into account. First reason is the objective to maintain the cohesion between its theme,



content and form of art. Since mine is an auto/ethnography about transformative learning of ABLT teachers, it is quite natural that the form is art. The cohesion between its theme, content and form of expression is at play. The second reason is the choice to deliberately deviate from the standard way of writing a dissertation; it is written in more kind of post-qualitative that is different from the dominant standard.

### **Auto/Ethnographic Inquiry: Self and Practicing Culture**

Self and other are the important elements of an auto/ethnography.

Auto/ethnography uses the 'self' that was always there anyway and of exploring personal connections to our 'culture' (Wall, 2006, p. 11). Associatively, according to Qutoshi (2015), auto/ethnography is one of the most awakening and illuminating approaches to research that engages the complex undetached-fluid-self and beyond in a powerful multi layered learning process that enriches Transformative Learning (p. 3). It is a "genre of research and writing" about the self, a self that is not a separate entity detached from research but a central part of culturally others living in a sociocultural context of research work (Walls, 2006, p. 9. as cited in Qutoshi, 2015, p. 4). Hence, auto/ethnography is a type of exploration which amalgamates 'self' (auto) and 'other' (ethnography). Roth (2005) mentions that there is a slash in between the two words to refer to the individual and her/his society who mutually accept one another. He further elaborates that the experiences of the individual and the society are incomplete with one another as without the individual there is no society and an individual's life is meaningless without a society. Auto/Ethnography therefore always is the exploration of one's culture in the context of her/his society in general. It is indeed a life writing to tell about a culture at the same time it tells about the life of an individual.

Hence, finding the relevance of the concepts like awakening, illuminating, multi-layered learning process and self and others from the above definitions of auto/ethnography to my research, I believe that my research is the study of my 'self' in the light of the culture of 'others.' As an auto/ethnographic inquiry, I reflected on my past and present experiences of learning and teaching English in a fun way using arts-based to give my students a better learning experience. In doing so, I also situated myself in the realm of others; that is my participants who practiced their ways of art-based pedagogy, thereby getting known to their culture too. My 'self' therefore is the reflection of the society and its culture, where I and my participants live.

“Autoethnography is body and verse.

It is self and other and one and many.

It is ensemble, a cappella, and accompaniment.

Autoethnography is place and space and time.

It is personal, political, and palpable...”

Spry (2011, p. 498).

The afore-mentioned poem about auto/ethnographic inquiry illustrates that auto/ethnography is the study of 'self' and 'other' put together. In this regard, my research is also an auto/ethnographic inquiry because it is the totality of my 'self' experiences and the 'ways of life' of my two participant teachers (Tin, 2013, p. 401) in using ABLT methods in our classrooms to enhance our ELT pedagogy.

Additionally, as an essence of auto/ethnography, I have explored the growth, evolution and sharing of the knowledge acquired about ABLT through my research.

Elaborately, as an auto/ethnographic inquiry, I have made a time line and analysed all those classes inside and outside the classroom that I had facilitated in different schools for different levels of students in different time since 2012 till date.

And for ethnography, I have observed more than twenty classes of both of my participants, audio-recorded the activities outside and inside their classes, written observation notes, taken field notes like photographs of inside and outside happenings, transcribed, generated themes, analysed and discussed the finding. And for the information of the practices of the self, I have made a timeline starting with the experiences of learning as well as teaching English with art-based methods. So, the reflections of my art-based language teaching are the tools of information collection of the practices of the self and I have carried out formal and informal observations and conversations to find the culture of practice of ABLT of my participants. Hence, my study blends ethnographic interests with ‘life writing’ and ‘tells about a culture at the same time.

### **I/Other Reflective Dialogues**

The fact that my research is an exploration of ‘Self’, as researcher and researched (Qutoshi, 2015, p. 3) makes me the outsider of and the insider of the practicing community at the same time. So, most of my stories might be their stories and vice versa. Therefore, to see I/Other interplay, I had two basic research sites for my study. First was the space inside and outside the classrooms of my research participants for ethnography and next my memory for the reflection of the self-i.e. ‘auto’. The research site for my ethnographic study in order to explore the culture of others was one of the progressive schools in Kathmandu valley in Lalitpur district. The reasons behind choosing it were relevant ones. Firstly, it is because my participants worked there as primary English and grade teachers, whom I had met in the course of attending professional development training. Secondly, the fact that I had visited and explored the school two times during my professional development programs and had witnessed its classrooms with colourful and artful works in the

classroom was like an ice on the cake. Further, those visits helped me know the school principal which aided my easy access to the school and as much cooperation as required throughout the research. Similarly, I knew about the general modality of the school through my professional friends' circle and my relatives' children who studied there.

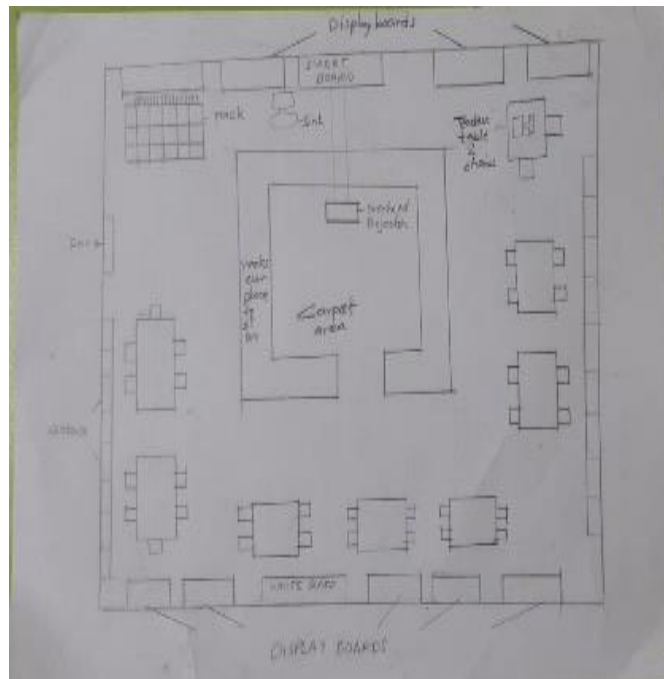
The school under study has about one thousand students comprising classes from grade one to twelve. There are different buildings and school timings for primary and the higher classes. The timing for primary school of about three hundred students is from 7:30 to 2: 00 p.m. The school provides breakfast, lunch and snacks to the students, teachers and other staff. 7:45 to 8:00 am is the time for warm up classes called morning gathering where students perform a variety of activities like sharing, dancing, listening to the music, playing indoor games and so on. Then the regular classes start from 8:a.m with breaks for lunch. The students are allowed to go to the toilet during the class times. All the students bring their own water bottles along that are kept on top of the book shelves. Whenever they needed it, they drink water with their teacher's permission.

The students come to school in comfortable and clean casual attire without as there is no school uniform. The classes from one to five follow a grade teaching system where two teachers each look after thirty students. Most of the primary classes look alike in terms of layout. The classrooms under my study are big, spacious, and airy and with good furniture which aided to the comfort and free movements of the students as well as the teachers thereby enhancing the smooth flow of the classes. There are two places for the students to participate in various activities. The carpet area at the centre is often used for morning gatherings, to give instructions, for audio and video, discussions and so on. And whenever the students have to do the writing,

they move back to the table area with the assigned places. The tables and chairs are set in groups of five or four. There are enough display boards for the students' works: class works, home works, projects, drawing, birthday charts, class room rules, vocabularies and so on. There are projectors at the centre to show videos or play audio for the students according to meet the demand of the curriculum.

The classes last for about 45 minutes generally but it changes to 40 minutes in the winter. Since it follows grade teaching, the teachers spend most of their time in the classrooms discussing the lesson plan or checking students' works as they were

the grade teachers too. Two grade teachers teach two subjects each and for other subjects they have subject teachers who come to the classes while the students stay in. Nevertheless, there is a staff room too. After every class, the students are allowed to use washrooms or drink water before they get



*Figure 3.1: My participants' classroom setting (Source: My drawing)*

ready for their next class. The students get their duties in rotation: distributors, collector, white board writers and homework checkers. Overall, the students share a cordial relationship with their teachers who listen to them any time, maintaining the stern rules though.

Next, for the study about the journey of the self in becoming an art-based English teacher, my memories and photo gallery of past and present experiences of

teaching English with art is the research site which I reflect while analysing the information in chapter four. I reflect on the memories of teaching English. So, for the collection of the primary information about art-based language teaching from the self (auto) as one of the research participants for my own research, my memories of teaching English through art-based methods in my overall teaching career is the first research site.

## **Selection of the Representative from the Community of Practice**

*Self and others, I explore*

*About ABLT to know more*

*Progressive teaching, work place nearby*

*And whose actions does creativity cry*

*Participants I choose to untie the knot loose*

With consideration to the nature of my research as an auto/ethnographic inquiry, I decided that my participants should be divided as ‘auto’ (self) and ‘ethnography’ (others). So, to begin with the selection of my participants, I did a purposive sampling and chose myself as the first participant of my research for self-reflection on my journey of becoming an art-based English teacher. Then, for ethnographic enquiry of others, I considered a few things before brainstorming the names and finally deciding on them:

- a. Participants for the study of ‘others’ should be the teachers of primary grades of a progressive school.
- b. Participants for the study of ‘others’ should be someone whom I had witnessed using art and having an inclination towards creativity in teaching.
- c. They should be working in Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur or in Banepa area, which would give me easy access while conducting observation and interview.

Hence, as I started pondering upon the participants who would match the above factors with these things in my mind, the first two things that came to my mind were ‘Professional Development Trainings’ and ‘Previous Schools’ that I had attended and worked respectively. Those were the places, where I had the opportunity to meet and work collaboratively with many English teachers. Until then, I had

worked in four schools and attended some training and workshops for ELT teachers. Then, I started narrowing down my criteria. I asked to myself, “Which training or workshop gave you the most creative experience so far?” The answer was the one that I had attended in one of the schools in Lalitpur where many teachers of teaching in different levels were present. In those two days, we participated in some creative group activities with effective ELT teaching at the centre. Eventually, I noticed and got impressed by these two teachers: Miss White and Miss Rainbow (pseudonyms) and their creative approaches to teaching. They were creative in their performance, speech and strategies while working for those activities. Later, we shared our numbers upon my request. So, when I decided to take them as my participants, the next step was to check their availability and willingness. I called them and to my pleasant surprise, they welcomed me happily to go and observe their classes. I gave my participants their pseudonyms based on the choices of colours and the reasons for loving them and to maintain the coherence with the artistic theme of my research issue. The pseudonyms and colours are as follows:

- a. Miss White: Given a choice of a colourful name, she chose white for it being the mother of all the colours.
- b. Miss Rainbow: When asked about what colour she would like for her name, she said that she liked all the colours in nature, hence I called her Miss Rainbow.

Lastly, as one of the participants for my research, I named myself Miss Scarlet considering my choice of colour as well. I am the participants who has been explored by myself as the researcher to collect the information of my ‘self’. So, I am here for the study of ‘auto’ while Miss Rainbow and Miss White are here for my ‘ethnography’ on ABLT.



### **Collection of Reflective Texts**

As an auto/ethnographic inquiry, my research required information from the self and others. So, while conducting my research, I used various related tools to collect data for the same: self-reflection, observation, field notes, interview, tape recording and internet/library search.

#### **Self-Reflection/Narrative: Text Generation**

For the collection of information from self as one of the participants of my own research, I reflect upon my memories from the past and present experiences or practices of using art-based methods in my English class since 2012 when I first began my teaching career. Not only the memories, I also include the photos of my practices that I had stored in my phone gallery while the classes were going on or of the works of the students taken later on. For example, the pictures of the lessons with drawing, displays of my students' works on the display boards of my classroom, pictures of my students' performances and so on.

#### **Observation**

Under the basic norms of qualitative observations, I as a researcher took a prolonged observation on the behaviour and activities of my participants at the research site. In these notes, I recorded, in an unstructured or semi-structured way (using some prior questions that I wanted to know as a researcher). My role was that of a non-participant who just observed and recorded the activities and behaviour both in writing as well as audio with the permission of my participant teachers (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, it is apparent that observation is one of the major information collection tools used in my research. I observed more than twenty classes each of both of my participants starting from May, 2019. Nevertheless, it was not done continuously; there were different kinds of breaks in between: weekends, summer

breaks, holidays, strikes and so on. Similarly, I also observed the classes that had practice for some programs like class day, diversity day, swimming classes, annual day and so on. On such occasions, I observed them too but continued with the regular class observations after that.

I recorded all the classes observed along with the interviews of my participants in my mobile phone to later transfer them in my lap top at home and store them in a file before starting the data transcription. Additionally, as advised by my supervisor, I made sure that my mobile was on an offline mode to avoid any calls which would affect the recording. I also made sure that the audio-recording did not make the teacher and the students intimidated. For this, I kept it in a fixed place that was on the table behind the teacher's computer after informing the teacher as well as the students beforehand. As both the participants' classes took place in the morning from 8:00 a.m. to 8:45 am, I could not observe them simultaneously. So, considering this situation, I first observed Miss White's class and then Miss Rainbow's.

### **Interview**

As a qualitative researcher, I conducted face-to-face formal as well as informal interviews of my participants. Those interviews involved unstructured and open-ended questions that were few in number and intended to elicit the required views and opinions from my participants (Creswell, 2009). I conducted two types of interviews to collect the required data. The first interview was a semi-structured one after observing a few classes of my participants. It was undertaken to know the background of the participant teachers. I asked them a few basic questions like:

- a. Name, organization and numbers of years for teaching English.

- b. Past and present experiences, if any, on teaching English with drawing, painting, craft, origami, clay work, dance, song, role-play, storytelling, puppetry, pottery, music or any such methods.
- c. Strength and challenges of teaching English through such tools.

Next, I undertook short interviews of about half an hour with two to three questions which had arisen during the class observations. I asked those questions to clarify the points either not understood or to ask more detail on them.

### **Field Notes**

During and after the observations of the classes of both the participants and mine too, I took field notes, particularly pictures of the works of the students done during the same. Nevertheless, formal permission was taken from the teachers with the consents to be the participants of my research.

### **Unveiling the Meaning**

The information we collect in our research have meanings in them. Saldana (2011) in an agreement to this states that the purpose and outcome of information analysis is to reveal to others through fresh insights what we've observed and discovered about the human condition. The way there are a variety of genres, elements, and styles of qualitative research, there are a variety of methods available for qualitative data analysis too. The choices of analysis of the information collected are most often based on what methods will complement our genre selection and conceptual framework, what will generate the most sufficient answers to our research questions, and what will best represent and present the project's findings (p. 89). Taking these factors into account, I have analysed the information in the way they best suit the content and theme of my study.

Hence, I considered the three important steps suggested by Maley (2019), ‘Input-Process-Output’ of the art-based methods used by me and other teachers as my research participants while analysing the information. Elaborately, the input were all the art forms like aesthetic, music, drama, poetry, visuals of many kinds used in a teaching process to apply to these inputs. Those were the random connections between things which were not normally found together, you put together to make a new meaning, reframing practices, teaching in a different way, dictation in a different way and so on. Then the creativity of outputs were analysed: what the students could produce; pictures, poems, stories, artefacts; individual outcomes too; how they learned to take risks, work together, approach new things themselves for educational benefits and so on.

Consequently, after the collection of information in the recording app of my cell phone, I transferred and stored them in a separate file and finally transcribed them in another file of my computer. All the files had separate headings: data transcription grade 6, data transcription grade 4, interview transcription Miss Rainbow and interview transcription Miss White. Then, I analysed the data to find the common themes: music, drawing, scribbles, storytelling, etc. They were later kept as the sub headings of chapter four which were then discussed individually with reference to the literature. Likewise, the discussion of how they addressed the different tenets of my theoretical reference: Transformative Learning theory is done in chapter six.

### **Textual Representation**

As a part of representing my/my participants’ thoughts, expressions, and discoveries, I have used multi-genres: poem, narrative, story, abbreviation and multi-logics: use of dialectical and metaphorical use of art because the standard-linear linguistic representation did not help. Or in other words, the standard writing format

did not help in meaning making and also did not address the multi-paradigmatic nature of my research. I have also used the figurative devices like metaphors, images, drawing etc. to represent my ideas.

### **Quality Standards of My Research**

It is a general belief that students are the mirrors of some parts of the teacher's values, ideas and philosophy. Therefore, considering the fact that the issue and methodology of my research germinated and got its initial shape from one of my professor's classes in MPhil that eventually led me to carry out a multi-paradigmatic approach to researching the journey of becoming ABLT teachers, I have chosen to maintain the cohesive quality standards proposed by Luitel (2012, pp. 107-109) that are: Incisiveness as focus on significant issues; illuminating as cultivating subtleties; verisimilitude as lifelikeness; transferability as viability; pedagogical thoughtfulness as evoking readers; and critical reflexivity as transformative process.

#### **Incisiveness as Focus of Research**

As far as I have understood from reading the article, the quality standard helps maintain the focus of the research on significant educational issues. My research has maintained it in the sense that it has tried to excavate the innovative ABLT methods from the practices of my participants. The normal standards of teaching with lecture or rote-learning has been given a new dimension. Hence, it has kept ABLT as the focus of its exploration that has been discovered to be a part of the practicing community of ELT in Nepal.

#### **Illuminating as Cultivating Subtleties**

As the name suggests, this standard has its significance in ensuring how the research has brightened the meanings of its issue. In my research, I have used multiple ways of expressions like narratives, reflections, poems, stories, dialogues, role-plays

to highlight the meanings of the experiences related to ABLT in the journey and practices of my research participants.

### **Verisimilitude as Lifelikeness**

The objective of maintaining the verisimilitude or the truthfulness of my research, I intended to make my research trustworthy with credibility. To ensure trustworthiness of my research, I undertook prolonged involvement and interaction in the research field with my participants: outside and inside the classroom, formally and informally. I did it to understand their real culture and generation of trustworthy experiences. During interaction with them, I compared, learned from and shared their perspectives and interpretations about the practices of using art-based methods with mine as a participant researcher. I visited them many times for about six months, not regularly though, until I got the genuine information which assured me that member checking process was carried out. I used open-ended questions rather than close-ended and the spontaneous questions that popped out while observing their classes. It was done to excavate their experiences related to using art-based methods in their classrooms.

### **Transferability as Viability**

For transferability, I have made sure that I included thick descriptions about practices of using art-based methods to facilitate English Language classrooms. I ensured a detailed description with reference to my participants and existing literature's viewpoint which could be useful and thus transferred to its real social contexts that is the educational organizations and people. I tried to make it usable and helpful for the related people for their purpose. For guaranteeing the conformability for the assessment of its usefulness, I added relevant and real references with proper APA so that my research could be tracked and used easily by others for their purpose.

Hence, it was the conformability of my research through data audit that is to make sure the availability of my data according to the source.

### **Pedagogical Thoughtfulness as Evoking Readers**

In the process of reading and understanding the idea put forth by the proposed research, I also ensured to stimulate thoughtfulness in my participants including me and the readers of my research and to be able to reflect on their own professional practices. During the research, I set interview questions particularly about art-based techniques used and the objective behind their use and the impact it had on pedagogy as a whole. But the questions did not directly include the term art-based, instead its forms like drawing, storytelling, music, role-play and so on. Whenever I saw my participants using such things in their classrooms, I would enquire about them in detail and eventually, I saw them doing them more often. Hence, it was done to maintain and encourage the quality standard of pedagogical thoughtfulness in my research through its participants (van Manen, 1990, as cited in Taylor & Medina, 2011).

I tried to make the participants benefit from the research I undertook in two ways. First, I tried to make them reflect on their practices of art-based methods by asking them such questions in the interview which would rhetorically tell them their classrooms were somewhat different: lively and fun when they taught through art-based methods. I began the questions with expressions like:

- a. Hello ma'am, today I thoroughly enjoyed your observing your learners cheerfully drawing to express their understanding.
- b. I had fun watching children performing role-play.
- c. Today I found actors and artists in your classroom.

Next, I took a lot of interest in taking field notes by clicking pictures of the art-based works of the students thinking that it would not only

encourage them to use such interesting methods but also benefit the learners. I took the participants' permission to be used in my research without having shown the children's faces. Finally, as an evidence of pedagogical thoughtfulness, one of my participants during member checking told that she realized that they have been practicing ABLT but had never spoken about it. My intervention made them realize that they're doing, learning and updating themselves. They also look for different forms of engagement for their students.

Additionally, for the readers of my research, I have created an informative environment about ABLT methods in ELT classrooms of Nepal through ideas, experiences, practices and reflections of me and my participants so that they get evoked to practice creative methods or update themselves in continuous professional development in various platforms discovered by my research.

### **Critical Reflexibility as Transformative Process**

The fact that my research is an auto/ethnographic inquiry of the self and others and it largely contains my subjective understanding, interpretations and values, I am fully aware of the limitations of the same that has been explained at the end of it. Throughout the research, I kept in my mind that it is my point of view and tried to make my readers aware of it too.

### **Member Checking**

Apart from the standards above that judge the quality of my participants' experiences, I also have used member checking in order to solicit their reactions (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 77), capture their voices and for the reflection of their experiences and how they can look forward to integrating what was learned in their classrooms (Candela, 2019, p. 626). After my research was complete, I met them



formally to inform them about my findings to which they would agree or disagree and I have included their responses in detail in the last chapter.

### **Ethical Issues of My Research**

As a social being, whatever we do is and should be based on some morals or ethics. Likewise, ethical consideration in social research is inevitable from the beginning till end. So, my research is guided by some ethics starting from the data collection process to its analysis.

#### **Representation**

I have represented my ideas, experiences and perspectives as clearly as possible to avoid misinterpretation (Medina & Taylor, 2011). I have maintained the ethics of auto/ethnographic inquiry as a self-narrative that critiques the situatedness of self with others in social contexts (Spry, 2001, p. 710). Then, while dealing with my research participants throughout my research, I have considered the following ethics as stated by Denizen and Lincoln (2011).

#### **Informed Consent**

After having chosen the research site and participants according to the nature, objectives and requirements of my research, I informed and took the consent of my participants formally in a written form with the clarity of purpose of visit. I requested my participants for the prolonged observation and interview during my research. Similarly, I made my objective of observation and interview very clear to convince with the logic of my research, but never tried to force it. During this I even assured them of withdrawal any time they wanted to in case of any circumstance or inconvenience.

**Avoidance of Deception**

In carrying out my research, I have tried to make everything clear to the participants: objectives, process and so on. I also assured them that I would be honest in using the information collected from them only for an academic purpose and that nothing will be misinterpreted or misused in my research without their permission.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**

The participants did not want their names to be revealed, so I used their pseudonyms as Miss Rainbow, Miss White and Miss Scarlet to avoid making their views about the pedagogy public. That was done for the protection of the identities of my participants and the research site.

**Accuracy**

To remain accurate, I have avoided to fabricate or falsify my participants' responses, even if they did not agree with my idea; I have included them as they ensured the original quality of my research.

**Chapter in a Wrapper**

To sum up, the third chapter of my dissertation revealed how I conducted my research. I started by stating the philosophical assumptions of my study and then the paradigm that governs it. Then, it introduced the sites, participants, and methods for the collection of information to make meaning for my study. The quality and ethical standards were also set to maintain the quality and ethics of the same.

## CHAPTER IV

## ON GROWING: GETTING INTRODUCED TO AND EXPLORING ABLT

*... I now tread upon the very important path of my journey; here I unveil my/other's journey of growing and becoming art-based English language teachers. It begins with the discussion of how I/others got inclined to ABLT dot by dot, which are explained under the metaphorical name, 'Artful Connectives.' Then I proceed on to show how I and my participants got the knowledge of ABLT or its forms. Thereby showing how we are evolving to be art-based English teachers from the usual ones when we get to know about ABLT through the different exposures in different professional development platforms and come back to our context to see the need to apply it in the same. To do this, first of all, as one of the participants of this study, 'I reflect on my journey with the excavation of the artful connectives of my journey. I commence it from my days as a learner to the initial days of my teaching till the present date. Then, I show how they came together and paved my way of self-transformation from a usual teacher to the process of becoming art-based. Finally, I explore my participant teachers' journey of becoming art-based English teachers discovered through the process of interview.*

**Artful Connective I: Lakhe Teacher**

*Sometime in the 90s when I was in primary school.*

*My Lakhe Teacher (as a noun in a boastful manly tone): Ha...Ha...Ha. Here I come. I am NOUN, the naming word, the one who gives names to all.*

*(Pointing arrogantly): You, you and you too Mr. God. I give all of you your*

*identities or else, you would be nameless. I, (egotistically) am the name of everything: person, place, animal, thing, feeling, idea, emotion, everything. So, I am the mightiest of you all.*

*The Learner Me (as Pronoun in a polite female tone): Dear Noun, I*

*really appreciate that you are the names of all. You are indeed very important. But let me tell you that I am also PRONOUN: a word that is used to replace nouns. I am used to avoiding repetitive usage of nouns. Hence, I am important too.*

“I remember, I remember”<sup>3</sup> that the most cherished memory of learning English with one of my primary grade teachers, my favourite teacher, who most probably was the one to activate the creative faculty of my mind. I enjoyed his classes to the fullest as they would be full of fun and thus probably attracted my young mind full of wonders. I remember the loud voice of my teacher, ‘*ha...ha...ha...*’ and his movements, here and there, when he acted as a boastful noun. I thought noun was a rude man, yet powerful, as he gave names to all. But when I role-played as a polite pronoun, I got an impression that females are polite but as powerful as men and I understood that pronouns take place of a noun. I remember, I was lost in the world of imagination. Judson and Egan (2013) claim that pedagogical toolkits like games, drama, play, rhythm and rhyme, pattern, story, image creation, metaphor, personalizing objects, changing the context, a sense of wonder, a sense of mystery,

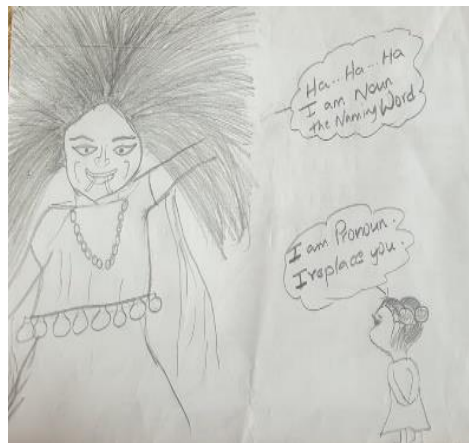


Figure 4.1: The Lakhe teacher  
(Source: Self drawing)

<sup>3</sup>From Past and Present, a poem by T. Hood

and the odd (and not-so-odd) help teachers make learning a second language fun, to creatively teach new vocabulary, to facilitate understanding of the subtleties of verb conjugation, to aid in memorization and, hopefully, to engage students' imaginations in the process (p. 343). My teacher was probably used some of them to do the same.

Therefore, as a facilitator, spectator and a participant, my teacher probably tried to make our learning fun and motivating by broadening the world of the classroom to include the outside world and offering a much wider range of language opportunities. Hence, role-play as a creative speaking activity enabled us to stay in our own shoes but put ourselves into an imaginary situation (Budden, 2006).

Similarly, Wilhelm Von Humboldt's famous words, "You cannot teach a language; you can only create the conditions under which it might be learned" in (Xerri & Vosallo, 2016) suggest the English teachers to convert their classrooms into an art galleries and to surprise their students one day and replace all the 'boring' stuff with colourful posters. They suggest the teachers make the classroom environment artful (p. 100). Hence, I remember, I too was amusingly informed about nouns and pronouns when the English teacher had turned our classroom into a stage, where we got to perform. I and other students got inspired to do something different; he had probably awoken the joy and creative expression through the art form 'role-play.'

Connectively, when I witnessed the role-play of nouns and pronouns, I aspired through my teacher to be like my teacher metaphorical to 'Lakhe': expressive and artistic, which is related to another memory of my childhood. Along with many other diverse cultural festivals of Nepal, the popular 'Lakhe Dance' that I used to have immense fun watching every year as a curious child in my 'Mamaghar' (maternal uncle's house) in Dharan (one of the cities in Nepal) always fascinated me with its peculiar dance, costume and expression. *The dancer's ferocious face, overhanging*

*fangs, locks of red or black hair and the colourful costume have somehow made me learn the importance of some creative expressions.* I remember, I used to get extremely terrified, yet equally enthralled by the beauty of its uniquely scary look. I used to run away horrified but again returned back curious. I liked the feeling of wonder at that amazing Lakhe and thus liked to imitate its violent looking steps and dance positions with the body swinging free and wild.

That memory perhaps was so powerful that it remained with me when I went back to Darjeeling after the vacations where I lived with my parents and where I studied too. I used to try to dress up like a Lakhe using my mother's shawls, saree, lipsticks and eye shadows whenever I played with my friends and cousins. I used to try to look, speak and dance exactly like a Lakhe. Some used to run away terrified while most of them were attracted to me and I used to create imaginary stories, which of course were orally transmitted from my maternal grandmother. But, in order to get the continuous attention of my friends and cousins, I told the stories as if they were mine. I used to however make up the stories with bits and pieces of my grandmother's various stories like 'Ranke Bhoot<sup>4</sup>', 'Kale ra Rakchesh<sup>5</sup>' and so on. As Maley (2015) advocates that creativity is widely believed to be about letting the imagination loose in an orgy of totally free self-expression (p.6), the desire to entertain and educate people through creativity and art had been probably kindled in my little heart.

Accompanying the memory, the fondness of art and creativity continued when I reached the higher classes. I remember my higher school days when the most creative impression I got was from the 'Mahakavi' (The Greatest Poet) Laxmi Prasad Devkota's short epic '*Munamadan*' and the 'Adikavi' (the First Poet) Bhanubhakta

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<sup>4</sup> The Fire Ghost

<sup>5</sup> Nick name for black guy and a demon

Acharya's poem '*Ghasi*' (the Grass cutter). The songs that Madan (the lead character) sings in different situations in 'Munamadan': separation from Muna, his wife; betrayal by his friends; assistance of 'Bhote' (a Mongolian) etc., not only made me enjoy the musical epic but also perhaps made me marvel how 'songs' as a genre of art can be beautifully used to express important situations in a drama. That experience might perhaps have strengthened my understanding that songs can be used in ELT classrooms too for addressing the learners' affective, cognitive and linguistic faculties in the days to come (Schoep, 2016). I had sung and enacted most of them by heart but the most remembered one is, "*Chhetri ko choro yo pau chhunchha ghrinale chudaina, manisha thulo dila le hunchha jaata le hudaina*"<sup>6</sup>.

Similarly, the poet's creation of the poem '*Ghasi*' based on the considerate behavior of a grass cutter, who thinks of building a well for the passer by in the village who will drink water and remember him forever, startled me. Eventually, introduction to and discussion about the various literary essays, poems and dramas in my higher studies brought me closer to the world of creativity as Read (2015) mentions that creativity doesn't happen in a vacuum. There is always something that stimulates and underpins the generation of children's original thinking, such as an idea, picture, text, story, object, question or problem, or some combination of these (p. 29). Whenever I came across such creative pieces, I used to wonder and try to understand their meanings as they really fascinated me through their creative expressions. Joining the dots, eventually, one amazing day of 2006 when I had just begun my Bachelor of Arts in English and Sociology, I was amazed to know from my teacher who taught 'Critical and Creative Thinking' that the people chained in the

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<sup>6</sup>Chhetri's son who belongs to a high caste touches the feet of a low caste man with respect and gratitude not with loathe

'Allegory of Cave' by Plato were the worldly human beings who are bound by the chains of material happiness. I immediately got intrigued by the novel idea; especially to know about the one who climbs up the cave towards the spiritual light. Similarly, the abstract paintings of Pablo Picasso that I got to interpret as the assignments, aroused in me, the desire to go beyond the normal standards of art. Additionally, one day, I remember getting awestruck by the shape of the poem "Buffalo Bills" which was in the shape of a gun cohesive with one of its themes of 'heroism.' I curiously asked the teacher many times if anyone was allowed to write a poem in such a way, breaking all the grammatical rules, until I got an answer from my teacher that it was called breaking away from the normal standards to create something new. In this way I eventually started comprehending how creative art can enhance the process of learning.

On the contrary, when I remember every such experience of learning English artfully so clearly, I wonder why I don't remember and cherish lectures, or may I say boring lectures. I now feel that they never excited me to learn. I had to forcefully acquire the knowledge. Apart from my least interest, I realize today that they taught me no skill more than mugging and passing the examination. The engaging activities like song and role-play probably brought me closer to ELT, which at least had something interesting to do and talk about. In those days, I never experienced learning any other subjects with art forms as tools. The teachers simply explained the text in the book, wrote on the blackboard, made us copy, so homework and remember to reproduce in examination.



## **Artful Connective II: A Rookie English Teacher**

Professionally, it was back in the year 2012, after I completed my Masters in English Literature that my career as an English teacher commenced. Other than my newly attained degree and being brought up in a family with both of my parents being teachers, I presumably had the sub-conscious enthusiasm to become a good teacher. However, I believed from the very beginning that a teacher should bring variety within the class which would motivate her/his students to be ready to learn something rather than just monotonous drilling, rigorous writing exercises or boring comprehension only (Bhattarai, 1993). Now I can term that nature as the longing to become an ‘Artful Teacher.’ I began with a hope that my students would be charmed by my interesting teaching methods. My fascination towards small children made me choose to teach the primary level of learners in the beginning. In my initial days, children’s interest was at the centre of my teaching philosophy. As a fresher teacher, I was so excited that I tried using my acting skill to attract and make my students understand the concepts without getting bored. I probably could act because I was given the platform as a learner back in my school. I used to read the stories to my students acting out every word and situation. My students reacted positively to the way I used to enact stories that I in fact had to explain. I thought singing, dancing, acting, jumping, running and so on were helping me make them understand the topics clearly as the students used to be amused.

In the due course, I got some opportunities of professional development from the school I was teaching at. I remember the twist that I had in my teaching style. One fine month of 2015, I was sent to attend a training conducted by one of the then newly opened progressive schools by a group of experienced teachers, where I participated in many creative teaching methods: readers’ theatre, story cloud and story

wheel making. After that experience, I looked back at my own practices and felt the need to change my old habit of mind about teaching and develop my capacities to bring reforms at my context (Qutoshi, 2015, p. 164). It became the rational process leading to experience in a paradigm shift that altered my way of thinking, believing and knowing about ELT (Mezirow, 2009). I felt the need of transformation from my old to new culture of teaching. As a result, I clearly remember how excited I was to go back to my school and try the story wheel with my grade six learners on the term's book, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl.

*Miss Scarlet's class sometime in the year 2015*

*I, along with my students, executed the lesson plan in four days. First, I oriented the students about the story wheel; the process and the materials required. On the same day, I divided the class of thirty students into five groups with six of them in each group and I told them to work in the class to divide the work depending on their skills and interests. Works included: materials collection, summary writing, cutting and pasting, illustration, writing the summary into four parts in the wheel. The next day, I gave the materials to the students like hard boards, chart papers, sign pens, crayons, scissors, glue, colourful papers and thread. I guided them throughout. That and the next two days, students worked together in groups to complete their task; while some were writing the summary, others worked on cutting and pasting and others on the illustration. On the fourth day, the story wheels were completed and we hung them in our classroom walls for other students, teachers and even parents to see during parents-teachers' meetings.*

I was content to see that every task related to the activity: reading, summarizing, dividing the story into parts, group division, making a story wheel, colouring, cutting, pasting, drawing, designing and displaying them on the classroom wall engaged and made my students happy. I could also feel a sense of ownership in the learners when their works were creatively tangible and evident. After that, I decided to teach as creatively as possible and started to spend more time in planning topic related activities. Every learning in a professional development program was like a blessing to an aspiring teacher like me. I realized that there was more to learn. Judson and Egan (2013) suggest that it is common for a novice teacher of a second language to emerge from her teacher education program with fully equipped pedagogical toolkits; the sun glints off, as yet, unscratched tools designed to smoothly teach the elements of a second language. She has games for everything. She may even have images and stories at hand, as well as songs and funky raps intended to make learning a second language fun (p. 343). Therefore, I too as a beginner English language teacher applied what I had learnt in a professional development program. I thought it would be a creative learning experience for my learners

### **Artful Connective III: A Greenhorn in the World of Research**

As Robert Frost has said, '*Way Leads on to Way*'<sup>7</sup>, my preliminary step towards ABLT as a rookie teacher exploring and learning from various professional development platforms led me to join MPhil in English Language Teaching at Kathmandu University School of Education that has become the turning point of my biggest stimulator of professional development in the yet to come future. Every scholar of KUSOED like me will agree with me that we get many platforms there apart from the mainstream degree. We just do not enrol and get the degree there.

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<sup>7</sup> The Road not Taken

There is so much to learn and gain during the process. So, I too got to learn and practice innovative methods of teaching English as an MPhil (ELE) scholar. It might sound hyperbolic but it was as if the classes, training, workshops and the conferences were waiting to meet my craze and need for creative teaching skills. I practiced writing my assignments and giving my presentations with creativity at the centre, as much I could and knew. The professors always motivated us to do something out of the box and the books like *Diwasapana* by Gijubhai Badheka in the first semester introduced me to a teacher who likes to go beyond the traditional methods of teaching; '*Literature and Language Teaching*' by Gillian Lazar, which explores 'hows' and 'whys' of using literature in language classroom and many more helped me to take more steps towards creativity.

In addition, the Fine Arts Department in the University which always displayed their unique creations in the form of paintings, sculptures and so on had also always been stimulating my love for creativity side by side. All of these and many more which came my way of creative teaching encouraged me to eventually defend my research proposal with the title, "Becoming Art-Based English Language Teachers: An Auto/ethnographic Inquiry" which I thought of starting with an enactment of a nursery rhyme, "Humpty Dumpty" and then using all those works created by my students in my class as samples of art-based language teaching. I was humbled with kind appreciations of my mentors and wishes of luck for the success of my attempt to do something different. I was motivated.

Relatedly, the aforementioned and many more such exposures in and around KUSOED during my study as an MPhil (ELE) scholar made me feel the cracks (drawbacks) in my way of teaching back in my school. I was learning new strategies of ELT, realizing their need in my context, applying the learning and feeling the

impact and wanting to transform simultaneously during that time. The light of new ideas was missing, yet the light of transformation perhaps had begun to find its way through the crack. My world of teaching with dominantly old ways got cracked by the crises of unparalleled proportion between the old world I was in and the new world of teaching that I was encountering; forcing me to rethink the fundamentals of my life, my teaching (Taylor et al., 2012, p. 1). Additionally, Broemmel et al. (2019) informs that over the past four decades, a number of researchers have attempted to describe the reading habits of teachers, and with good reason: teacher reading habits may directly impact student learning and achievement. As a research scholar at KUSOED, I started reading different books and journal articles related to the issues of ELT for writing assignments and classroom presentations. Assignments also included frequent writing research-based papers and essays. All these activities eventually led me to know about different trends and issues in ELT and also introduced and attracted me to creative teaching as well. I badly felt the need for change and eventual transformation in my ways of teaching and the kind of teacher I was till then.

#### **Artful Connective IV: Butterflies at IATEFL, 2018**

Teacher organizations play very important role in teachers' development. Gnawali (2013) also asserts that the teacher associations generate activities that are aimed at the teacher professional development include organizing annual conferences, workshops, seminars and trainings; publishing journals and proceedings; running blogs and mailing lists; providing opportunities for foreign exposure and higher studies. In all activities, learning from each other seems to be the core of the learning process. With reference to this context, one of the important artful connectives during the initial days of my dissertation proposal idea conception was 52<sup>nd</sup> IATEFL Conference held on 2018 in Brighton, UK which had announced various scholarships

programs for the English teachers around the world to attend and present in its 23<sup>rd</sup> Conference, 2018 in Brighton, UK as usual. I, along with many of my friends, were given an orientation in our university about applying in the conference by one of our mentor professors at KUSOED. After that, during the process of exploring the scholarships, my eyes caught the attention of the ‘Creativity Group Scholarship.’ Then, with the objective of making the paper as relevant and creative as possible, I started brainstorming about the issue and framing an attractive title. I thought about it everywhere and every time: in the MPhil classes, with my students, with family and at school with my colleagues. I remember talking about the issue with my colleagues at lunch time one fine day. After some suggestions, rejection, addition, twists and turns, I decided to send a paper entitled, ‘English Teachers of Nepal: Butterflies with Colourful Wings’. I wanted to share with people the creativity that we Nepali English teachers have in us.

I might have definitely screamed out the loudest at almost midnight of 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 when I read the email from IATEFL which informed me that I had won the ‘Creativity Group Scholarship’ to attend the conference. The scholarship meant a lot to me as it was an opportunity for me to personally and professionally develop in an international platform which would give me exposure to many creative and innovative ideas. Moreover, the fact that it was ‘Creativity Group Scholarship’ added to the significance of the opportunity I had gotten as I could add a lot to the art-based teaching kitty. I could only imagine the activities that I would do and take part in for about seven months with other important experiences of corresponding with the IAEFL team about the booking of hotels, travel, visa etc.. Finally, the arrival at my dream city London, exploring beautiful Brighton, attending various events in the conference: plenary, workshops, exhibitions, interview, dance class, presentations, the

Award Night and many others were all more than asked for. Attending Lit Sig on the first day of the conference gave me some deep insights of using literature in a language classroom. I was happy to gain some take home ideas to apply in my class as I also taught some novels and plays to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade learners back in my country.

Yet, one more artful connection was on the way waiting for me, I guess. When I finished my presentation on the fourth day of the conference, I asked my few yet thoughtful audience members to put forward any colours they think can be added to the wings of the English Teachers. Among them, one of the very generous spectators suggested to me that storytelling could be one of the interesting ways to make the language classroom engaged. William Faulkner has once said, 'If a story is in you, it has got to come out.' As I was craving for something which was a novel experience for me; something to take home for me or maybe something which fulfilled my creative desire, I was fortunate to participate in David Heathfield's Storytelling session the same night. Additionally, I was blessed with an opportunity to share my story on the platform, 'A folktale- Sunkeshari Rani' that my maternal grandmother had told me in my childhood. I felt motivated. Later, with the guidance of Mr. Heathfield, I held some similar sessions in my school and college back in Nepal as one of the important speaking skills enhancing activities. My learners and friends felt pleasure telling varieties of Nepali Folktale at the sessions. Since then, I and my learners have been sharing our stories which will perhaps open avenues for some other interesting artful connectives.

Gnawali (2013) again explains that teacher associations are formal or informal groups of teachers set up for mutual professional benefits. The teachers come forward to form associations when they realize that they can exchange their ideas and experiences and learn from one another (p. 6). So, my participation in IATEFL was an

experience of sharing knowledge, networking and most importantly getting to the art of storytelling more closely. The objective of attending the conference of an international conference had definitely professionally developed me. It informed and taught me about the significance of storytelling and even made me thoughtful about the relevance of many similar art forms in an ELT classroom. I had learnt to use it as a tool to make my teaching interactive, insightful and effective. Prior to 1997, this was a very small qualitative study. As an adult learner of ABLT strategies, I was experiencing the need for change after the negotiation of the dramatic changes in worldviews and new framework of storytelling as a creative ABLT tool for ELT (Mezirow, 1978, as cited in King, 2011, p. 5). My passion to develop as an ELT teacher grew more.

#### **Artful Connective V: Getting Introduced to the Art of Storytelling**

In this section of the chapter about growing to become an ABLT teacher, I reflect upon my experience of getting known to the art of storytelling. It begins with my personal and professional connection to the art of storytelling: childhood memories of getting connected to storytelling through my grandmother's stories, most notably, '*Sunkeshari Rani*' and getting introduced to one of the most inspiring storyteller in my early days of MPhil classes. The heart of this part of rising action is the disclosure of two major factors behind my urge to become a storytelling teacher and then my interest of wanting to know and thereby delve into my participants' process of becoming the same. In other words, I explore how I/others have used storytelling as an art-form in our English language classrooms.



*My grandmother, sometime in the 90s*

*'Eka desh ma, euti Sunkeshari Rani bhanne assadhai raamri keti thi. Usko lamo, baklo ani sunko kapal le uslai sabai bhanda sundari banauthyo.'*

*(Once upon a time, there was a very beautiful girl named Sunkeshari Rani.*

*Her long, thick and golden hair made her the most beautiful of all. )*

*Her rough, yet loving and caressing hands*

*Her wrinkled, yet cute smile*

*Her old, yet glittering eyes*

*And her fascinatingly changing facial expressions,*

*Soft and loud, high and low voice tones as the story unfolded.*

*Oh! How I and my siblings loved to hear her stories, more than our schools' lessons.*

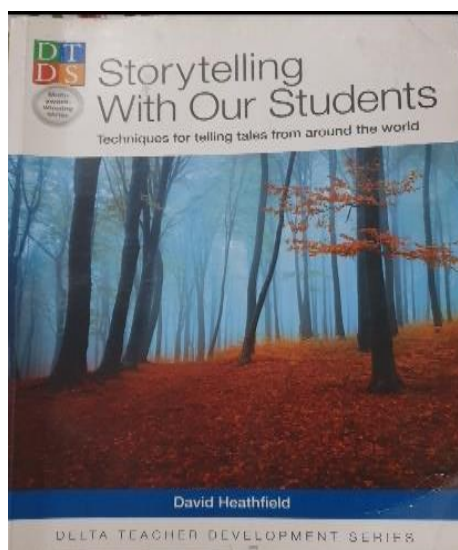
My experiences with storytelling tells me that it is an art form. Heathfield and Goksu (2019) say that storytelling is, without a doubt, the oldest of all arts (p. 190). So, the oldest time I reckon myself getting introduced to this form of art can be anytime during the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s during my childhood and most probably the first person who introduced me to this interesting genre and awakened my love for it was my maternal grandmother, Ms. Thapa. The memory so afresh, as if yesterday, I vividly remember that it was almost every night during my three months' long winter vacation in my maternal house, in Dharan, I heard her tell the story of 'Sunkeshari Rani' and many others; cuddled in her lap and lost in the world of imagination. She is indeed the best storyteller. We used to eagerly wait for the winter vacations and then for its nights full of stories; fascinated and mesmerized by the artful narrative of our grandmother. We used to take turns to sit or sleep beside her when the story was going on. When she said, '*Ekadeshma euti Sunkeshari bhanne asaddhai ramri keti thi*' (Once upon a time, there was a very beautiful girl named

Sunkeshari), we used to get excited that the story had begun and we got cosy around her. The golden hair that made her so beautiful, her loving family and cheerful life gave us the background of the story. Then, the eventual movement of the plot to the time when the main problem hit her life: the loss of one strand of her golden hair, her parents' promise to marry Sunkeshari to the one who found the lost hair, the dramatic finding of the lost hair by her own elder brother and her run away from home upon the discovery of the truth helped us understand about problems in our lives.

Nevertheless, the happy ending when Sunkeshari gets married to a handsome prince and gets united with her brother conveyed the message that we have to work and try to solve our own problems. When I reflect on it today, I understand that this story and many other stories told by my grandmother educated me about so many things and endowed me various skills rather than just about stories. Firstly, the basics of the story: beginning, middle and end and its essential parts like exposition: setting (temporal, spatial), characters (major, minor, protagonist, antagonist), rising action (the conflict), climax (peak of the problem), falling action (characters work to solve out the problem) and resolution (the ending). Second thing they might have taught me are the morals: victory of good over bad, sharing is caring, importance of hard work etc. and other important parts of human life like society, family, religion, culture and so on. Additionally, storytelling has helped me develop language learning skills: vocabularies, grammar, listening, speaking, pronunciation, writing, sentence structure (Brewster, 2014). It is thus a creative art form that addresses the needs of ELT learners in variety of afore-mentioned ways.

Clap, Clap, Clap...that woman, Clap, Clap, Clap...that woman Clap, Clap, Clap...her eyes Clap, Clap, Clap became Clap, Clap, Clap the eyes of a leopard, Clap, Clap, Clap....that woman, Clap, Clap, Clap...that woman Clap, Clap, Clap...her teeth Clap, Clap, Clap became Clap, Clap, Clap the teeth of a leopard, and her hands Clap, Clap, Clap...became, Clap, Clap, Clap...the paws of a leopard, Clap, Clap, Clap... and her back Clap, Clap, Clap became Clap, Clap, Clap the back of a leopard...Clap, Clap, Clap...and her skin Clap, Clap, Clap...became Clap, Clap, Clap...the fur of a woman...and her heart became the heart of a leopard (Blake, 2016).

It was sometime in the beginning of the year 2016 when in my MPhil academic writing class, I was introduced to a wonderful storyteller, ‘Jan Blake’ by our facilitator of Academic Writing course in the first semester, who exhibited us through her story of ‘Leopard woman’ how storytelling has not only become a popular profession but is also an effective educational tool to teach expressions,



*Figure 4.2: A gifted storytelling book*  
(Source: My photo gallery)

pronunciations, vocabularies, listening, speaking and many other language skills. In this regard, (Heathfield & Goksu, 2019) affirm, “There are many advantages in putting storytelling at the centre of what we do and in organizing our teaching around it” (p. 187). It creates fun in ELT classrooms.

Hence, I explored other stories of her which were: The Fisherman: A tale of passion, loss, and hope; Story of Pumpkin, etc. in YouTube. Eventually, that

exposure and exploration germinated the seed of a quest for storytelling in my mind. I gradually comprehended that I could use storytelling for enhancing various English language skills of my learners like listening, speaking and writing. Similarly, later I thought to use it in my classroom and sometime later it also got connected to my research.

Therefore, the plot story of our ( I and my participants) takes place in the temporal setting of the year 2016 through present and the spatial setting of Kathmandu, Nepal and Brighton, UK (for my auto/ethnographic accounts). The

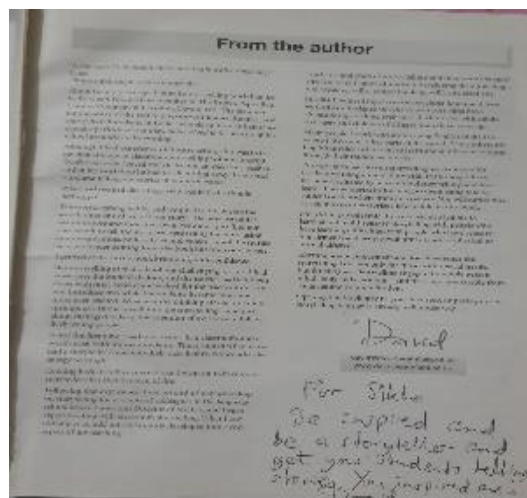


Figure 4.3: Author signed page of the book (Source: My photo gallery)

characters who add life to the journey are: ‘I’ who represents myself as a participant and researcher, my participant teachers and our students, the story teller Ms. Blake, Mr. Heathfield, Prof. Dr. Gnawali and so on.

It was for the first time in the year 2018, at 52<sup>nd</sup> IATEFL Conference’s storytelling session conducted and hosted by one of the popular storytelling teacher Mr. Heathfield when I had a substantial realization that storytelling can be a uniquely powerful linguistic and psychological technique in the hands of a language teacher which s/he can use with people of any culture and with people of virtually any age (Heathfield, 2014, p. 17). After presenting my paper, entitled ‘English teachers of Nepal: Butterfly with Colourful Wings’ as a Creativity Group scholar from Nepal in the Conference, I got an invitation from David, who was one of my presentation’s few but avid audience. At the end of my presentation, I clearly remember his words, “Perhaps storytelling could be one of the colours to your wings.” It was hence an

opportunity to participate as a storytelling English teacher in such a session where English teachers from different countries of the world had gathered to spend an evening listening to one another's stories enthusiastically.

At the same time, it had only been some time since I had defended my MPhil dissertation proposal entitled, 'Becoming Art-Based English language teacher in Nepal.' So, I was a conference participant, researcher and a participant for my research at the same time whose urge to become art-based teacher with storytelling had begun. The following along with me were the participants in that storytelling session hosted by Mr. Heathfield.

*Irshad from Pakistan- Story: difficulties of living with a strict father; David H from England-Story: 'The Golden Earrings', a re-telling of a story from Nepal by Manisha Panta; Lana from Russia- Story: The Fox and the Cheese.;*  
*Xiangdong from China-Story: her experience of telling and writing; Andrew W from Hungary-Story: Little White Cat; Bram from The Netherlands-Story: a traditional story about a fox stealing the milk; Svetlana from Russia-Story: a traditional story about a deer with silver hoofs; David H from England-Story: 'The Straw Millionaire' a traditional story from Japan told to him by Kenta Ogawa about a poor boy who gives away what he has but is given much more as a result; Maggie from the United States-Story: a story about jeopardy;*  
*Daria from Russia- Story: a traditional story about pulling up a big turnip;*  
*Rosemary from Australia-Story: a story about killing snakes; Andrew W from Hungary-Story: a story from personal experience, 'Beggar in Bogota';*  
*Charlotte-Story: a tale about transporting a double bed; Scarlet from Nepal-Story: A traditional story from Nepal about a time when everything spoken became true (Heathfield & Wright, 2014, p. 7).*

It was the first time ever that I had told a story in front of about one hundred people in an international platform and the experience not only helped me gain my confidence of public speaking, but also fuelled so many ideas inside me that I would apply back in my country with my learners in my teaching context as well as with my fellow English teachers of Nepal through various professional development platforms. I definitely grew as a professional there on that platform and was endowed with the new concept of the ‘Art of Storytelling’ as a creative tool to enhance ELT. It sowed the seed of exploration about it and application in the nearest future as well.

*For oft on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude  
And then my heart with pleasure fills  
And dances with the Daffodils.*

- Wordsworth, 1807

When I look back to those memories, I feel that life has always been poetic to me: full of metaphors and similes. Most of the time, life is like a roller-coaster ride. First, it has lots of ups and downs. We enjoy happiness from good moments, while we also have to face the unpleasant ones. Next, it has twists and turns. We never know what it has to offer us next to its winding streets (Gurung, 2018, p. 70). Thus, among many ‘I’s’ inside me, the one that is a traveller, a researcher teacher who is seeking to gain creative art-based methods of English language teaching and keep on offering to myself and my learners and others with a joyful learning experience of English pedagogy. The afore-mentioned journey makes me reflect that the various artful

connectives in my life have been the exposures that gave me the knowledge of ABLT; made me critically reflect on the way I was teaching; use my reasons to walk on the path of transformation, a life-long journey of becoming an ABLT teacher.

Furthermore, the introduction to storytelling as one of the important art forms made me realize its possible usage in my ELT classroom back in Nepal that I have explored in detail in the following chapter. Nevertheless, storytelling stimulated the need for use of storytelling to facilitate so many topics of ELT to the learners in my classroom was like the ten stages of transformation identified by Mezirow (1978, as cited in King, 2011, p. 5). It initiated with a disorienting dilemma between my way and storytelling way of teaching that led me to self-examination. Next, I went through the phase critical assessment of epistemic, socio-cultural, or psychic assumptions and the recognition that my discontent with my storytelling absent teaching strategies and the process of transformation with it were shared. After I came back, I got to learn about storytelling from some more interactions with David that led me to the path of exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions with storytelling. Then, I decided to plan for the course of action with it in my context. The introduction of storytelling in and outside my classroom in the aftermath and its further improvisation to meet my classroom needs led me to the acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing my plans. The provisional trial of new roles of storytelling in my classroom helped me build competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships that made me reach out to other ELT teachers of my circle to share my knowledge by conducting various workshops and training programs. It was thus the reintegration of a new perspective into my life, my way of teaching.

### **How Do You Know What You Know?**

After the reflection of my journey of knowing about ABLT, I am was interested in my participants' exposures to it that I discovered through their class observation. Dornyei (2007) explicates that from a research perspective, observation provides direct information rather than self-report accounts, and thus it is one of the three basic data sources for empirical research (p. 178). Similarly, the observation of my research participants' classrooms helped me not only gather information about my research issue and understand their culture but also stimulated the question, 'How do you know what you know?'; the answers are explored in this chapter. In simple words, I explore how my participants grew to be art-based English teachers which made them apply different types of art forms as tools in their classrooms. The tools are the ones which I have discussed in chapter five as the themes generated out of my data collection. The question 'how' that got arisen after the observation was answered through the interview, one of the qualitative methods of inquiry as follows:

*a. What do you do to update your knowledge about English language teaching?*

*b. During the observation of your classes, I saw that you use various tools like drawing, music, audio/video, pictures, role-play, discussion, class day etc. to teach your students. Where did you learn about them from?*

My research participant, Miss Rainbow, MEd (Major English) from Tribhuwan University, who had been teaching in Kindergarten and primary for about two decades gave the credit of her knowledge about creative teaching to various sources, which were common to my source of growth and evolution as a teacher. She said that she attended workshops and professional development sessions to update her knowledge about contemporary trends and issues of English



Language Teaching, which are two among many effective ways of continuous professional growth according to British Council's CPD framework (2020).

Furthermore, according to her, reading articles/ books related to subject matter and most significantly, interactions and sharing with other colleagues also help her teach in variety. She added that finally each year the children she taught introduced her to the present modern technology and lingo too.

My next participant, Miss White, a resident of Lalitpur district, completed her basic education (O level) from Singapore, 10+2 from Darjeeling India and bachelor from IGNOU. Additionally, she self-pursued courses between after 10+2 related to education. She too had a common source of knowledge to voice out during the interview. She affirmed that she too attended webinars; requested from friends abroad when possible; teachers' blogs helped her much; YouTube videos of other teachers' lessons etc. to learn about the new ways of teaching. In this context, Rao (2019) claims that attending training programs, conferences, workshops and conferences help the teachers understand the latest trends in ELT and that teaching that has been changing from time to time and thus there is a need for the teachers to change their teaching strategies and styles accordingly. She also stressed that she observed how kids use English language in other subjects and how they are being affected by their surroundings gave her ideas to tune her lessons. This line of thought by Miss White seems to affirm Dornyei's (2007) who elaborates that besides asking questions, observing the world around us is the other basic human activity that all of us have been involved in since childhood to learn and gain understanding (p. 178). She has developed by reaching out to various sources of professional development.

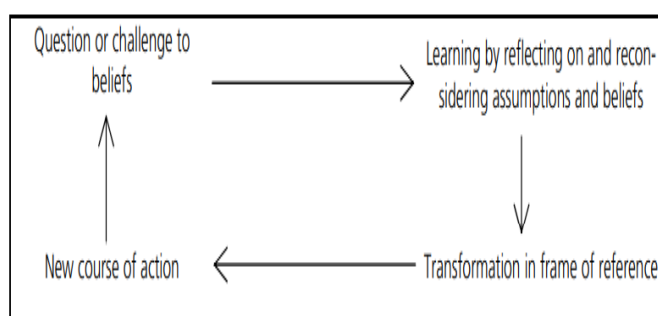
Focusing on the knowledge about various art forms as tools Miss Rainbow explained that teaching 9-11 years old children has made her realize that they tend to grasp ideas exploring in different forms be it recitation, role play or audio/videos which help them develop their social, cognitive and emotional skills. She remembered that she was introduced to these various activities while she was pursuing her bachelor's in education. Moreover, the awareness of the teaching approaches enabled her to put them into teaching practices. She further recalled the knowledge acquired from an interaction in a professional development program, where, the speaker had emphasized on "begging, borrowing and stealing" when it came to sharing knowledge and imparting it! Last but not the least, she gave credit to her passion of learning more which makes her explore and try new ideas to make learning fruitful for her learners.

In this same context, Miss White got nostalgic and said that initially she was trained and the training stimulated her curiosity to search for more online sources. There she observed how English teachers in other countries were doing, especially places where education was strong. Other times when she reads books and articles, watches educational videos or just converses with people, she keeps a mental note or a note on her phone. Also, asking the kids for their feedback on how to prevent excess boredom has helped her a lot. She further asserted that the strategy which seemed to work for her the most was to remain open to ideas and think how and where she could use them in class. However, she clarified that such strategies were best effective when freed up of other obligations like overly-detailed lesson plans, meetings, marking to think and search. "Taking responsibility for my own professional development" is defined as the professional practice in CPD (British Council, n.d.) which involves:

Understanding my professional needs, interests and learning preferences in order to identify areas for development; defining my short, medium and long-term career goals; understanding the developmental pathways available to reach my specific career goals; using technology to facilitate my professional development; staying up to date with developments in education in teaching and learning; being aware of, selecting and engaging in appropriate professional development opportunities and resources to inform my classroom practice, including: collaborating with colleagues and other professional; Reflective practice; teacher research and other forms of classroom inquiry; attending and presenting at conferences; participating in training; reading and publishing Joining teachers' associations; observing other teachers and being observed (p. 14).

Connectively, in the light of the afore-mentioned framework of professional development by British

council, I analysed Miss Scarlet, Miss Rainbow and Miss White's journey of growing, which gave them exposures to and eventually make them use different art



*Figure 4.4: Mezirow's transformative learning (Source: Belangar, 2011)*

forms as tools to make their classrooms lively, engaging and effective. To summarize their journeys of knowing, I saw that their journey of growing to become art-based English language teachers is backed by different professional development platforms like their education and online sources; self-exploration and passion; observation and reflection; and attending conferences, webinars, workshops. So, their participation

and attendance in these various aspects give them exposure to new trends and issues of English language teaching, where there is the possibility of gaining knowledge about ABLT too. Likewise, the whole journey of knowing, reflecting and moving towards transformation can be illustrated with the figure of transformative learning above proposed by Mezirow (as cited in Belangar, 2011, p. 44). I and my participants have indeed gone through similar process of transformation.

### **Chapter in a Wrapper**

The exploration of the journey of me and my participants' knowledge is the answer to my first sub-research query. So, in this chapter, I explored the lore, the story of our growth. I began it with the exploration of my journey first; connecting the artful dots: Lakhe teacher, rookie, greenhorn, IATEFL and storytelling started my journey of becoming. Then I explored my participants' journey of knowing and becoming connected with their narratives and expressions taken during the interview. The knowledge from conferences, webinars, training, books, and online resources helped the teachers gain new perspectives about ELT teaching, particularly teaching with various art-forms; compare the old and new ways and reflect upon their own practices and finally transform for better.

CHAPTER V  
ON PRACTISING: BECOMING ABLT TEACHERS

*... After exploring the journey of knowing of ABLT I am now curious to explore the practices of ABLT by myself as the insider and my participants as outsiders, to find out what transformation they have brought in us as ELT teachers, if they have. 'I' want to view myself through the lens of other's culture of the same. I therefore reveal 'what and how' ABLT practices are adopted by me in my teaching context parallel to other's practices. Therefore, I explore various ABLT methods practiced by me and my participant English language teachers in our classrooms and how they supplement our process of becoming ABLT teachers, if they do. The evidence derived from reflection of the 'self' and observation of the participant English teachers are analysed thematically. But the traveller 'I' like to explore this part of my journey as a sub-plot of the main story. Nevertheless, even though it is a sub-plot, it has only three elements: it begins with an exposition climbing up to its rising action and higher to the climax without the falling action that generally leads to its resolution. The experience of exploration makes me realize that the process of becoming is a continuous one that will never end.*

**Exposition of the Settings and Characters**

The plot of the story of becoming ABLT teachers has three major characters: Miss Scarlet, Miss White and Miss Rainbow (myself as one of the research participants), the participant teachers. The minor characters are the English teachers who taught the researcher; the participant teachers' students who were observed by the researcher; the researcher's students whom she taught with art-based methods and reflected the memory in the research, her mentors, trainers, presenters in the

conference and so on. In the same way, there are two basic spatial settings of the story of becoming. First, the researcher's memory of learning and teaching English in Darjeeling and Kathmandu for the exploration of the self and next, one of the progressive schools in Kathmandu valley to explore the practices of other teachers. Similarly, the temporal setting for the researcher's experience of learning and teaching English starts from the 90s till date while the time for the ethnographic study is from 2019-2021.

### **If Your Voices are Louder than Our Music, You are Too Noisy**

As the movement from the exposition of the settings and the characters, the sub-plot ascends to its rising action and climax of the participants' practices with ABLT that I explored during reflection of the self and observation of others. I start with the exploration of music as an art form in the classrooms of me and my participants.

#### *Miss White's class*

*...The students continued to shout. Miss White waited for them to settle down. When they did not stop for quite long, she said, "If your voices are louder than my music, you are too noisy. Now you hear the music? Can you hear it? Answers were in yes, no, yes. She furthered, "Ashrit, you can't hear it still. That means you don't get anything I tell in class. From today onwards music will be played at this level only, if your voice is louder than this, you have made too much noise. There is a time phase to make noise but then there is time to keep quiet and work as well.*

That day, in the period between the morning gathering and the class work in Miss White's class, she tried a new art form: music to control her class. It was unlike other days when she and Mr Blue, her classroom partner did the same with other methods like counting backwards, 'flat tire' or clapping to control the class noise, quite art-based too. Affirming on the multiple benefits of songs Kusnierek (2016) stresses that not only do songs provide pleasure, but they also enhance language practice and positively affect vocabulary acquisition and memorization. The author experimented and found out that listening to music in English is highly motivating for students and songs are easily accessible for all learners. Similarly, Engh (2013) claims that the use of music and song in the English language-learning classroom is not new. As early as Bartle in 1962, Richards in 1969 or Jolly in 1975, scholars have been arguing for use of music in a language acquisition context for both its linguistic benefits and for the motivational interest it generates in language learners (p. 113). Therefore, songs and music do contribute to the effective ELT pedagogy.

Hence, with relation to the established significance of music in teaching, the observation of Miss White's class made me realize that she played a soft background music for few other important reasons relevant to her context and need: settle the students down, control the noise and to set a culture to speak softly and listen. The music played during the class work eventually reduced the noise and after sometime although the noise still prevailed, I saw some students enjoying the music and doing the work with it in the background. The environment gradually got 'musically academic.' Similarly, I observed one additional advantage of using music in English language classroom is that it helps the teacher not to shout and reduces her energy. Eventually, the music was played throughout the class. She then continued with the plan for the day: giving feedback on the worksheets given as homework, discussing

the important questions from the book ‘Wonder’ like a. What does August suffer from? b. Explain a White lie. c. Why did August grow his hair long?

The observation of the use of music as in Miss White’s classroom takes me back to one such class in the midst of academic session 2018 in my current school, when I too used music to provide my learners with relaxed classroom atmosphere; help them settle down; and to bring variety and fun to learning (Vishnevskaja & Zhou, 2019). It was always a great challenge for me to facilitate the last period with these students because it generally brought to me tired and irritated students in my class after seven periods of long class lectures and works. So, while I was pondering on ways of making my students active, I remembered I had read an academic blog in the British Council’s website which illustrated how music can play a really important part in the language classroom and that it can change the atmosphere in the room within seconds. Out of five ways to use music in the classroom, Budden (2008) had begun its use in ‘setting the scene’ by stating that if music is playing as students enter the class, it can be a nice way to settle the group. Give the class a few minutes to settle down and then turn the volume down slowly and use the end of the music as an indicator to the students that the class will begin.

So, on Friday, which was usually our lesson plan day, I planned the class with a warm-up song with an objective to help the learners settle down and concentrate before they started the day’s activity. I explored some songs online. I had thought I would play loud music to freshen the students after long day’s periods, but eventually selected a popular Nepali chant song known for its soothing music and moral lesson by Ani Chyongi Dolma’s (a Nepali Buddhist nun and singer). I played the song, ‘Phool ko aankha ma, phoolai sansar, kanda ko aankha ma, kandai sansar<sup>8</sup> on full

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<sup>8</sup> In the eyes of flowers, flowers are the world; while in the eyes of thorns, thorns are the world.



volume with its video on the projector board just before the students entered my class. The students came in as they took their seats in amazement. They looked at me while I was softly chanting the lyrics of the song. Soon everybody settled down and started singing the song together.

Unlike other days, it took me less time than usual to make the students get to their seats, settle down and eventually get ready for the class work. Then, I played the music again, this time for them to enjoy and relax. Most of them were singing the line ‘*Chitta shudha hos mero boli Buddha hos, mero paitalale kirai namaros*’<sup>9</sup> After it ended, I displayed the class work on the projector board. Before I started the instruction, I asked how they felt and if they were ready for the class work. Some reactions were:

*Miss Scarlet’s class, sometime in the year 2018 - last period (3:30-4:15 p.m.)*

*Prabhas: Ma’am, let’s listen to music more often in our class in the similar way, even while doing our class works. We can do our work faster.*

*Danya: Ma’am, this song is good, but can we also listen to the ones that we usually listen to? We’ll do everything you say.*

*Aarti: I love English classes when we do such things. Music and videos are interesting.*

*Aaditya: Let’s listen to rock music as well. (Everyone laughed)*

Auto/ethnography as a transformative research paradigm works as 1) an ‘unlocker’ that opens hidden windows to view unseen things; 2) a revealer that exposes sociocultural delicacies and/or intimate secrets of self/others; 3) a healer that creates empathy and sympathy for being victimized and/or marginalized; 4) an energizer that empowers the powerless to fight against

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<sup>9</sup> Let my heart be pure, let my words be Buddha; let my feet not kill even an insect.

inequalities;5) a challenger who fights to disrupt canonical ways of seeing, believing and doing things as taken for granted;6) an enabler that develops capacities in self/others; and a change agent who creates feelings of emancipation in society, to name but a few (Qutoshi, 2015, p. 2).

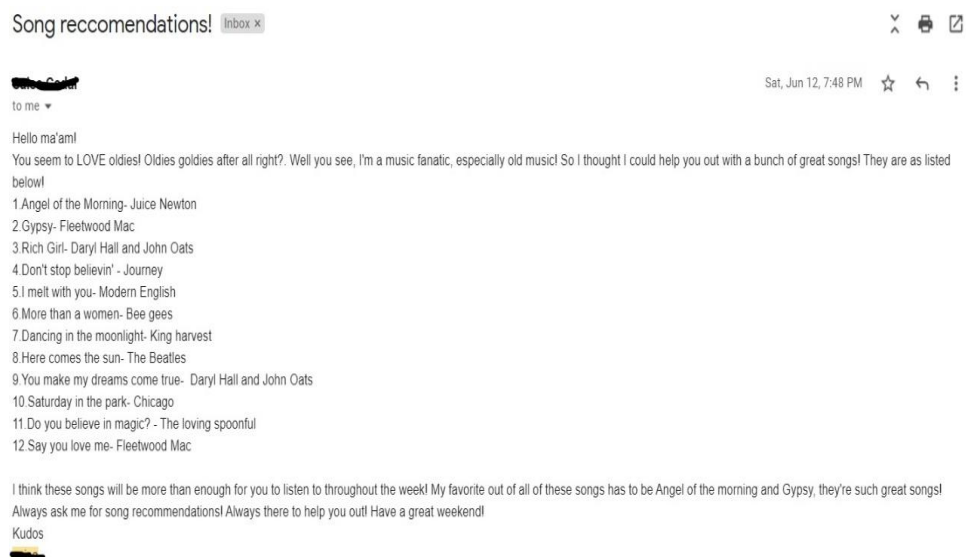
So, my experiment of using music in my classroom did not only help me make it lively but also to hear my students' voices that reflected their desire to study in a fun way. Those responses of my students were like eye opener to me about the responsibility of a teacher to make their learning interesting. Since then, I have made it a culture to use music in my classroom according to the needs and nature of students. The experience of the turning point that seemed to be an irreversible change that encouraged, then transformed me to work as a change agent for social transformation (Qutoshi, 2015, p. 4). Currently, I have been using music to open my virtual classes every day. It so happened that grade nine students as usual come from mid to high school in the new environment and among the new teachers. I have observed that they feel lost and disconnected in the beginning of the session and it is also the same with the teachers. We take time to build the rapport. And I feel that it is the teacher's responsibility to make them feel comfortable and at home. And the pandemic has made it even more difficult because I and my current grade nine students have never met in person; our teaching-learning relationship has been only virtual so far.

After identifying the situation of myself as a teacher and the need of immediate rapport building, I started planning my lessons with music and song as the beginners. First, I started playing the songs that I was known to from my school days learnt in my 'fun school', like 'Hundred Miles', 'By the Rivers of Babylon,' 'Sleeping Child', 'Country roads' and so on I played them for about three-5 minutes while the

students joined the online classes. To my pleasant surprise, students started communicating to me in private on their own. They started sending requests for songs to be played in the classes. So, I started playing songs of their choice. I took the opportunity to be closer to them by saying that I was running short of songs and they sent me the songs frequently, in chat and via email. Additionally, I also opened classes with poems and motivational speeches on YouTube and I found the students enjoying and connected. We have come closer faster than usual. I tried this with grade ten students too, who also have had very less in person interaction with us.

*Miss Scarlet's online class in the beginning of the academic session 2021*

*Mridula, one of her shy students who was finding it difficult to adjust and had written a long email to all the teachers about her discomfort a few days ago, interacted with her in private chat after some days of music play beginning the classes of beginning of the academic session, 2021. That day, she had begun*



*Figure 5.1: A student's recommendation of songs via email (Source: My photo gallery)*

her class with a motivational poetic speech entitled, 'Don't Give Up' considering the frustrations that might have troubled her students in the online space, not able to interact in person.

The interaction below is developed from the multiple screenshots that Miss Scarlet had taken during the pleasantly surprising interaction with Mridula.

Mridula: uwu

Miss Scarlet: What is that?

Mridula; Act of love uwu

Miss Scarlet: Love for the poem?

Mridula: That too.

Miss Scarlet: (With the intention of getting her get more comfortable and expressive): What is the first then?

Mridula: Appreciation of having such an uwu class. That's also an adjective.

Miss Scarlet: Is that a compliment for me then? 😊

Mridula: Of Course. <3

Relatedly, Budden (2008) also states that music can be used in class for various purposes like music to begin the class, background music, music as a springboard and time limits (para. 5-9). In Miss White and Miss Scarlet's class, it worked as a tool to begin the class, motivate and build a rapport with the students,

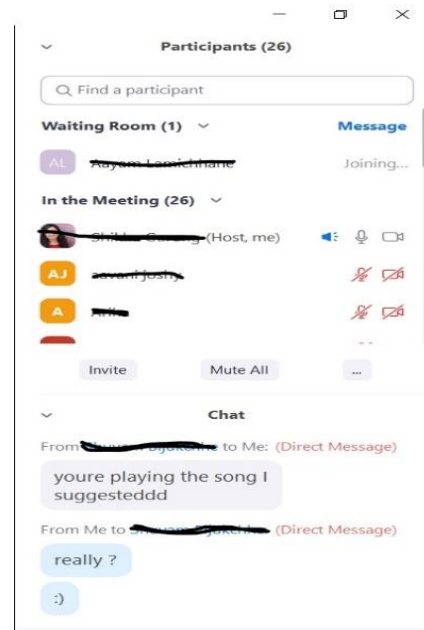
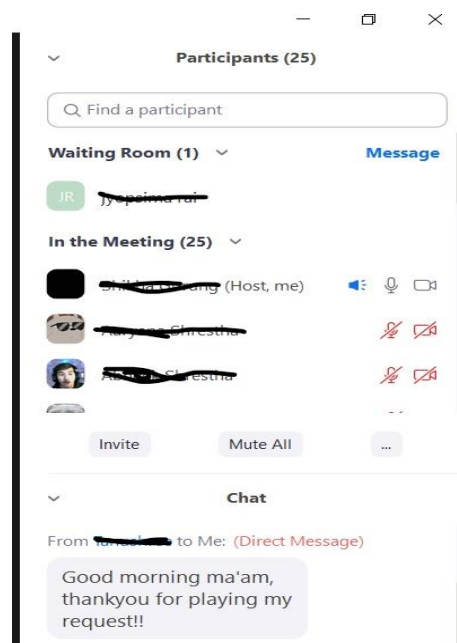


Figure 5.2: A student's expression of gratefulness (Source: My photo gallery)

background music and to settle and relax the stressful students. Therefore, music as an art form seems to be assisting Nepali English teachers in making their classrooms musical and lively thereby, enhancing the pedagogy. Budden (2008) also stresses on the use of music in English language classroom for changing the tempo i.e. to calm down an over excited class or to wake up a sleepy one and also to provoke feelings like I used it to give a relaxation feeling to the students. Therefore,



*Figure 5.3: Another student's expression of gratefulness (Source: My photo gallery)*

music as an art form seems to be assisting Nepali English teachers in making their classroom musical and lively thereby, enhancing the pedagogy. Miss White and Miss Scarlet seem to have started using music as a tool to teach English as warm up or even to teach some grammar topics. From the afore-mentioned observations and reflection of my participants' classes (researcher as a participant too), I find that music is not a new concept in English classrooms of Nepal. Teachers have started using it as a tool to enhance their teaching but there are more uses to be explored and used by them.

Before the new idea about the use of music was acquired by Miss White and Scarlet, they seemed to have been facing problems like students' lack of attention, noise in the classroom and exhaustion while the learners too seem to be compromising in many ways. When they might have critically reflected on these problems with rational discourse about the new idea, their perspective transformation is visible in the lessons that they plan. However, the use of music as a stimulating tool seems to have been just made in practice by these two teachers. We can nevertheless

see the self of Miss White and Miss Scarlet in Transformation (Fingarette, 1963, as cited in Fleming, 2018, p. 121) when they are applied the knowledge about music's use into their practice. These are no doubt the signs of the 'caterpillar' trying to break the uncomfortable cocoon: the beginning and continuous process of becoming ABLT teachers.

### **'Eka Deshma,' Once Upon a Time: Storytelling in Our Classrooms**

This is the rising action of the sub-plot of the journey of the exploration about the practice of ABLT by me and my participants. Here, I explore another art form: storytelling that was discovered during the reflection of my own memory of practice and classroom observation of my participants' classes as 'auto/ethnographic' information. Lawtie (2020) illuminates that storytelling activities are great ways to allow students to express themselves freely and creatively in an authentic and real way. Stories can be a very versatile and powerful teaching tool. Stories are fun and motivational; they allow students to be creative and imaginative; they give students a sense of achievement; they give students a chance to practice oral fluency and extended discourse. They introduce language in a comprehensible and meaningful way; they are authentic; listening to stories can develop important skills such as prediction, guessing, hypothesize and message decoding; storytelling can provide valuable cultural input; if the students know the story in their first language they can use this knowledge to help them understand or tell the story in second language; and there are lots of different fun activities that spin off from stories.

*Miss Rainbow's interview after her class observation sometime in the year 2019, 8:00-8:45 am*

*Miss Rainbow: Aa...yeah... in that case... in the same mini lesson plan, we read aloud in the class, like one or two chapters, the teacher and the children*

*will read aloud and do the storytelling. When we do the storytelling, the ones with good listening skills will surely listen. And the children, the low performers, when the story is interesting, they will definitely listen to it. We hope they, too will be able to do it. Like, we really hope that in the case of the children who don't write, they too might write one or two lines. (Smiles) Yeah.*

On that day of class observation of Miss Rainbow's class, I observed her doing various things. To begin with, she started her English period in grade 4A with the sharing of weekend activities in two sentences each. The students were seated in the carpet area (as they named it) which was in the middle of the classroom, with a cosy carpet on the floor surrounded by square shaped furniture. The teacher sat among them on one side and ended up with her share of weekend activity. Moving on to the board area (as they named it), outside the carpet area, the next thing she did was discussion of the new characters introduced in the book *Double Fudge's* last series of books. Some of the students took names, while some could not. The teacher understood that they had not read the book. She noted them on the board as follows: *Double Fudge, Richie, Oliver, Howie, Flora and Fauna, Farley*. She then shifted the discussion to *Flora and Fauna*. Again some answered, some couldn't. It seemed to me as well that they hadn't read the book. She asked questions, students who knew answered and she added to the board: *Flora and Fauna, Twins, Washington DC, Daughters of cousins Howie, Eudora, Hawaii, Sing, Friendship with Sheila, Peter, Trick or treat*. She continued to ask various questions about the character, and the same students couldn't answer. I observed that the teacher noticed. When the brainstorming was done, the teacher instructed them to write about *Flora and Fauna* in their notebooks. She gave the writing instructions and the opening lines as:

*In the story, Double Fudge, we have a set of twins. Their names were Flora and Fauna.....*

The students were told to go to their table area and start writing with the points on the board. While the students did their work, the teacher took a round on each table, observed the students, gave feedback and corrected them. The ones who could not answer the brainstorming questions, probably as they had not read, were the ones to do their work slowly or left incomplete. So, the teacher told them to complete it afterwards or at home as the class time was over then. But when the students started submitting their works, the teacher said that some students had not read the book. So, I quickly noted down the following questions to be asked during the interview after the class:

- a. How many students have not read the book?
- b. How will they manage or what are your plans?

They were answered in the following way:

*Miss Rainbow: ...This book is the last in its series book. In this book, among thirty students, before Dashain<sup>10</sup> when we asked them questions after reading the book, 17 of them had already read it and they were able to answer and talk about this story. For today, we started by revising it but, only ten could relate to the story: who are the new characters. So, our plan was as we have read the story and they know it as well, and as this story is one of its five books series, instead of regular characters, we had thought of making them do the character sketch of new characters instead of the usual ones and we started one today.*

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<sup>10</sup> One of the main Hindu festivals in Nepal.



*We started the book in class through 'Read Aloud' and in class as well for some time like ten minutes, 20 minutes or 45 minutes' period we make them do silent reading. For this book we did silent reading and read aloud in the whole class. And for the remaining chapters, we asked them to read books in their free time. But most of the children are not motivated to read books at all.*

*When the teacher reads for them, they listen. More than reading themselves, they like to listen. For example, in this book, one character is seven years old already but one of the children is still stuck in the previous book of the series when the teacher had read for the class.*

*And for him, the character is still five years old. So, there are very few children who are very good listeners more than readers. They do not show that much interest in reading. When we do the storytelling itself, the ones with good listening skills will listen anyway. The story being interesting, they will definitely listen to it. We hope the ones who could not do it will be able to do it as well. Like, we really hope that in the case of the children who don't write, they too might write one or two lines.*

Hence, the situation inside the classroom of some students lacking interest in reading the stories themselves or their love of listening to the stories from their teachers or friends or somebody else, made the teacher choose the art of storytelling. As in the words of Heathfield and Goksu (2019), English language teachers are ideal classroom storytellers, well placed to select and modify the story as they tell it. The



Figure 5.4: Storytelling Fest, 2019 registration  
(Source: My photo gallery)

expressions, voice, tone, actions while telling the stories might help the students listen with interest and eventually remember the events and characters clearly enhancing the flow of their written work (p. 87). Consequently, while I observed Miss Rainbow's class, I realized and understood that she used storytelling as an alternative method when students did not understand, pay attention or do not read it themselves.

When the teacher told the story to them, it sparked interest in the learners. This realization makes me nostalgic about similar usage of storytelling with my learners back in the year 2018. Two reasons had motivated me to use storytelling



Figure 5.5: Storytellers in Storytelling Fest, 2019 (Source: My photo gallery)

with my learners: my personal and academic inclination in becoming art-based English teacher and the want to change the usual trend of speaking and listening activity with my learners. So, after I participated in storytelling session conducted by David Heathfield in the 52<sup>nd</sup> IATEFL Conference and sent my story's transcript to him after returning home, I thought that I learnt something about Storytelling and that it would add to the effectiveness in enhancing speaking, listening and writing skills of my learners. So, I decided to organize a storytelling session with my learners on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2019.

*The overall execution of the event can be divided into three parts. Firstly, planning and preparing for the event included preparing and submitting a proposal to the department coordinator and the school principal. Then when the idea was approved by them, I approached the guest storytellers. My*

*school's coordinator and I decided to have the program held in the school auditorium. The date got fixed on 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2018. I also sent the text to the communication department of the school for the certificates to be given to the participants. The next step was to inform and orient the students of grade nine and ten for participation, listening, emceeing, volunteering, decoration of the venue, chart paper displays, registration, and so on. Furthermore, I collaborated with my coordinator and colleagues about the layout of the venue. I had gotten more or less idea about it from Mr. Heathfield, but I wanted to give it a Nepali touch, since it was the month of 'Dashain', Nepali's biggest and most important festival. So, it was decided that we would make the storytellers and the audience sit on the floor. Storytelling Festival: On the main day of the festival which was scheduled on 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2019, I along with some of the students and helper brother and sisters decorated the venue as planned with marigold flower pots and some Nepali musical instruments. Everybody would sit on the floor. When everything and everyone was ready, we started the program at around 2 p.m. The emcees, started it with a formal welcome to everyone. The audience sat relaxed on the cushions excited for their friends' stories. The guest speakers, principal and the Social Studies teacher, one by one shared their stories. Then the students told their stories using their expressions, gestures, acting, mimicry, laughter, song and voice intonations to narrate the beautiful folktales of Nepal. The program ended with certificate distribution as a part of motivation. After that day, the event was included as an annual event in the school calendar. The video clips can be found on the YouTube under the school Nepali Folktale Session. Post-Storytelling fest: Since the speaking and listening skills were addressed by the*

*storytelling festival, I wanted to do some writing activity too. We did a few post-storytelling activities. First was to write short reflections on the event which would be about sharing their experiences and learning from the event. I pasted the reflections on a chart-paper and displayed it on the walls of English room. Next activity was done under the guidance of Mr. Heathfield: to retell their*



*stories, record, transcribe and sent them to me and him. This time, I encouraged all the students to participate. They took some time to do it. But after doing it, they shared that it was a unique experience for them to listen to their own voice and transcribe (Heathfield & Gurung, 2019).*

Hence, in the journey of becoming an art-based English Language practitioner,

I practiced storytelling and

*Figure 5.6: The Storytelling Fest, 2019  
(Source: My photo gallery)*

realized that it can first of all add

to

the learners' creative experience of learning English. Similarly, story sharing helps learners and teachers share their culture and heritages. More significantly, through storytelling, the learners develop various language skills like listening, speaking and writing, pronunciation, vocabulary, sentence structure, and so on. As an ice on the cake, the learners learn to socialize, respect and develop mutual understanding, indispensable factors to the positive



learning environment inside and outside the classroom. Furthermore, with my exposure and experiences, I have learnt that Storytelling can be a very effective art-based method for English language learners in many ways. Like (Ellis & Brewster, 2014) explicate that it is important to remember that listening to stories is not a passive activity. As children listen, they are observing the storyteller's gestures, noticing the subtle differences in her voice, matching any visuals shown to the language they are hearing, building up their own pictures in their heads, trying to predict what comes next, guessing the meanings of new words and so on. In short, a great deal of information-processing takes place in learners' heads. An important way of helping children to listen with understanding is to ensure they are motivated and actively involved while listening.

Considering this importance of the art of storytelling as an important tool to develop listening skill in my learners, I remember, I planned a listening task on one fine day of July, 2018, as a part of a listening test. Before I was known to storytelling, I used to carry out such tests in a usual manner like reading a text, playing an audio of some speakers, making a native volunteer teacher speak and so on. They too were easy for me to conduct and students scored quite well; but the factor that was missing was, the interest in the students. Storytelling has therefore allowed me to conduct listening tests in a lively environment where students enjoy their test as well as develop. In other words, I wanted to try something different from the usual audio that they had been listening to. I decided to use the story for listening test as it would be full of gestures, sounds, mime, moral, emotion, and action and so on. I conducted the test borrowing Ellis and Brewster's (2014) basic structure: pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening, the steps were totally different though:

Pre-Listening: As I had been recently introduced to and had listened to Jan Blake's stories like 'The Leopard Woman,' and 'The Fisherman: The Tale of Passion, Loss, and Hope', I thought one of these stories would be used as a starter. Considering the fact that the later story was longer and the previous one had more expressions and gestures, I chose 'The Leopard Woman' as the text for the test. So, I planned the test for the class time of forty-five minutes: a. I informed the students about the listening test and that this time, it would be different. b. I set the objectives: developing listening skill, introducing the students to the art of storytelling, helping them learn to express and use gestures. c. Then I downloaded the video in MP4 from YouTube and stored it in my file named 'Videos'. After that, I listened to the story two times to check that the voice is clear and also that there is no obstruction. d. Then I framed two sets of questions of fifteen marks each for section A and section B: five marks for fill

in the blanks, five for true and false and five for questions (some questions were about analysing too) e. I printed out 32 copies of each set and got ready for the final day.

While-Listening: I divided the class on the main day as: 2 minutes for settling down, 5 minutes for brainstorming, video play for 5 minutes for video play, 20 minutes for writing and rest of the time for feedback and sharing. So, after the students had settled down, I started brainstorming the students' thoughts on storytelling: whether they liked it or not; why and why not; what qualities should a storyteller have and so on. Then, I informed them to watch the video with full attention. I played the video and the students watched. I noticed them get excited and interested as the video progressed. I was amused to see them shrug and burst out into laughter when suddenly storyteller roared as:

*..... and she looked at her husband and she said,  
heeeeeeee.....aaaaaaaaaaaa.....aaaaaaa.....oooooooo.....wwwwwww,' (a loud roar)  
and that man was so afraid, he ran to the nearest tree and up-up-up-up, into the  
branches and he clung on for dear life, aa...huu..hu....(sound expressing fear).<sup>11</sup>*

After the video was over, I gave them some time to relax and then distributed the question paper. I always believe that if students like their lesson, they do their tasks faster because they understand better. So, to my pleasant surprise, the students completed the task in less time. Post-Listening: After the test, we gathered close to talk about the experience. It was a plan that suddenly popped out of my mind, out of my plan though. I said to the students that they had to give their feedback, learning or experiences from the story or about the overall activity which will be marked as their speaking. The students shared their opinions. Some of them are listed below.

*Simran: I didn't feel like I was giving a test.*

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<sup>11</sup> A section from Jan Blake's story in YouTube video entitled, 'The Leopard Woman.'

*Sahit: Thank you for introducing Jan Blake to us, I will explore more about her*

*Sambhav: I learnt so much from her expressions*

*Sweta: I like the clapping part more, the one she uses to show the transition from a woman to leopardess and later from leopardess back to a true self.*

*Ankit: Her hand*

*gestures and*

*movements were*

*amazing.*

Since it was the first term, I told the students that I used audio and video. The students were happy with the idea as they said they could watch and listen both. Hence, storytelling has been a part of

LISTENING REVISION SECTION A FIRST TERM EXAMINATION 18 <sup>th</sup> July, 2018	
Audio and video: 'The Leopard Woman', by Jan Blake; 5 minutes, 40 seconds	
1. Fill in the blanks with suitable words from the bracket. (1x5=5)	
(hunter, across, wife, spear, hungry, bow)	
a.	The man walked across the African plains with his _____.
b.	The man had the _____ and _____ and arrow across his back.
c.	The woman had the baby tied _____ her back.
d.	The husband said he was _____.
e.	The husband was a _____.
2. Answer the following questions. (1x5=5)	
a.	What ability did the wife have? _____
b.	What did the husband tell his wife to do? _____ _____
c.	Why should the wife listen to the man? _____ _____
d.	What happened to the husband after the wife got transferred to a leopard? _____ _____
e.	How did the leopardess transform back into a woman? _____ _____
3. State whether the following statements are true or false.	
a.	The man had the baby tied across his back. _____
b.	She fell upon the youngest of the bush calf and tore its throat. _____
c.	The woman untied the baby and set her on the ground. _____
d.	Finally, the hand of the woman changed into the paw of a leopard. _____
e.	The leopard woman chased the herd this way and that way. _____

*Figure 5.8: Worksheet on 'The Leopard Woman.'*  
(Source: My photo gallery)

my teaching ever since I was introduced to Jan Blake and I look forward to using it in as many possible ways as possible. In the words of Heathfield (2014), storytelling helps the language learners in various ways: "vocabulary development, extended and creative listening skills development; elementary, extended and creative speaking development, collaboration and so on" (pp. 17-23). Similarly, asserting the pleasure impact of storytelling on listening skills, Davies (2019) says that storytelling can give students a chance to listen to something that is enjoyable and understandable, and this takes the pressure of listening. Storytelling is a facilitator of ELT in many ways.



In this regard, I remember observing Miss Rainbow's class on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2019 addressing the same through storytelling in her class, with her own twist though. First, she retold the story of 'Annie of Green Gables' to help her students in various ways: as a warm up activity, to help them recall what they had read earlier and link with what they were going to read further that day, teach sentence structures and enhance speaking skill and so on. It was an interactive story retelling as follows:

*Miss Rainbow: So, Ryan tell me. How old was Anne when her parents died?*

*Ryan: Three months?*

*Miss Rainbow: Can you please speak in a sentence?*

*Ryan: Anne was three months old when her parents died.*

*Miss Rainbow (Affirmatively): Anne was three months old when her parents died.*

*Another Student (corrected): Her mother died.*

*Miss Rainbow and other students: Her mother died and then after four days, her father also died.*

*Miss Rainbow: Ammm... she stayed with two different people after her parents' death. Two different families, one was the family of? Aryan?*

*Aryan: Amm...the Thomas Family?*

*Miss Rainbow: Thomas family. Which was the other family?*

*One student: Hamot?*

*Miss Rainbow: Hamot? Or Hammond? N...and 'd' not 't' okay. So, when aa....(students whispered) when Annie's parents died, first she went to live with the Thomas family and later on when the Thomas family moved, when Mr Thomas died and Mrs Thomas also left for a different state, she started living*

*with the...Hammond...family. And later, even after the Hammonds, she was sent to an?*

*Students: Orphanage.*

After the interactive storytelling, I observed that the teacher proceeded to tell the story to help the students build their vocabularies. While doing so, she took students' point of view through her questions. She furthered the story that Podrellia had a lot of imagination and many things in her head and she thought, *'Okay, I have red hair, so just because I have red hair, if I wear something pink, it will not...?'* The students replied, *"Suit me."* The teacher further asked the students to guess the word to describe such a trait of the character. The students continued guessing by words like fashionable, stylish, curious, and conscious and so on and the teacher continued to motivate them to guess. Other students guessed it to be 'matchy' and the brainstorming went on for some time until most of the students had their say in the story retelling. Ellis and Brewster (2014) have affirmed, "Children can become personally involved in a story as they identify with the characters and try to interpret the narrative and illustrations" (p. 6). I observed that the teacher used storytelling to help the learners get involved because they listened, answered, corrected and got corrected. Then after some time she continued to tell the story when her students relaxed on the carpet area and listened to her. I noticed some of them laid flat on the floor, yawning, but listening and occasionally responding whenever they were questioned by the teacher.

*Miss Rainbow (Continuing the storytelling): So, she says, "I can't wear pink, it doesn't suit red haired like me, not even in the imagination and by the way, are we going past the lake of shining water today?" (a student coughs) "No, we are not going by Baris pond. If that's what you mean by the lake of shining*

*water”, said Marilla. Glad to get the word in. We are going by the course road and while you are full of talk, why don’t you tell me about yourself? And I don’t want dreams and imagination, just facts.” Annie didn’t meet Asim twice. “I was eleven years old last March, my mother and father were Walter and Bertha. They were high school teachers....*

Furthermore, she used storytelling as a tool to teach the students synonyms and meanings of about ten words like maid, interfere, bachelor and so on in the time period of forty-five minutes. She continued, *‘Mathew’s face glowed with delight. “I thought you would come to say that way,” he said. He is such an interesting little thing. It would be more to the point if you said she could be a useful little thing. But that’s my business. I’ll train her to help us and Mathew, you are not to go interfering with my methods, interfere’* and said, *Interfere...what do we mean by the word interfere? Interfere? Ryan?’* Ryan answered that the word was ‘Interrupt’ The teacher requested to explain it a little longer to which one of the students Sakshyata raised her hand and said, *‘When somebody is speaking and you disturb.’* The teacher agreed and elaborated that we not only interrupt while speaking, but also when somebody is doing something then you go interrupt the person. It might be a single person doing the work or it can be two people. Giving the examples of the students she said that it might be Sakshyata and her friends are having discussion; they are talking about something, then, Ryan barges in (Ryan laughed) and says, *‘What are you talking about?’* Students agreed that it was ‘interfering’ when the teacher asked them what Ryan was doing.

Then she continued the story: *So, Marilla says that Mathew should not be interfering when Marilla is teaching Annie to work in the house. The students corrected it to be an apple farm, not a house.* Then the teacher came across the word

‘maid’ and said there the word maid doesn’t mean a person who helps you. It means something entirely different. She asked Azul who said, *‘A maid is a person who cleans.’* When the teacher disagreed, another student raised her hand and said, *‘Housemaker?’* To the teacher’s disagreement to that as well, another guessed, *‘Past tense of make?’* Other students were surprised. And when no one could guess, the teacher told Prabhas to check the dictionary. But Prabhas made the last guess, *‘mermaid.’* But when it was still not correct, Prabhas looked for the meaning of the word in the dictionary while the teacher tried to talk to other students. Prabhas and some other students looked for the word. The teacher after some time went to help him. They found the two meanings of the word: the female servant, and another a girl or a young woman.

When everybody understood the contextual meaning of the word, ‘maid’, the teacher continued the story: *So, Marilla says to Mathew that, you are not going to go interfere with my methods. I may be an old maid, o old maid, old woman, maid mean a young woman.* Next word was ‘bachelor’ whose meaning was asked to Anshuman. He guessed it to be something that we do after we complete our studies. But the teacher said that it was in their studies and gave the hint as it was somehow related to the word, ‘maid’ But what do you mean by a bachelor? Some students discussed and guessed it to be ‘a young boy while Ryan seemed to know the answer as he said, *‘A boy who is not married yet.’* The teacher confirmed that a bachelor means a young boy or a man who is not married. They might be having cousins, brothers or uncles, who are not married yet. So, if they are not married yet, then we could call them a bachelor. In the same way, a woman who is not married, then we can call her a maid. She is a young maid. Finally, after the storytelling, the teacher took ten words out

from the story which were discussed and gave them as a home work to develop them into sentences. It was written on the board as follows:

*22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2019, Wednesday*

*Arrange the following words in an alphabetical order and make sensible sentences.*

*maid, glad, anxious, blessing, whisper, interesting, delight, firmly, bachelor, curious*

The reflection on the self-practice and observation of other's culture can lead to the analysis that Miss Scarlet and Miss Rainbow were using storytelling as a creative tool to develop various language –learning skills of their learners: vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking, pronunciation, reading, writing, learning to learn and learning about culture (Ellis & Brewster, 2014, pp. 31-46). I have elaborated in chapter four about my journey of becoming an ABLT teacher with storytelling. I learnt its basics from my grandmother; got introduced as a profession through Jan Blake's video by one of my professors at KUSOED and got to participate as a storyteller and learnt about it further at IATEFL, 2018's session by Mr. Heathfield and got to practice and establish it in my own work context with my learners. My participants also said that they have learnt these kinds of teaching strategies from similar exposures.

In the words of Heathfield and Goksu, (2019), "One of the ways in which storytelling can be embedded in the school's curriculum is by making sure that teachers are enabled to use storytelling in their own professional practice" (p.189). In this respect, my journey of becoming ABLT teacher with one of the oldest art forms, 'storytelling' was first of all getting exposure about it at IATEFL, 2018 and my practice of teaching English since then. When I got to know about various uses of

storytelling in ELT at IATEFL, I thought to try it in my own context first and then share about it to my fellow ELT teachers of Nepal. I wrote a proposal to my school coordinator and principal who gave me the creative liberty to hold a storytelling festival with my learners, which later got established as an annual festival carried on till date.

Additionally, in account of Transformative learning theory about adult learning, Fleming (2018) informs that Mezirow proposes social justice and change as an aim of adult education.' So, teaching and professional developments as the part of adult education of the teachers, the data of observation of my participants' classes and the reflection of my practice with storytelling can be seen as the process of transformation of teachers to make teaching-learning creatively better for teachers as well as students (p. 121). The teachers like us seem to be seeking social justice for themselves and their learners to teach and learn meaningfully and effectively. We are updating their knowledge about teaching from different platforms to make their teaching as engaging as possible through different art-forms. The same skills were taught in a traditional way as we were taught by our teachers like explaining, rote-learning etc. But the different exposures available to the teachers of today help them gain new knowledge; critically reflect on their existing practice; realize the need for better teaching and finally practice as better as possible. The perspective transformation is thus a continuous process hinting the becoming of the teachers; here, it is becoming ABLT teachers through storytelling, an effective tool in ELT.

### **Blue, Green, Pink and Yellow Put Together to Show They Know**

The experience of being a learner to being a teacher and then a research observer has helped me comprehend that drawing is a common art-form used in English classes. Be it an excellent drawing or a stick drawing, I have seen students

enjoying to express, imagining and colouring different figures in their copies. Most of them like to play with colours too. Claiming about the significance of drawing as a universal language, Walker (2013), tells a story of an artist who once reached out to a cottage at some distance as he had neglected to secure his lunch before going amongst some. When the good woman of the house opened the door, the artist made his request for a cup of tea, to which he got the reply, ' *Dim Sassenach* ' (No English). After again urging his request, and meeting with the same determined, settled, and settling answer, ' *Dim Sassenach* ,' he bethought him of his pocket sketch-book and he instantly made a sketch of a cup of tea, and showed it to the unwilling dame, who, recognizing his want, instantly opened wide the door, beckoned him into the cottage and offered a chair. In an unknown language two children, who had concealed themselves behind their mother, were hastily dispatched, and soon returned, one with a bundle of sticks and the other with a can of spring water. Very quickly the kettle was boiling, and cakes were baking on something like a Scotch ' griddle, 'hung from a chain in the chimney. Soon the artist was enjoying himself, and the remembrance of the noisy cackling amidst which he was introduced, suggested to his mind the possibility of making his repast more substantial by the addition of a few eggs ; so he politely, but thoughtlessly, asked his hostess if she could oblige him with an egg or two. The inevitable ' *Dim Sassenach* ' soon showed him his mistake; so, getting out his pocket sketch-book, he sketched some of them whereupon the good woman, charmed at her power of interpreting, went off to a cupboard, and immediately returned with a large, clean, wooden bowl, filled with eggs, of which the rough sketch will give an idea. Satisfied, refreshed, and again ready for work, the artist prepared to depart, but not before he ascertained the power of his hostess to understand, without any sketch, the value of English silver (pp. 2-4).

The story above illustrates how drawing helped the artist to express his desire for a cup of tea because it became the medium of language of communication and expression among the two people of different languages. The artist used



*Figure 5.9: The artist's expression through drawing (Source: Walker, 2019)*

drawing as a tool of expression to make the woman understand what he needed because the woman was speaking a different language incomprehensible to him. Connectively, the following section will explore how my participants (including me) use this powerful art form in their classrooms. Formossa and Zammit (2016) confirm that drawings are amongst the most expressive media that we use to convey meaning. Even the worst drawing tells a story. This activity can be done by using both reading and listening texts. Ask students to read or listen to a text and draw their interpretation of what they 'see' while reading or listening. How do they interpret the authors' thoughts and meaning through their drawings? Encourage them to explain their drawing to the class as feedback (p.31). Drawing can be a very good tool of expression or our students.

During the observation of my participants' classes and reflection of my experiences of using drawing, I found them using drawing most frequently and it was a common art form that the teachers used as a tool to make the learners express their understanding through their imagination. In the same way, drawing was also used as a tool for interpretation in order to make the learners comprehend the lessons better and in a fun way. Hubbard (1989 as cited in Christianakis, 2011) clarifies that drawing is not just for children who can't yet write fluently, and creating pictures is not just part



of rehearsal for real writing. Images at any age are part of the serious business of making meaning—partners with words for communicating our inner designs.

On the mornings of 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> May, I observed Miss Rainbow working together with her students to imagine, share and write as the inputs and create and draw their inner colourful poetry in their notebooks as the final output. I observed that the whole lesson was executed in five different phases. First the teacher started the lesson with brainstorming and defining a poem to find the students' prior knowledge about a poem. Since it was the beginning of the session and they had just come from grade three, maybe this helped the teacher move ahead smoothly with the lesson. The teacher asked a few questions about poems and the students responded interactively to give their opinions. The teacher side by side wrote all the points they said on the chart paper which was pasted on the board. Finally, they came up with the following:

After that, Miss Rainbow encouraged the students to imagine and write a poem together. She began by asking the students to put on their thinking caps to think about a poem. She said they would be writing maybe eight lines and everyone would get a chance. She further told them to think of a sentence, think of a line which came to their mind. Miss Rainbow asked who would like to say the line or sentence. The students thought. Then, Pranshi proposed the first line, *'My dear frog likes to sit on the log.'* The teacher wrote the first line on the board for the discussion further. Then, any of the students had to say a second line related to the first line and that should make some sense to be related to the frog or the log. Ananya tried, *'The frog eats insects from the log.'* The Teacher suggested avoiding the word log. It would be better to try with another word; log's rhyming like log- dog or it could be hog.

Sarbashree tried, ‘The log is beside a dog?’ The teacher agreed and suggested adding one more word there as, ‘The log is beside the lazy dog (students laughed). She also mentioned that the words log and dog rhymed. She further asked the students Alavya to try to add one more line. Alavya suggested, ‘*The frog was scared by the dog?*’ But the teacher said that it would be better to use another word than repeating the word, ‘dog’ and she also told them not to worry as the words need not need rhyme with log or dog. It could be something related to the previous two lines. In this way, she moved on with the help of the students to create a rhyming poem. I saw that most of the students participated and those who didn’t were encouraged to think by calling out their names. After some the class came up with a poem as follows:

*The teacher wrote the created poem on the board:*

*My little frog likes to sit on a log.*

*The log is beside the lazy dog.*

*The lizard is talking to the old wizard*

*But the frog is afraid of the wizard.*

*The frog got scared and ran off*

*The lazy dog went to play golf*

*Old wizard got his broom*

*And I’m thinking about them in my bed room.*

*Teacher: Did we make a new poem?*

*Students (happily): Yes.*

When the poem was created, Miss Rainbow told the students to recite the poem together. The students did it a couple of times, each time was better than the previous. The teacher then compared the poem that had been created together in the class to the features they had discussed earlier. She then told them to think of a title.

The students proposed different titles like: ‘The Frog’, ‘The Dog and a Log and a Frog’, ‘My Imaginative World’, ‘My Sweet Poem’, ‘The Frog and the Dog’, and ‘The Frog and the Old Wizard.’ After the discussion on the title of the poem, the teacher told the students to copy the poem in their notebook. The students copied the poem. The teacher told them that they had fifteen minutes to finish the work as they would be going to the auditorium for some art exhibition at 8:45 a.m. Another teacher helped the students who had not finished. Some of them finished the work, while others were writing. While writing, the teachers gave them feedback on the previous home-work submitted, she reminded them on the punctuation marks to be included in their write-ups, date on the notebook and so on. In the next day’s class, the teacher, before making the students write a poem on their own on one of the four given topics with a drawing related to the poem, she did a little recap on the rhyming words.

*Miss Rainbow: What will be the rhyming word for flower? Shivali?*

*Shivali: Power?*

*Miss Rainbow: Power.*

*Shivali: Hour?*

*Miss Rainbow: Hour, okay...what about ...*

*Students: Shower,*

*Miss rainbow: Shower. There are so many rhyming words, right, so you can always pull out any set of rhyming words and then write it, aa... keep it in your lines and make sure the last two words...the last words in the two lines rhyme with each other. Okay, aa... Sambridhi, what will be the rhyming word for game?*

After the discussion on the rhyming words for some time, where most of the students had their inputs, Miss Rainbow asked them if they knew the rhyming words. The students answered in affirmation. Then she asked if they could write a poem thinking if the first line's last word rhymes with the second line's last word? She then wrote some topics on the board: My Pair of Shoes, A beautiful day, Football, My Class. Then she told the students to listen very carefully. They had to choose any one of the topics there, any one of the topics. She wanted them to write a very quick, short, four lines' poem.

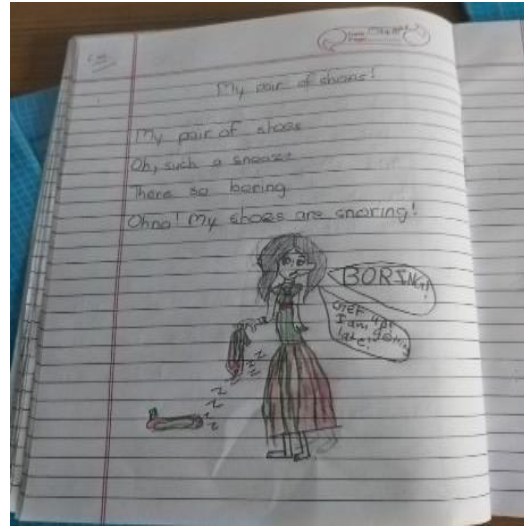
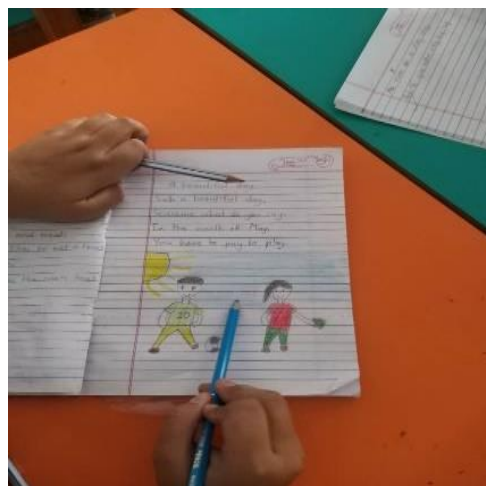


Figure 5.10: Miss Rainbow's student's poem with drawing illustration (Source: My photo gallery)

She also reminded them that the first line should rhyme with the second line with an example on the board and whatever they wrote, should be related to their topic. So, they had to make up their mind on which topic they wanted to write on. They had to draw and colour the picture related to the poem too. Few students finished the work in class while others brought them the next day.

Miss Rainbow's class observation of those few days clarify the use of two creative art-forms: poem and drawing as the tools to encourage students to discuss, think and express their thoughts through a poem while also addressing the vocabulary building; language structure and creation of something that they could own and be proud of at last when they read it. I also understand that most of the students liked to draw Godini and Rajuan (2018). After writing the poem, they immediately and happily started drawing and colouring. While drawing, most of them looked involved and did the task with full interest and determination. Similarly, each table with four chairs had two coloured pencil and crayon's stands, which told me that drawing was part

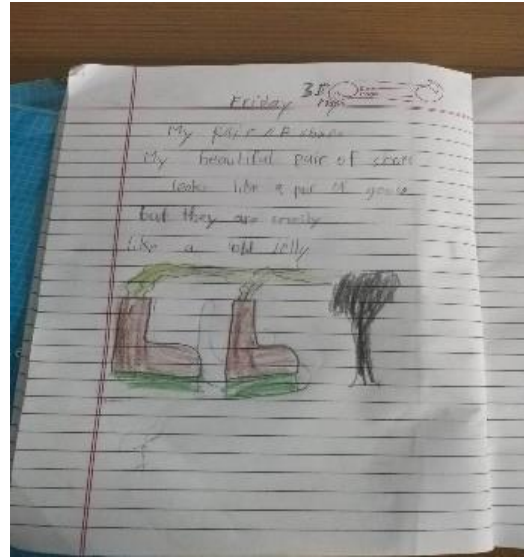


*Figure 5.11: Miss Rainbow's another student's poem with drawing illustration (Source: My photo gallery)*

of the regular teaching-learning culture of their classroom. They expressed each word of the poem through pictures and in doing so, they were learning language skills too. Like when some students wrote a poem entitled, 'A Beautiful Day', I observed that they drew sunny days and happy children and, in the poem, "My Pair of Shoes", each one of them drew a pair of shoes. Good or bad, all of them enjoyed drawing and colouring their poems which made their works in their notebooks look artful and creative. It was different from the usual way of writing a poem with plain text only. Adoniou (2012) states that drawings are important modes of communication for children who are learning English, particularly in their early stages where they have very limited control of written English (p.4). In Miss Rainbow's class too, drawing

helped the students focus in their work, think creatively as well as write their poems with interest.

Drawing was a regular task in Miss White's class too. In my observation of her class too, I have seen her using drawing as a tool to facilitate language learning in many ways. For example, I got to witness this on the very first day of Miss White's class observation. That morning's class as usual started



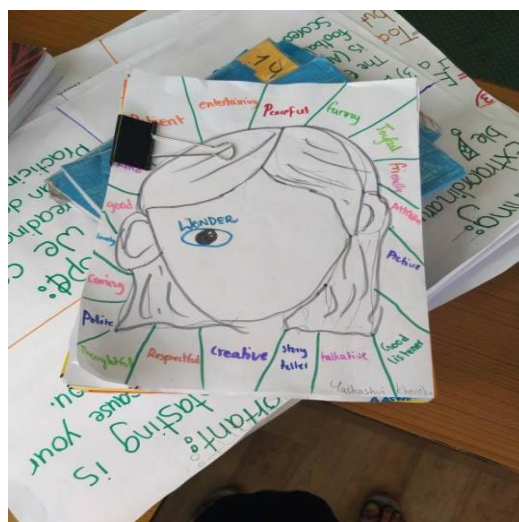
*Figure 5.12: Another student's poem with drawing illustration (Source: My photo gallery)*

from 8 a.m. After talking to her students about the general habit and hand writing in the morning gathering, which I later learnt was called Morning Circle, Miss White started discussing the homework that was given a day before. She later told me upon my query after the class that it was a pre-reading activity. Until that day, grade 5 A students had read the book 'Wonder' by R. J. Palacio till page number five and had been assigned a homework. They had to imagine that they were 'August', the main character of the book and draw his picture. Then around the picture, they had to use as many words as they could think of to describe the character that they had assumed themselves to be. While collecting the works, she reminded the students to check their handwriting, spelling and neatness. She then started checking the spellings on the words that the students had used to describe the picture. For example, she reminded one of the students, 'There is single l in the word, 'smiling,' not double.'" The students took some time to check their works. Some sat on the table, some on the carpet and

some around the teacher. In other words, the setting was very natural as if they were doing it in their homes; talk and laughter accompanied their works.

Drawing is an effective ELT tool. Castillo (2007) also enlightens that when drawing is used in the classroom, teachers are constantly eliciting students' ideas, knowledge, experiences and suggestions that can foster their imagination and creativity to produce language. Similarly, I observed that Miss White made her students draw basically for four things: a. know the main character better, b. visualize the character c. use language to write about the character and d. use descriptive vocabulary like adjectives. If drawing was not the part of the writing then perhaps there would be the absence of fun for the students while doing it. Hence, drawing was used as a tool to teach describing words as well as imagine and internalize the character's attributes.

Observation of Miss Rainbow and Miss White's Class with drawing takes me back to the time when I first got aware of the significance of this art form in a language classroom through a one hour creative



*Figure 5.13: Miss White's student's drawing of a character from 'Wonder' (Source: My photo gallery)*

workshop by Elizabeth Taylor in the first International TERSD Conference by Kathmandu University. There I had learnt how art forms like scribbles and drawing can be used as creative tools to teach story-writing and storytelling to the learners of a language classroom. Coates and Coates (2015) affirm that scribbling plays a significant role in children's development (p.4). Hence, when I was suggested by one of my professors to attend the same as he thought it would be helpful for my research,

I attended it and found that it was a fun learning experience. Since then, I have been applying scribbling as an ABLT tool to teach story-writing and story-telling to my students of grade nine and ten that year and only to grade nine from the following year. I planned my lesson according to my own context. I divided my lesson into four classes: scribbling and discussing characters and setting; discussion and storytelling; storytelling continuation and story-writing.

Drawing the process of the scribbling activity from the workshop, in the first class of forty-five minutes, I placed three different shades of sign pens, two pencils and two A4 size paper on each pair of tables before the students entered the English room. I had informed the students about the lesson a day ago and divided the pair too. So, the students settled down with some amazement about the task. After that, I asked an ice-breaking question to them:

*Sometime in the year 2016, Venue- English Room*

*Miss Scarlet: Take one-minute time to think and discuss if you like or dislike scribbling and why?*

*Vanya: I like scribbling because it helps me release my stress.*

*Anubhav: It is satisfying.*

*Muskan: It follows no rules. I can do it freely.*

*Kavya: I don't like it as it is messy.*

*Shweta: Yeah. It makes my copy dirty.*

*Miss Scarlet: Thank you for your opinions. Now let's see how scribbling can be useful. Listen to my instructions carefully. First step is to scribble randomly and in different patterns in the papers in front of you with the help of a pencil.*



The students were surprised to hear that but started to scribble anyway. While scribbling, they asked me the way of scribbling and I repeated that they could do it randomly. After about two minutes of scribbling, I asked them how they felt.

*Vanya: It was fun.*

*Miss Scarlet: Okay. Now lift one of the sign pens in front of you and try to locate three animals that you can see in the scribble with the help of your imagination*

The students looked bewildered at first but soon started enjoying the task. Then I told them to outline three mathematical shapes that they could see in the scribble and write down their names at the back of the paper. Finally, they had to find any three of the other things they had found in the scribble. The students seemed to enjoy the process. After they were done, I told them to discuss with their partners to create a story each with all those things found in the scribble. They could use them as characters and settings. They had to share the story the next two days. Before leaving the class, I handed them the print of 'plot-mountain' which explained its major parts: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution.

Next two days' classes were devoted to storytelling with partners. Students had created funny stories. The animals and mathematical shapes were kept as characters and settings in creative ways. The most fun part of the whole lesson was when the students shared their stories in front of the class. They enjoyed telling and listening to one another's stories. And the final class was devoted to writing. The students had to write the stories they created with the scribbled page pasted on one side of their notebooks as the raw source of their stories.

Hence, I used scribble in my English language classroom not only as an art-based method to teach storytelling and story writing to my learners, but also as a focus for social interaction and a kinetic activity (Coates and Coates, 2015, p. 12). The way of teaching story writing has evolved in me as I got exposure to many art-based ways of doing so. I



Figure 5.14: My student's scribbles (Source: My photo gallery)

remember, when I was a beginner teacher, I used to simply read a

story and tell my students to write similar stories with the pre-assumption that they might know how to do it. Then, as I learnt further, I taught them to write stories with the use of the picture of a story-mountain drawn on the board. Then, finally the exposure to the art form of scribbling has helped me make my classroom lively and engaging comparatively. Further, Coates and Coates (2015) say that scribbling, as an area in its own right, receives little attention in the literature and thus she finds through her research that scribbling can be effective teaching-learning tool in many ways: basic scribbles can be the drawing for its own sake; scribbling can be a means of representation as evidenced by language; scribbling can be the transition to symbolic representation; scribbling can be a focus for social interaction; scribbling can be used in relation to themes from the media; and it can be a stimuli to muscular exercise as well as interaction and observation during the scribbling process.

Like the scribbled work represents for children a means of communicating a story or an experience (Coates & Coates, 2015), drawing as an art-based tool can also help the learners comprehend a lesson or part of a lesson artfully. The fact that drawing adds to the creative learning experience makes me



Figure 5.15: My student's engagement in finding characters from the scribbles for her story (Source: My photo gallery)

reflect on two such experiences of using drawing in two different ways in my classroom to help my learners reflect, express or comprehend the class reading of a novella, 'The Old Man and the Sea' by Ernest Hemingway as a text book for their first

term. But this requires the acknowledgement of the learning from Mr. Heathfield about the multiple usages of drawing in an English language classroom. Ever since I came back from attending his storytelling session at IATEFL,

Conference, 2018 on April, I had been in contact with him through many

programs and one fine night I received the following email from him and his student Aiko.

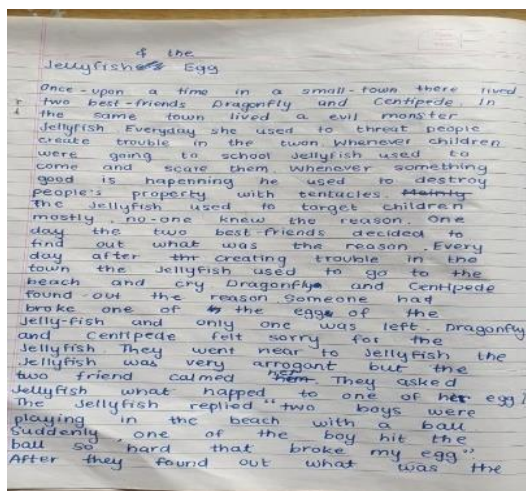


Figure 5.16: A student's story from the scribbles (Source: My photo gallery)

*6<sup>th</sup> October, 2018, 11:54 pm*

*Hi Scarlet,*

*On Monday, I told Sunkeshari Raani to Aiko KUSUNOKI, a 20-year-old student from Japan. After telling the first part of the story, I asked Aiko to sketch the strongest image in her mind in just three minutes (see attached). After the end of the story, Aiko selected some 'creative response' questions she wanted to answer about the story. Some of her answers are in the email below from her to you. Then I invited Aiko to tell a Japanese folk tale to you in return for your lovely story. She chose to tell you Hanasaka Jiisan. I helped her with some vocabulary as she told it the first time. She then audio-recorded herself telling the story a second time (listen to attached audio file). On Monday evening she wrote out Hanasaka Jiisan for you (also attached). I'm also attaching a photo of Aiko and me I took for you at the end of Monday's lesson. I've copied Aiko in to this email so you can respond to us both.*

*Warm wishes*

Aiko had written in the letter that she liked Sunkeshari Rani a lot. To my pleasant surprise, she had even imagined the colours of the story: yellow and gold referring to the brightness of heaven as well as the colour of Sunkeshari's hair. She further wrote that the young brother had made a strong impression on her. It is because he loved his sister and followed her. And even if he was forgotten by his sister, he believed in her. And she imagined him as her young brother. She was surprised that the prince threw water at her. Because it was the first time they had met. She finally thought that the story was a children's story because the main characters were children. And it was easy to understand for children (Heathfield & Gurung, 2019). That email illuminated my thoughts on the impacts storytelling can have on

students. Aiko also sent me a drawing of a moment from the story that she imagined after listening to it from her teacher. Hence, a few communications after that with her and Mr. Heathfield helped me explore and learn further how drawing would help teachers facilitate their students' learning in various ways like teaching vocabulary; help cultivate their capacities to imagine and visualize in their minds, allowing for quicker learning; encourages students to develop focus towards lessons and increases teacher attractiveness; enhance continuous student discourse to naturally improve their daily conversation as unlike traditional methods in the modern era that may now be archaic and obsolete for use in classroom settings, the use of drawing remains ever so practical (Altun, 2015, p. 192). Similarly, I wanted to implement the learning with my students who were reading 'The Old Man and the Sea' as the text for the first trimester. We had finished about twenty pages of the book by then. So, I planned the comprehension lesson with drawing for three days.

*Miss Scarlet's Class, sometime at the end of the year 2018*

*First day, I told my eleven students of Optional English class to list down three of their favourite moments from the story so far. Then, they shared a reason for each. When they had finished, I told them to take one best from them and describe it. The students chose to describe moments like the boy getting food for the old man, physical appearance of the old man, the old man folding his trousers to make a pillow for himself and so on. Second and third day, we decided to draw the moments like David's students had done. Some did it happily while some struggled as they thought they were not good at drawing. But I told them that it didn't really matter and to motivate them, I also sat with them to draw my favourite moment. Fourth day, the students shared their drawing and*

*retold the moments. We recorded and watched them for fun and learning, they did not want to go public though. But I informed and took their consent that I would use it as an evidence in my research (Heathfield & Gurung, 2019).*

I and my students also watched David's students' reflections on Sunkeshari Rani through their beautiful drawings in YouTube. Students enjoyed comparing it with theirs and learned from them too. Rather than the usual writing down the summary or interpretation of the reading, I was able to facilitate my students' comprehension, reflection and expression skills through drawing. It built a creative learning environment in the class. Since then, I have been using drawing in many ways. It has become one of the major tools in my teaching creatively.

Further, recently, in David's three week's course entitled, 'Creative and Engaging Storytelling for Teachers', I read in his book that it makes sense to do creative tasks after listening to stories and sometimes before-rather than detailed literary analysis or comprehension checking. Creative response tasks like drawing, painting or making models of characters and events or retelling the story tend to focus on mental imagery, personal interpretation and the students making connections with their own experiences (Heathfield, 2014). I used this learning too in my class with a twist of my own. After reading the same book, 'The Old Man and the Sea' with another batch of grade nine Optional English group of eighteen students, I planned a lesson with extended drawing as a creative response to the reading. On the first day, the students were oriented about the task: they had to create a comic based on the reading. For this, I and the students figured out the major events of the story till then:

*Miss Scarlet's online class in 2020*

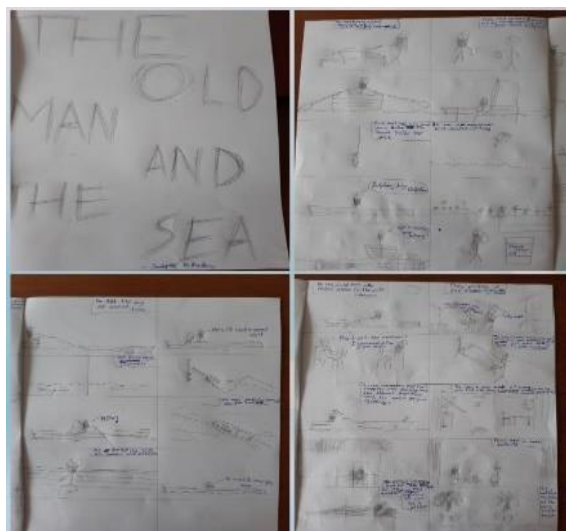
*Discussion of major events of 'The Old Man and the Sea' till page 30  
Old man's failure for eighty four days;  
everything about the old man being old except his eyes which were cheerful and undefeated, Santiago*



*Figure 5.17: A collage of my students' comics (Source: My photo gallery)*

*and Manolin's special bond; Santiago's determination; Santiago's journey far into the sea for fishing on the 85<sup>th</sup> day; Santiago talking to the bird and himself; a big marlin hooked.*

After the discussion, we decided on the layout, design and timeline for the comic. Since it was an asynchronous work, students were given two weeks' time to complete the creative response task on any layout or



*Figure 5.18: A collage of my students' digital comics (Source: My photo gallery)*

design they liked to do: sketch, drawing, online drawing etc. After the orientation class, we continued our reading and other exercises. But at the end of every week before the deadline, I kept writing to them via email and even took some time before every day's classes started to know about the progress:

*Tashi: I have finished re-reading the book until the assigned page.*

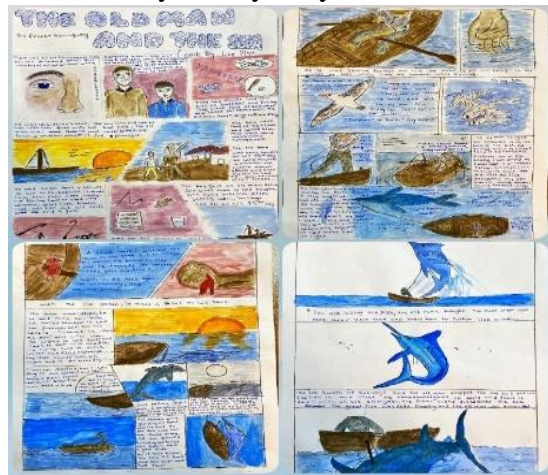
*Anshu: I have changed the major events a little bit according to my understanding and comfort.*

*Pragya: I have started sketching.*

*Anshul: I will do it on the computer.*

*Juum: I will draw myself.*

This went on for three weeks and eventually, everybody submitted in the deadline. Two out of eighteen students submitted after the deadline. When I received the final draft of their comics as their creative response to their reading, I was very happy. There were differences in the drawing; some were very good while some were okay, but the



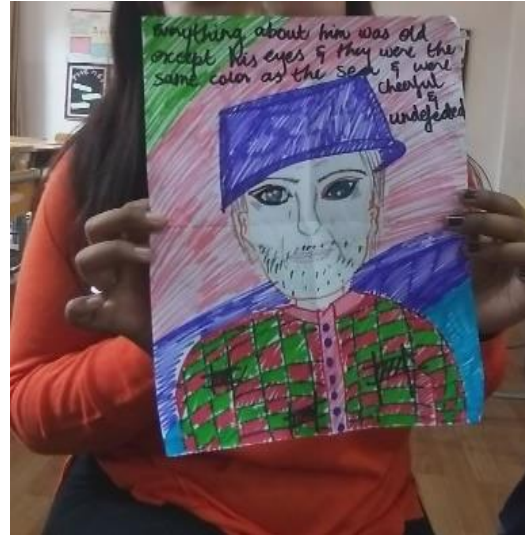
*Figure 5.19: A collage of a student's hand-made comic (Source: My photo gallery)*

understanding was clear. It made me assume that they might have understood the book and thereby created their understanding.



When I went through the finished product of the creative response to the text, I observed that the drawings in the comics ranged from stick drawing to sketches to computer drawings. The students didn't hesitate to send me their works, probably because they were instructed that it didn't matter what kind of drawing they came up with as far as it was comprehensible.

The task was meant to help the learners comprehend the parts of the book that was read in the class and reflect their understanding which was achieved to a large extent. The type of drawing didn't matter to me. I simply wanted to involve my students in an engaging work in which they could use drawing as an art-based tool to



*Figure 5.20: A student's reflection through drawing (Source: My photo gallery)*

express their understanding. The success of the task can be measured as ninety percent success because out of eighteen students, only one did not submit on time and had to be given one week extra to complete and submit it. After the works were submitted, I congratulated the students and told them to write a sentence of expression about their experience.

Further, this memory takes me to the previous year when I first used drawing in my classroom to teach the same book to a different batch of twelve students in Optional English. It was done to help the learners reflect upon their favourite moments from the book read till then creatively. Drawing was used to replace the usual writing as a medium of understanding and comprehending.

*Miss Scarlet's class sometime in the beginning of the year 2019*

*First day, I told my eleven students of Optional English class to list down three favourite moments from the story so far. Then, they shared a reason for each. When they finished, I told them to take one best from them and describe it. The students chose to describe moments like the boy getting food for the old man, physical appearance of the old man, the old man folding his trousers to make a pillow for himself and so on. Second and third day, we decided to draw the moments like Mr. Heathfield's students had done. Some did it happily while some struggled as they thought they were not good at drawing. But I told them that it didn't really matter and to motivate them, I also sat with them to draw my favourite moment. On the fourth day, the students shared their drawings and retold the moments. We recorded and watched them for fun and learning, they did not want to go public though. But I informed and took their consent that I would use them as evidences in my research. Later, I included that class in my auto/ethnographic research's data analysis chapter as a way of becoming an art-based English teacher. I and my students also watched David's students' reflections on Sunkeshari Rani through their beautiful drawings in YouTube. Students enjoyed comparing it with theirs and learned from them too (Heathfield & Gurung, 2019).*

Drawing is an important tool. Walker (2013) adds that drawing is a universal language too. So, as a teacher who had recently understood this through different kinds of exposures during my professional development programs, I used it as an art-based tool to help my students comprehend, reflect, share and thereby create a fun and engaging



*Figure 5.21: My students' drawing comprehension (Source: My photo gallery)*

classroom. Like very few people who have recognized the role of this common art form, Budden (2020) proposed a new idea that drawing dictations is a good way to practice vocabulary and to find out how well the students in your class listen to you. Altun (2015) adding to the impacts explains that the drawings serve as tools for remembering; while the discussion around the drawings helps the children retrieve their memories from the drawings and also offers pupils a chance to speak: they can make comments on each other's picture, ask questions about details (p. 91). Considering all the usefulness of drawing, I abbreviate the word 'drawing' in relation to the belief of different literatures and the practices of my research participants:

*D-Drawing helps develop*

*R- Reflection or Retelling with*

*A- Articulation,*

*W- Wonder and,*

*I- Imagination to encourage*

*N- Noteworthy*

*G- Growth and Understanding*

The above abbreviation of drawing showing its significance is the depiction of my awareness about its significance as an ABLT strategy to facilitate ELT. The whole process of knowing about its usage, applying it in my class to facilitate various ELT topics with my learners and the observation of the practices of the same in my participants' classrooms has made me feel the essence of transformative learning as “a deep, structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions” (Transformative Learning Centre, 2004). As Mezirow (1978) has enlisted, it was indeed the exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions; planning of a course of action and acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing my plan along with the realization of the discomfort in my old ways of teaching without drawing. I taught English before I knew about this art form too. But I could teach better after knowing and applying it. My perspective on teaching has definitely changed.

## ‘Thinking Marks’: The Reading Companions

The observation of my participants’ classes made me discover some common art-forms as tools that were known to me and also the ones that were unknown and new. ‘Thinking marks’ were the new type of art form that I discovered during the observation of Miss White’s class and it made me so happy. I learned about a new creative way of encouraging reading culture as well as making reading fun and effective for learners.

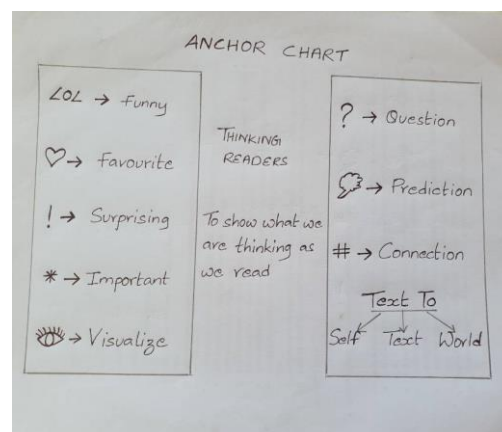


Figure 5.22: The Anchor Chart (Source: Miss White’s class)

It was on one of my observations in Miss White’s class in grade 5A on 7<sup>th</sup> of May, 2019. After the discussion about ‘religious tolerance’ in the morning gathering, Miss White and her students moved inside the carpet area and started revising the previous reading of the book ‘Wonder’. Before she did that, she checked if everybody had the book with them. One of the students named Abhay didn’t have it, so she instructed him to search for it on the book shelf of the classroom. He found it there. Miss White continued reading from page number eleven. Most of the students were listening, some were lazy though. After reading and discussing some pages, she told the students to look at the anchor chart that hung on one of the walls of the class.

She then asked the students to read out the words with their signals one by one. She also drew some of them on the board to repeat and help the students remember them. She said: *You have to put these signal while reading the story books.*

Then she switched the projector on which displayed similar signals with some extra ones too. I guessed that she did so for the convenience of the students to see any of the two while reading. The display on the projector had some the same signs with some added ones too as below:

READERS' USE	
THINKING MARKS	
To show what we are thinking as we read	
<b>LOL</b> Funny part	<b>C</b> I made a connection
? Confusing part	◊ I visualized
♡ Favourite part	✦ Important part
🗨️ I made a prediction	! Exciting part
<b>I</b> ↓ Inferred	<b>N</b> I learned new information

Figure 5.23: Thinking marks and their meanings (Source: Miss White's class)

The students then continued to read some pages. After some time of the reading and before the class ended, the teacher asked them, 'Can you give me some examples of the signals that you have kept in the book?' One of the students quickly replied:

*Ma'am, I have put 'LOL' in the line where the nurse farts.*

Everybody laughed, including the teacher. I couldn't stop laughing too. But at the same time, I was pleasantly surprised to see how fast the students applied the thinking marks while reading. After the class, I talked to Miss White for a while. I requested her to tell me more about the thinking marks. She replied,

*"Oh! Okay. Those marks? Yeah. They are the marks for the students to use while reading the story books throughout the year from today onwards because they have to read many books. This will help them concentrate on*

*reading, engaging and understanding. I am trying to help them develop a reading culture through such thinking marks from the very beginning of the session. I remember, I explored it when I saw that passivity in students while reading and I wanted to encourage active reading. So, I googled 'Active Learning' and it led me to a teacher's blog, I forgot the name. Then it further made me explore YouTube videos about engaging reading.*

Contextually, Findley (2013) explains that 'Think Marks' are one out of many effective teaching reading strategies where she helps her learners to mark their thinking while they are reading. Along with the fun reading experience for all, it is mainly readers who struggle to construct meaning during reading is a challenge. It is a challenge for the students because they struggle connecting to and getting immersed in books. Teachers are challenged with making complex texts comprehensible and engaging, while teaching grade-level reading skills. I knew about such strategies like writing 'marginalia' 'book marks' 'highlighting or underlining'. Thinking marks could be the art-based or creative versions of all these as a reading strategy, where students leave small drawing or emoji like expressions to mark their reading. I have noted that Miss White's students when introduced to the thinking marks had used them spontaneously and creatively, which also added to the humorous environment of the classroom.

Talking about its knowledge, Miss White remembered that it was her self – exploration about active reading online when she saw that her learners were not into reading with interest. Then as the secondary source of her knowledge about it were the teacher's blog and YouTube videos. Hence, I comprehend that Miss White's reflective teaching and self-exploration into online blogs and YouTube videos became the professional development platforms for her, which helped her learn a new

teaching strategy, address the needs of her learners and give them creative reading experience.

I have never used thinking marks in my classes. But when I try to connect it with other similar things that I might have encouraged my students to read while reading are: highlights, bookmarks or marginalia to note important lines, quotes, characters. Dobrinska (2015) preaches that marginalia are a part of a body of writing to mark up the margins with our thoughts and ideas while reading. Whether they are humorous jots and tittles, lessons learned from the story, or more serious notes of textual analysis, marginalia are simply fascinating. Nevertheless, the knowledge about thinking marks from my participant Miss White was a new addition to the old frame of my knowledge about teaching to read. I got thoughtful that the boredom of plain reading can be replaced by the fun thinking marks. Thinking marks are indeed the creative expressions of students' reading experiences.

### **Images/Pictures/Videos Speak Louder than the Words**

Next art forms that I discovered during the observation of my participants' classes and reflection of own memory are images and videos. Donaghy and Xerri (2017) state that the vast majority of language teachers use images in their classroom. They claim that it is difficult to imagine the language classroom without course book images, photographs, paintings, cartoons, picture books, comics, flash cards, wall charts, YouTube videos, films, student-centred artwork, and media and so on in today's increasingly visual world. During my observation of my participants' classes too, I found that images and videos heavily dominated the classroom instruction. Similarly, when I reflect upon my teaching practices as one of the participant, I too realize that pictures or images, audio and video are also the creative art-forms that I use for my learners' attention, interest and creative learning experience.



On one of the observations of Miss White's classes, I witnessed a very innovative way of using images and video together in the beginning and end of the class respectively to help the learners use the five different vocabularies: *slaughter*, *obnoxious*, *diverse*, *percept*, *aversion* to create and write a story in their journal notebook. All the activities that were done in the class were so cohesively interrelated that along with the four skills of language: reading, writing, speaking and listening, skills like critical and creative and moral and ethical thinking were addressed artfully.

At 8 am of one of her classes, Miss White started her class with the review of the afore-mentioned five words that were given as homework to find the meaning, antonym and synonym of the previous day. After discussing and encouraging the students to understand the meaning of the words rather than just copying them from the dictionary, she informed them that they were supposed to write one page in the journal notebook. But before that, she set up the room: closed the curtains, switched the lights off and switched the projector on for the students to see four images carefully on the active board, think for one minute about each of them and then guess the common pattern in all of them.

*First Image: A boy reaching out for the dollar hung on a tree*

*Second Image: A man singing while walking unaware of the trap ahead*

*Third Image: A woman serving chicken to three smiling policemen, one person lying dead on the floor.*

After letting the students think for a while, Miss White made them guess about each picture and finally find the common pattern:

*Miss White's Class watching a set of four images to find a pattern*

*Teacher: Two, second image. Third image. Fourth image. Okay, I'll show you from the beginning again. This was the first image. All of the image have a*

*pattern. They have the same idea and I want you to look at it very carefully.*

*Can someone try, raise your hand and tell me what this picture is trying to say? Samriddhi try.*

*Samriddhi: Aamm...*

*Teacher: What is that person trying to do and what do you see in the picture?*

*Samriddhi: Aamm... there's a trap.*

*Teacher: It's a trap? Okay. Let's try this one. Hold on. Shruti?*

*Shruti: That man is trying to...*

*Teacher: Which one? The man in...*

*Shruti: The man am... behind*

*Teacher: Behind something, an object, is trying to?*

*Shruti: Is trying to trap*

*Teacher: Yeah. Is he setting a trap?*

*Students: Yeah.*

*Teacher: Setting a trap right? And do you think the man in the foreground?*

*Foreground means in front, background means at the back. At the back, you'll see this man with red hair or a hat, I can't tell. Do you think the man at the foreground knows that it's a trap?*

*Students: No*

*Teacher: How do you know that?*

*Aashrit: Because the...man*

*Teacher: Hands before your mouth? Yeah Spandan?*

*Spandan: Because the man is smiling.*

*Teacher: The man is smiling, okay. When you know it's a trap, would you smile and do that? You wouldn't right? You would be aware. You'd be cautious. Yes. Try another. Yes Subhanga?*

*Subhanga; He is walking and doesn't know that it's a trap.*

*Teacher: Okay, he's walking and doesn't know that there's a trap. Okay.*

*Again, Prashwin, do you think this man knows that it's a trap?*

*Prashwin: No.*

*Teacher: How do you know that he doesn't know that it's a trap?*

*Prashwin: He's listening to music and he's distracted.*

The active participation of the students with the teacher's guidance led to a conclusion that the common pattern was 'setting a trap'. The pattern that the images depicted was then linked to the book, 'Wonder' when she brought all the students inside the carpet area to read it from page number six. After reading a few pages, she explained how the character Auggie's father thought that 'Sending to school was a tap for Auggie' because everyone in the school would bully and make fun of his distorted face. Miss White encouraged her students to have a talk on this topic of how he would be victimized or slaughtered like an innocent lamb. Finally, at the end of the class, Miss White showed Nathaniel Neman's video on whose life the book 'Wonder' was based on. I saw the children excited to watch the video and while watching too they empathized with the character. So, probably, the teacher wanted them to feel the character's pain and suffering and be accepting. Clare (2017) enlightens us that the power of video lies in the fact that it can be an effective language learning tool. It can help students immerse in the culture through socio-linguistic context and as an access to English speaking culture. Further, like what Miss White tried to do, it helps engage the learners' emotions and has an impact on their cognition too. Similarly, it can help

in the active learning experience of the learners. Videos are authentic inputs which develop new language and reinforce language; help us increase learners' ability to tolerate language that they don't understand; learners get primed for learning, helps teachers spark discussion in the classroom. She also explains that videos can give the platform for learners' media literacy, visual literacy and make them develop human connection, empathy and aspiration

(pp. 33-41). This was visible in Miss White's class.

Furthermore, the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> class observations of Miss White's classes also helped me draw a common theme of the use of pictures in different ways: pictures for reference while reading and pictures to explain the

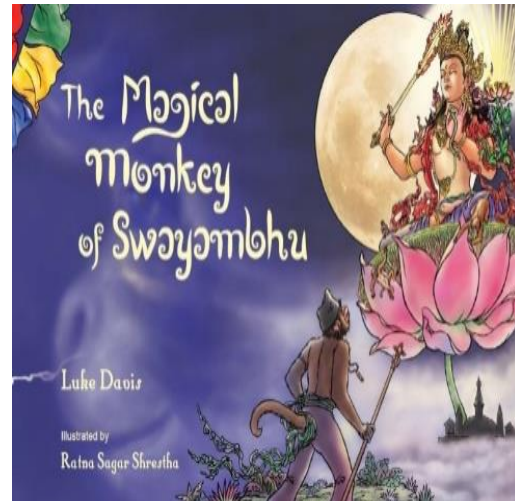


Figure 5.24: The cover page displayed (Source: Miss White's Class)

theme of the chapter of the book. On the ninth class, I observed that after collecting the home-works and giving some reviews on them, she invited one of the students, Dhanush to come in from of the class and share his book review. Dhanush hadn't brought his book, so she searched the picture of the cover page of the book and displayed it on the active board with the projector to be referred to while sharing the review. The student had told her that the title of the book that he reviewed as a homework was, 'The Magical Monkey of Swayambhu' by Luke Davis.

Before the review sharing, she distributed the book review points for the students to go through and for her to explain as in the worksheet given. After the explanation of the rubrics of the grade points from one to twenty-four, Durbish started sharing his book review with reference to the picture on the active board. It made the students listen to the book reviewer while visualizing it on the active board. It helped them keep their attention intact.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

S.N.	Book talk components	Points	Points	Points
1.	Title and genre			
2.	Author			
3.	Interesting facts about the author			
4.	Publisher			
5.	Illustrator			
6.	Blurb			
7.	Prediction			
8.	Summary (characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, theme)			
9.	Point of view			
10.	Loved			
11.	Surprised			
12.	Visualized			
13.	3 connections			
14.	Vocabulary			
15.	Figures of speech			
16.	Question (s)			
17.	Advice to characters			
18.	Lesson learnt			
19.	Sequel			
20.	Voice			
21.	Confidence			
22.	Eye-contact			
23.	Book report			
24.	Parent's Signature			

Figure 5.25: A book review table (Source: Miss White's class)

*Dhanush: (Pointing at the picture): So, my book's name is, 'The Magical Monkey of Swayambhu, the author's name is Luke Davis and the illustrator's name is Sagar Shrestha. I got this book for free because Luke Davis is a swimming teacher in Lincoln school and my mom also teaches there. And some interesting facts about the authors is, he's a swimmer, he's from America but he has like...aa...Buddhist wife, that's why he became Buddhist. And then...oh, he's semi-Buddhist, sorry. (His friends and teacher laugh) Half Christian, half Buddhist, and then, yeah.*

*Friends: That's two facts.*

*Dhanush: No, three facts.*

*Miss White: Okay. Guys, do not interrupt while he's talking.*

*Dhanush: So, aa... I don't know the publisher, I forgot. I read it but I forgot.*

*So, what this is about is, this is about a monkey, like there's aa... many characters. So, it's about like. Like...yeah, aa... so there's this monkey called Machchi who lives in Swayambhu. So, aa... his mom, his mom, she fell sick. He was, she was like quite nauseous. And there was this round pill that could cure her at the...on the hill...at the top of the hill. And he had to go take it. He had to go bring the pill for his mom. So, first of....first he asked his mom. So, what, how to cure her and then he had to get the round pill. So, he had to go through Pokhara and other many places. So, at last he went to the top of the hill and he got the round pill. So, aa... his mom at last, she could be fine. And this book was especially dedicated to all the mothers because Machchi, Machchi could get the round pill for his mother and the story line is based on that and it's dedicated to all the mothers. And, and, and, yeah the blurb, I didn't have time to read, so I didn't. Aa... I don't know the blurb (laughed). And yeah, if I could, I could visualize it like when I read this book, aa... like when I read this book, I would feel like, how could a monkey could do this? How would a monkey do this all like he could talk and everything? So, my prediction was, I, the, before I read this book, my prediction was, I think the mon...I thought the monkey, was in the search of the God because in this cover (pointed to the picture on the active board) and there was God and I thought that the monkey was in search of the God and then, Manjushree and all. He loved searching for the God. And at last, nobody supported him to do that but at last his mom did. So, I thought about that.*

Everybody applauded for the review by Dhanush. His friends were too eager to ask him questions. So, Miss White let them ask one by one. Hence, I got to infer that the picture on the boards not only helped the listeners connect to the story without having read it but also guided the reviewer while talking about it. The picture had also made the reader pre-assume the storyline and he was surprised to read that the story was quite different from his prediction. It served as a creative tool to encourage the students' involvement and understanding. In this regard, Seburn (2017) suggests to ask a key question when considering which visual impact meaning: Does the content of this visual improve understanding better than if the visual were not included?

This question can probably be answered by the evidences from Miss White's tenth class observation.

*Miss White: Can you please look up on the board? Do you see something familiar?*

*Students: (Together) Yes.*

*Miss White: Raise your hands before you speak. Karna, so what do you think you see?*

*Karna: Aa... I see a statue.*

*Miss White: You see three statues of?*

*Karna: Gods.*

*Miss White: Yeah, maybe of Gods. Have you seen them somewhere?*

*Students: Yes. Swayambhu.*

*Miss White: Yes, Swayambhu has these statues, okay. This picture was from Swayambhu. But you find similar pictures wherever people worship Buddha, right? Whether Lumbini or Bouddha, Swayambhu. Why do you think people*

*want to create statues? Obviously, this was not sent by God. It was not like you didn't drop it to earth. It was built by men. Why would people build it?*

*Students: Because it's God? Respect?*

*Miss White: Out of respect? Respect for who?*

*Students: Like for God?*

*Miss White: What did Buddha do that he deserves respect?*

In this way, Miss White made the students brainstorm ideas from various pictures displayed on the board: stupa, bust and a statue, Tenzing Norgay, statue of Arniko until she could finally relate them to the theme of the chapter on page 65 of the book, *'Your deeds are like your monuments.'* After the discussion on the theme in relation to the pictures displayed on the active board, Miss White told the students to copy the precept in their notebooks to write down its meaning at home based on the discussion in the class with pictures and theme of the chapter, *'Deeds are Monuments.'* Hence, Seburn's question's answer seems to be 'yes', which was rhetorically answered by Miss White's class. Images were seen to have a creative impact on her instruction and the learners' understanding as well as participation.

As referred above to the claim of Donaghy and Xerri (2017) that images play an indispensable role in language classrooms to address multiple skills of the learners, Miss Rainbow's instruction also seems to be heavily based on these two art forms: images and videos. It was on the ninth-class observation of her class when she soon after the morning gathering showed a video entitled, *'Judy Blume Teaches Writing.'*

*Miss Rainbow's Ninth Class Observation*



*Blume in the Video: When I started to write, I was determined, to be honest. So, I'm going to share with you the practical side of writing, process, story, voice and dialogue and character. It's nothing more important than character.*

*You're living with these people for years. You had better feel for them. Do some exercises. Have your characters write a letter to you. The first draft is pure torture for me. I mean every second topic. I have a messy mind and my*

*writing is a process of cleaning up the mess. Then, slowly, making a story, I will be able to tell that to you.*

*Miss Rainbow: So here, she is sharing about how she writes a story. Her drafts. Look at her writing.*



Figure 5.26: The book series read as the text. (Source: My photo gallery)

The class watched the video thoroughly. The teacher then continued to ask questions in between by pausing the videos. For example, ‘How long has she been

writing?’ It was quickly replied by the students, ‘Fifty years.’ Then after the video, she gave the website about Judy,

‘www.judyblume.com’ she showed some pictures in the photo gallery of the website of Judy

Blume and her family and friends with some information written



Figure 5.27: The author's second image (Source: My photo gallery)

below each of them. The teacher and students read all the captions under each image. She continued to ask other questions related to the author from the pictures and the students continued to answer quickly. The video and image seemed to have improved the understanding about the author. It worked like a visual world as a script where the students have to learn (Turbayne, 1970 as cited in Navidinia et al., 2019, p. 3). This activity ended up with the assignment for the students to explore more about the author and her books with some more websites on the board by the teacher.

Claiming the power of images, Kessler (2018) stresses that if we can get our students to respond to a single image with a thousand of their own words, or a hundred, or ten or even one, under certain circumstances, that can be a significant step toward language production. Miss White used the picture as a guideline to encourage reflection on the reading of one student while responding to his sharing by other students. She chose the picture as an alternative plan when the student had forgotten to bring the book. Next, she used pictures to make the students discuss and extract the theme of ‘setting a trap’ to connect it to the chapter’s theme of the book

‘Wonder.’ Similarly, Miss Rainbow utilized the video and images to disseminate the information about the author, her journey of writing and consequently help her learners get inspired to write. It was done in an



*Figure 5.28: The author’s third image*  
(Source: My photo gallery)

engaging manner, which could have been done the other usual way: simply writing the information and reading it for examination. But information with the images and video definitely added to effective learning about the author. Overall, I observed that

the video and images worked as tools to spark interest, interaction and better understanding about the topic under study in all the cases discussed above.

Assertively, Aschwir (2014) state that having provided the pictures as the stimulus, students are frequently happy to take initiative, discuss, and write about the image among themselves. Pictures are easy ways of bringing the outside world into the classroom (p. 90). Images and videos in a nutshell provide creative platforms for students' learning and engagement.

### On and Beyond the Classroom Walls

The observation of my participants' practices of ABLT methods in ELT revealed to me the practices extending the walls of their classrooms too. Various ABLT methods were observed in the language oriented ECA. As stated by Yildiz (2016), these activities not only help them better succeed in language curriculum at prep schools but also to create a sort of a bridge between the academic study of the target language and its practical application in further life. Further, they also

encourage students to interact in natural environments outside' the classroom, where they can achieve non-linguistic goals through the use of their target language in a non-threatening way (p.

165). The ABLT ECA activities discovered were activities like *Morning Circles*, *Interactive Language Fair* and *Class Day*. Starting with *Morning*

*Circles*, each morning, my participants, their grade teaching partners and students gathered together in a circle in the carpet area of their classrooms for about fifteen

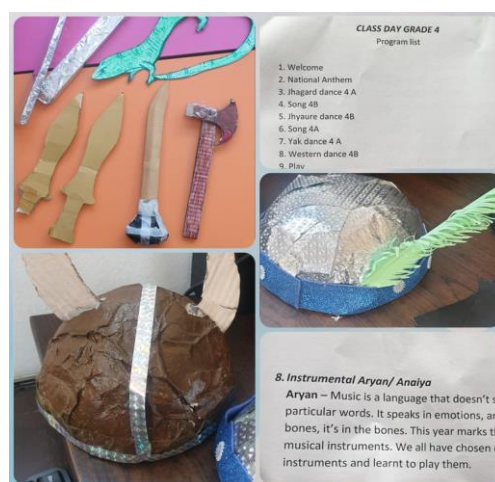


Figure 5.29: Students' handmade props and speech for Class Day (Source: My photo gallery)

minutes and interacted with one another through engaging activities such as *greetings, sharing, dance, song, exercise, meditation, games, group activity, morning messages, reflection and so on*. Morning gatherings the part of the culture in my present teaching context as well, it is engaging way for me to start each day, build a strong sense of community, and set children up for success socially and academically (Responsive Classroom, 2016, para 1-5). It is like a warm-up before entering into the main classes of the day.

*I (Miss Scarlet) start my class with morning gathering at 9:00 am to 9:15 am every day before the regular classes begin. The morning gathering is conducted by my students every morning in turns: solo/pair/groups. I do not interfere. My students decide what and how they want to engage themselves. They play indoor/outdoor games and engage in creative active activities like Damsharas, Charades, Chinese Whisper, confessions, Story Chain or even socialize through chit chats. They also decide to divide weeks' morning gatherings into various themes like current affairs week, game week, exploration week and many more. My students come up with creative activities that sometime I too am not aware of. Online exploration helps them.*

Yusof and Abugohar (2017) recommend planning much more effective ECAs that promote students' speaking skills (p.10). Next, ECAs that not only enhance speaking but hone a variety of skills of my/my participants' students are: Class Day, Interactive Language Fair, Speaker's Club, and Diversity Day. I observed my participants Miss White and Miss Rainbow prepare their students for Class Day with their school's ECA teachers like Dance, Music and Play teachers.

*Grade Four's Class Day, 2019*

*Every day before the Class Day, 2019, Miss Rainbow with other subject teachers of grade four took the students to the auditorium on a separate schedule for its practice. She along with teachers of dance, music and play helped the students rehearse different items of the class day: welcome speech, vote of thanks, emceeing, Jhagard dance, song, Jhyaure dance, Yak dance, western dance, play and instrumental. This went on for a month when finally they performed it in front of their parents.*

Miss Rainbow said to me that it was an annual program of the school prepared with the objective of honing a variety of skills in students. I observed Miss White's class' *Class Day* with similar preparations and activities too. Both of them used ABLT methods to add to the fun learning experience of their students. This observation makes me share the annual program that I conduct too. It was all face-to-face mode before pandemic which has now been improvised to fit in for the remote learning space.

*Miss Scarlet's memory of ILF,*

*2019*

*Interactive Language Fair is an interesting concept I learnt first from NELTA conference and later on from IATEFL Conference. I learnt about it practically when I participated and put up my stall to display two ABLT methods: storytelling*



Figure 5.30: Interactive Language Fair, 2019 (Source: My photo gallery)

*and scribbles in NELTA Regional Conference, Hetauda, 2018. So, I thought to apply this in my teaching context. But I improvised it a bit. Instead of teachers, it would be students displaying various language learning games/activities in various stalls for the visitors to come, explore and learn. In the year 2019, I tried this with the then grade ten students as the hosts and grade eight and nine students as the visitors. The whole class of grade ten students of 64 were divided into ten groups to display their language stalls in the auditorium. It took about a month and half for orientation, registration, activity exploration, invitation to the visitors, finalizing the venue and getting it ready and rehearsal. Like the original idea, the main event started with the host groups introducing their stalls and welcoming the visitor to visit their stalls. The visitors could go and explore the stalls. The event went on for 2 hours for grade eight and nine respectively as well as the teachers who eagerly participated in the event. The stalls had a variety of language activities that would help the visitors hone their language skills such as: Story Anatomy, Hit the Cups and Guess the Phrase, Call Cadaver, Rhyme It, The Puppet Show etc.*

From the experiences of conducting an Interactive Language Fair with English teachers in NELTA Conference, 2014, Gnawali (2014) feels that it is a way to enrich our practices. Two, the ELT professionals in Nepal are comparable at the international level which was demonstrated by the quality of the presenters in the Fair. The visitors/participants in the Fair said that it was a good learning opportunity for them (para, 8). Taking the inspiration from the idea and fitting it into my context, I experimented it with my students with the objective of enhancing their English language skills as well as collaborative learning skills. And it has been an annual

program since then. It was an ABLT method that I applied from my previous knowledge, a part of my adult education from a conference. Lately, I have been conducting it virtually ever since the classes got shifted to virtual mode after some time of the pandemic outbreak in 2020. Knowledge from the participation in a conference has led me to professionally develop. I like adding creativity and collaboration in students' learning process.

Finally, creative classroom displays are our ABLT endeavors to make our teaching engaging that our students can take the ownership of. Displays are effective

to welcome students for positive things. Effective displays celebrate each piece of work and radiate with sense of student pride and foster positive thinking in them

(Aphrogranger, 2014, para 27).

Miss Rainbow, White and my classroom doors and walls are filled up with students' works displayed.

My participants' classroom doors

filled in with a welcome display, a quote and students' names pasted in different shapes. I generally use my students' creative expressions metaphorical to welcoming the visitors into our classroom. *At present, our door has a chart paper cut out into a shape of a child sitting under a tree with a book symbolic to the importance of reading that is the base of every other skills.* Nevertheless, they keep changing according to the demand of the time. Next kind of display is when our class project brings together a range of individual work into a class display and the students all



Figure 5.31: Students' ABLT works displayed on our classroom walls (Source: My photo gallery)

own together, the motive of being innovative with displays get fulfilled (Russell, 2021, para. 9). These projects are the tasks assigned before, during as well as after reading a text, grammar or an issue in our class.

The sources of our knowledge of the afore-mentioned on/beyond classroom walls activities are generally the same as discussed in the previous sections such as conferences, books, and online articles/blogs and so on. But most of the time, it is also spontaneous idea or the experience of teaching or the students themselves. The passion inside us make us explore and find the sources and use them in our contexts. Morning Circles, Interactive Language Fairs, Class Day and classroom displays are the creative ABLT tools that help us facilitate creative ELT. We are evolving into ABLT teachers through the practices of such art forms.

### **Chapter in a Wrapper**

This chapter as the answer to the second query of my research explored the ABLT practices of me and my participants in the journey of becoming ABLT English language teachers in Nepal. The art forms like music, storytelling, drawing, thinking marks and images/videos and ECAs were explored, discovered and explained to show the relationship and importance of the same in ELT classrooms of Nepal. These ABLT methods were the results of the observations of my participants' practices that I witnessed during my information collection process. These discoveries suggested that ABLT methods are the culture of the practice community in Nepal that are used as tools to add to the effectiveness of teaching and engaging learning experience.



CHAPTER VI  
REFLECTIONS, INSIGHTS, IMPLICATIONS, THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION  
AND CONCLUSION

*... Finally, the traveller, 'I', near the end, mirror my journey with a dual role: researcher and the researched from the beginning of my research, draw the insights from the experience and identify the implication of my journey. I also hear my participants' voices once more and then contribute a tenet to the existing theory of Transformative Learning. Looking back to the point I started my journey from and contemplating on where I stand today makes me feel that I am transforming as an individual, a teacher and a researcher. It is the essence of every journey travel in our lives.*

**Journeying with Transformative Research and Auto/Ethnography**

*A dual role played*

*A journey for*

*reflections of the self*

*and observations of others*

*A traveller, a researcher, an outsider*

*experiences*

*a parallel life*

*as the participant, a teacher, an insider*

*with the question again*

*Are you transforming into a butterfly?*

I can sense a transformation in me and my participants. O'Sullivan (2012), auto/ethnography explain that a transformative research has a key potential to raise a

deeper level of consciousness and to develop wisdom in people (as cited in Qutoshi, 2015, p. 2). Hence, when I turn back to look at my journey from the beginning of my research till its end today, I feel a sense of profound understanding of myself as an individual and a teacher as well as deeper awareness about others and their culture. I realize the discomfort of the ways without and want to explore and apply the comfortable ways of ABLT to make teaching learning fun and effective for my students. The research in a good way reflected Mezirow's main interest in adults while forming his theory of transformative learning by applying it to some adult women who were in their postsecondary studies. It became a part of me and my participants' education; the original adult women's education as argued by Jack Mezirow. It is also like the analysis of the factors that have an impact on the progress of adults. In this way, I could evaluate and improve the quality of my own teaching culture (Sahin & Doganthy, 2018, p. 105). It's a professional development too.

Hence, as a reflection of the whole experience of becoming or transforming through this research with the dual role as a researcher and the researched, I find the metaphor of the life cycle of a butterfly quite apt again to reflect upon the whole journey. Hence, I have chosen to reflect on the journey of this research right from the beginning of the birth of its issue to its completion today with four stages of the life cycle of a butterfly because I think it is the best metaphor to represent the transformation. Walter (1997) explains that the stages of butterfly development include egg, larva, pupa, and adult. Metamorphosis is the process by which the young butterfly is transformed from one stage to the next (p. 1). I feel the similar metaphorical transformation.

### **The Egg**

The stage of egg can be metaphorical to the phase of the conception of the issue of my research. This stage is important and required a lot of brainstorming, discussion, reflection and mentorship. I remember I completed the first proposal at the end of second semester, something related to literature and language classroom as I had read Lazar (1993) and got inspired to explore the ‘hows’ and ‘whys’ of literature in a language classroom. At the end of the third semester, with the mentorship and discussion in dissertation writing classes with one of my professors, I updated it and came up with an improvised issue about the explorations of the journey of becoming ABLT teachers. The proposal defence after that gave me a lot of insights from the feedback of the research committee. The egg probably hatched a young larva.

### **The Caterpillar**

The young larva feeding on the host plants until reaching its full size of a caterpillar (Walter, 1997) probably is metaphorical to that stage of my research when I started to feed the researcher me through the reading and exploration of various literatures; and observation, interview and reflection to collect the experiences, evidences and stories required with the preliminary knowledge from my proposal defence. The development nevertheless took more time than I had thought since I had other simultaneous and multiple roles to play as well: a professional or two organizations, a wife, a mother, a daughter, a grand-daughter and so on. Nevertheless, after some time though, I was ready to proceed to the pupal stage.

### **The Pupa**

The larva in the pupal stage suspends itself from an appropriate substrate like a branch, by spinning a silk pad or a u-shaped girdle (Walter, 1997). The writing stage that involved: writing, editing, meeting the supervisor, getting feedback, cancelling,

re-writing and so on can be the stage metaphorical to the cocoon development around me. The cocoon was as tough as the silk one around a caterpillar to break through only after transforming into a young adult. During the stay inside the metaphorical cocoon of writing, I felt the power of writing as a kind of meditation practice: I literally heard and visualized my thoughts. This also let me practice being the habit of writing my thoughts down and reading them shortly after. I also allowed myself to shift back and forth between external awareness and internal awareness, which can lead to unexpected results (Krauze, 2019). I was transforming. The most important realization was about the theory that writing is largely a thinking process (Arapoff, 1967) that I had learnt during my masters. I experienced that writing is a meditative thinking with a rich investment of time about the issue, its purpose, audience, structure and so on.

### **The Young Adult Butterfly**

After investing quite a significant time on writing inside the metaphorical pupa, I could finally feel the break of the cocoon around me felt like the metamorphosis of an adult butterfly from the egg. As a young adult butterfly that has developed its tender body parts: eye, antennae, proboscis, thorax, legs, wings and abdomen (Walter, 1997), the young ABLT teacher and researcher developed from the earlier stages of my research has found the direction of path towards meaningful teaching, who is learning to make a full flight. Particularly, the transformative research with auto/ethnography has given me the basics of ABLT and now I feel ready for the flight.

## **Drawing the Insights from the Journey**

*The path trodden in the journey*

*led*

*to the window*

*that opened*

*to the discoveries,*

*the insights, the awareness!*

Getting involved in auto/ethnography as transformative research about the journey of becoming ABLT teachers has been like an ‘un-locker’ that opens hidden windows to view unseen things (Qutoshi, 2015, p. 162). Hence, as the window opened towards my new learning, understanding and awareness, I would like to take this section as an opportunity to open the window for my readers towards my new learning, understanding and awareness. I thereby illustrate the discoveries of the answers to the two sub-queries of my research that were explored in chapter four and five respectively: a. How have I/others grown to become art-based English language teachers? b. How have I/others practiced art-based methods, if we have, in the process of becoming ABLT teachers?

### **Discoveries from the Journey of Knowledge and Growth**

Every journey leads to discoveries, learning and insights. Similarly, when I travelled through the journey of ‘becoming’ of self/others in chapter four, I was led to explorations and discoveries about various issues of becoming ABLT teachers. In that chapter, I journeyed through the process of knowing about ABLT. Hence, I draw three major insights from that experience analysis.

The first is the raised consciousness about the importance and need for continuous professional development of ELT teachers. In this regard, British Council

(n.d.) has developed a CPD framework for teachers to help them evaluate their professional development needs and encourages teachers to take responsibility for their own professional development. It defines the professional practice “Taking responsibility for my own professional development”. It also suggests some other platforms for ELT teachers’ continuous professional development like: Conferences, Feedback Groups, Magazines, Materials, Membership, Mentoring, Observation, Reflection, Research, Specialization, Team teaching, Training and Workshops. The exploration depict that the more ELT teachers are professionally developed in the afore-mentioned variety of platforms, the better they know and apply. Nevertheless, only professional development platforms are not enough if the teachers are not passionate about their self-growth as teachers.

Therefore, the specific awareness from the passion, professional development and application should go hand in hand. Moreover, the passion to self-develop is more important than the platforms provided by others for our growth. The passion stimulates learning from one platform to the other. According to my participants’ experiences of knowing, their passion for self-development led them to know about innovative ways of teaching from different platforms: schooling, higher education, teaching experiences, the students and their feedback, research, conference, webinars, training sessions, workshop, teachers’ blogs, online videos and so on. Richards and Farrell (2005) focussing on the significance of workshops affirm that they can provide input from experts; offer teachers practical classroom applications; can raise teachers’ motivation; develop collegiality; can support innovations; are short-term and are flexible in organization (p. 25). Hence, it takes a lot for a teacher to professionally develop and evolve.

Next related insight that I can draw from the exploration in the same way is in relation to the need of the specific ABLT professional development platforms for teachers rather than the general ones. The more the ELT teachers can get the exposure to ABLT professional development, the more they can grow into becoming creative ABLT teachers. Hence, the need and self- exploration of the ELT teachers to reach out to such a platform got added to my knowledge. In my participants' experiences, they explored platforms centred on the use of various art-forms like storytelling, drawing, poetry, music, etc. that made them aware of their significance and desire to apply them in their classrooms in the process of knowing, growing and becoming ABLT teachers. Gnawali (2015) has also discovered the activities that are aimed at the teachers' professional development: annual conferences, workshops, seminars and training; publishing journals and proceedings; running blogs and mailing lists; providing opportunities for foreign exposure and higher studies. In all activities, learning from each other seems to be the core of the learning process. They also partner and collaborate with other organizations to create similar opportunities.

### **Discoveries from the Journey of Practice**

Art forms can be good facilitator of ELT. Farokhi and Hashemi (2011, p. 926) agree this and state that by placing art within the language classroom setting enabling them to express their ideas visually as well as by speaking and writing, teachers can: Build on prior knowledge; scaffold instruction; create a bridge between written and spoken language; make learning relevant and meaningful; help students develop self-esteem; foster creativity; develop an appreciation of the past; highlight similarities and differences; foster higher order thinking skills; promote high levels of analysis, reasoning, and questioning; support creative thinking; model problem solving; emphasize interpreting and communication of ideas and enhance students' ways of

observing, responding to, and representing the world (p. 926). Hence, the exploration of the practices of ABLT in my participants' teaching as the search for answers of the next sub-research query also lead me to a few important insights.

In the initial phase of my research, I defined ABLT as *A teaching method that uses various creative art-forms like drawing, images, painting, craft, origami, clay work, dance, song, role-play, storytelling, puppetry, pottery, music, sculpture etc. as tools to actively involve learners in an English language classroom to engage the learners through their active involvement.* So, the first insight from the exploration of the answer to the second research query on practices is related to this definition. The art-forms that I found to be most common in me and my participants' teaching strategies during my reflection and observation were music, storytelling, drawing, thinking marks, images/videos, Morning Circles, Interactive Language Fair, Class Day and creative displays. I did not find the rest of the forms of art as the part of ABLT method being used like painting, origami, dance, puppetry, pottery, sculpture etc.

This insight takes me to the second insight that I have developed from the exploration in the fifth chapter. I realize that ABLT is not a new concept in ELT classrooms of Nepal. Teachers seem to be aware of the significance of art in education as the constructivist approach to the child's self-development and self-expression that has had a great impact on how the teacher and educator think about art, culture, and aesthetics as active learning tools in the classroom (Chemi & Du, 2017) as the art forms like music, drawing, storytelling, images, videos and thinking marks were the part of their teaching tools. They have started to use these creative tools to make their classrooms fun, interactive and effective that they have learnt from



various professional development platforms. They are in the process of becoming ABLT teachers.

The second insight is connected to the final one I draw from the same phase of my research. As the ELT teachers of Nepal seem to be continuously learning and transforming, it makes me think about the possibility of the exploration of the use of even other art forms that fit in my definition of ABLT. Or maybe some other art forms could be part of their creative teaching tool if my observation and interaction had been longer. It makes me think so considering the two kinds of continuous updates my participants are involved in at present. The first one is academic growth. Miss White is currently pursuing Med in ELT; Miss Scarlet is completing her MPhil in ELE, and Miss Rainbow is thinking of enrolling herself in a higher degree. Apart from the academic update, they are provided continuous professional development training by the organizations they are associated with and they are self-motivated to reach out to the external platforms as well. As an essential of transformative learning theory, Mezirow (1992) has contended that it is primarily in adulthood that we become able to raise questions about the paradigms upon which the principles are predicated and to engage in premise reflection. Hence, we are adult learners: learning, developing and transforming.

### **My Participants on My Discoveries**

Considering one of the set quality standards of my research to ensure it quality, I carried out member checking near the end of it by sharing all of its discoveries with my participants, and allowing them to critically analyze the discoveries and comment on them (Creswell, 2007, as cited in Harper & Cole, 2012, p. 2). I conducted a virtual meeting with both of my participants and shared the discoveries one by one along with their agreement, disagreement and own opinions on

each one of them. I started by sharing one of the discoveries of my research from chapter five about ABLT not being a new concept in the ELT classrooms of Nepal. Planned or unplanned, teachers have been using it in their classrooms.

*Miss Rainbow's agreement and reason*

*It is correct. Since many years, we have used various art forms in our classes keeping students' engagement at the center. We have been including it for its future benefits in our students' lives too.*

*Miss White' agreement and reason*

*Yes, that is true. So many things can be made understood through art forms like song and pictures. We feel easy to make our students understand through art. They enhance our teaching.*

Next, I informed them that the most common art-forms found in their classrooms were drawing, music, marks, images, videos and storytelling and the forms that my observation time span could not cover were the use of paintings, origami, sculpture, dance and puppetry that too fall under my definition of ABLT. This sharing was responded with a revelation of 'curriculum integration' as a part of the culture where they integrate art and ELT or dance and ELT. It was an added insight to my research.

*Miss White*

*I don't find puppetry appealing from my 5<sup>th</sup> grade students' point of view more than it would be for younger students. They feel that it is more for their younger brothers and sisters and they lose interest. So, maybe I haven't used it considering my students' needs and attitude. Painting can be time consuming and we have a tight curriculum to follow. So, we have been integrating it with art as a separate subject. We inform the art teachers about our lesson*

*objective and discuss with them how both can be integrated. For example, while teaching 'Perspective' in literary texts, we take help from art teachers to make students view things through their perspectives. It saves time to focus on other things while also meeting the objectives.*

*Miss Rainbow*

*I agree with Miss White. Age and interest of the students play major role. We have integrated dance and ELT too. We have annual drama, where our students perform skit/musical play in English.*

Similarly, drawing one of the discoveries from chapter five, I asked them to give their opinions on the significance of professional development platforms for teachers, but also passion inside them to self-grow and evolve as teachers as an essential of adult learning. Along with the agreement, they had interesting metaphors share.

*Miss Rainbow*

*I totally agree. Huge money is spent on professional development program for teachers; but, if you are not passionate, outcome might not be fruitful. We as teachers need to grow, learn and adapt the new changes; be flexible with the environment.*

*Miss White's agreement and metaphor of swimming*

*Passion is a driving force in my opinion. It's a self-initiation like in swimming. After being thrown into the pool, if I don't have passion, I might just be at the edge of the pool or dipping my legs. Passion causes us to go further. Passion is a magical ingredient for self-growth.*

I continued the member check by extending the previous sharing. I asked them if they feel like there is a need for ABLT specific professional development programs that would help them better.

*Miss Rainbow*

*Yes. Old concept of old teaching thought the use of pen and paper to write. If we explore teaching through art more, it will be easy for us to address the needs of different types of our learners.*

*Miss White*

*Language is a bridge to somewhere else. Only writing in class can be monotonous and there will be no opportunity for real life learning. Art gives other platforms to see language through other perspectives, angles or vision that opens up many opportunities for students to come up with. It is better when compared to teaching language without arts and just sticking to one way: reading and writing only.*

Further, to ensure that their voices are heard louder, I asked them to talk about the loophole of my research; to tell if they sensed anything uncovered from their practices by my discoveries. They clearly pointed out some of them.

*Miss White finding a loophole*

*Most of the things were covered. I just feel that you missed to cover the challenges we face while involving such strategies in our practices. Parents' involvement is important, particularly in the foundation years. But they don't understand and think that art is just for time pass. It is insignificant. They somehow don't see the connection. I give my explanation of every activity but those who don't go through don't find art as important in the classroom. For example, I once planned to make my students create comics after reading one*

*of the books. But some of them questioned if that was important as reading and writing. So, I feel that we might lose the opportunity to get help from them as you know, it takes a village to raise a child. That is challenging while employing ABLT.*

*Miss Rainbow in the mode of affirmation with Miss White*

*Yes. More understanding and cooperation is needed from other stakeholders too. I wish they would understand that it's okay if a child chooses to express their knowledge through art, if they can't write.*

I continued by first of all informing them that I feel like an Artist in the stage of Phronesis evolving like a caterpillar into a young butterfly. Then I asked if they identify with my journey of transformation. To my pleasant surprise, they agreed but with a different metaphor.

*Miss White*

*I won't exactly say a butterfly. But I feel like I am always going to be a student craving and hungry for new ideas. Initially, I was a teacher; right now I am a students. My students are my real teachers. Roles reverse, you know.*

*Miss Rainbow*

*Learning starts from the womb till you reach the grave. It is a never ending process. Age doesn't matter. You always explore and learn.*

The last sharing was to ensure my participants experienced a reflection on practice as a result of the member checking process (Candela, 2019, p. 625). I asked them their experiences of being my research participants; whether or not it contributed to their knowledge.

Miss Rainbow's experience

*I realized that we have been practicing ABLT; but had never spoken about it. Your intervention made us realize that we're doing it, learning and updating ourselves. We also look for different forms of engagement for our students.*

Miss White's experience

*I remember an interesting realization I experiences after your research. After ABLT, I was happy to realize that I managed to use PE (Physical Exercise) in ELT. We have been using only 'thumbs up' or thumbs up' for responses from my students. But one day, I made my students express their understanding through physical exercise like stretching, jumping, kicking etc. It was fun. I was happy that I used something new.*

Consequently, with the responses of my participants with agreement or disagreement or new perspectives to my discoveries not only helped me check the quality of my research, but also made me feel that I captured their significant voices.

### **Implications of the Transformative Study to the Self and Other**

The earlier sections of this chapter like reflection and the insights have established that the whole process of my study starting from the conception of the issue to proposal writing to evidence collection to writing has been a transformative learning experience. The experience thus has had a significant impact on myself as the researcher and the research primarily and I have got the sense that it has implications on my professional circle as well. Hence this part of my study has highlighted the implications of my research on myself, the early grade English teachers and the future researchers who would like to pursue research in similar areas.

### **Implication to Myself**

The auto/ethnographic transformative research on ABLT has its implications on myself in some significant ways. First of all, as a researcher, it has informed me about the ABLT strategies applied by my participants who represented the ELT teachers of Nepal. In doing so, it has helped me change my frame of reference in the sense that I thought it was just one of the strategies, but my exploration helped me envision the comfort that ABLT can bring in the ETL pedagogy of Nepal and thus the significant need for it. In that way, it has transformed me into an Artist who now believes that ABLT is a good strategy to add to the same in numerous ways.

Next, the exploration, discoveries and learning has transformed me personally and professionally. Personally, I have become aware of the world around me and professionally and academically I have witnessed the significance of professional development and research in the life of an ELT teacher. Similarly, the value of creative ABLT methods have been enlightening and thereby motivating me to continue becoming a creative ABLT teacher for the welfare of my learners and the ELT community of Nepal as a whole. The learning will definitely support my future academic and professional endeavours.

Relatedly, the knowledge during and from the end of the research has opened many professional avenues for me. I am theoretically and practically informed to eventually be able to see a lot of scope for my professional advancement. I have started sharing my knowledge related to ABLT in different professional development platforms like conferences, webinars, training, workshops in with ELT associations and organizations like NELTA, KUSOED, IATEFL, TESOL and has even helped me become the grateful winners of creative scholarships like: a. Creativity Group Scholarship, IATEFL; b. TESOL Meral Gucerı Award; SUSI Scholarship, 2021 and

so on. I have evolved into a professional who understands the numerous values of continuous professional development; bridging the generation gap between the teachers and their students being the most important one. The recent course that I undertook for my professional update and application of new trends of ELT with my learners was the TESOL course of 'Best Practices of Online Practices' sponsored by RELO, US, Embassy and I am planning to share that knowledge with my fellow ELT professional in the nearest future. I have developed a culture of learning, sharing and giving back to the community to grow together.

Therefore, if my journey from the auto/ethnography as a transformative research has to be summarized in one sentence it would be, 'A journey of self-reflection on the ABLT practices along with the involvement with my practice community to come out transformed.' This summary stimulates the need of two philosophies of adult learning that I can relate to at this point of my journey. The first philosophy that I feel related to after this wisdom from practical knowledge is Aristotle's Phronesis. I feel that my learning from this transformative research is in the phase of Phronesis that he described as practical wisdom and prudence (Costello, 2017) that is the wisdom, virtue or knowledge drawn from the practical action (p.1). Through this research, I got to involve myself in my own practices to be the part of the practice community and draw my learning and reflection from the same. The Phronesis has opened the door.

The second philosophy that I feel connected to when I try to put my whole research experience in a nut shell is of an Artist. On second thought, the philosophy of Artist could be a metaphor to a pedagogical Artist, where Art + Activist = Artist. The compound word means somebody who uses art as a means for social change. They make use of creative expression to cultivate awareness and social



change spans various disciplines including visual art, poetry, music, film, and theatre (Funderbruk, 2021). Elaborately, I had started my research with the exploration of ABLT in self and other's practices of ELT in my mind. But after the whole journey, I feel like an activist who is an advocate of art in ELT. As a practitioner of ABLT, I reflected, learnt and transformed from my experience of teaching and research. Further, my old frame of reference of just exploring ABLT practices has gotten its new frame of reference with the idea of transformation from own practices. Similarly, I also envisioned the presence of and need for more ABLT forms in ELT classrooms of Nepal to address the right to fun and meaningful learning experience for our learners.

### **Implication for Early- Grade English Teachers**

Having talked about giving back to the community through various media as the implications of the research in my own personal and professional life, I connectedly see the implication of my research and its insights to my fellow ELT professionals, particularly, the early grade English teachers. The experiences, narratives and practices of ABLT teachers discovered by my research could be useful for them in making their classes engaging. And the significance of the professional development platforms and the passion to develop could also make them think about reaching out to various such platforms and add to themselves to the list of the becoming.

### **Implication for Future Researchers**

The issue of ABLT as an innovative teaching strategy discovered by my research through auto/ethnography as a transformative research design might be referential to the future researchers. The desire to research and explore similar issues

or contradict my discovery might be stimulated in them. The future researchers might see the gap in my research that I could not address too.

### **Limitations of this Study**

*And be one traveller, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth  
Then took the other, just as fair.  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear*

- *Robert Frost*

Mine like every research has some limitations due to the fact that we cannot do everything in one. Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018) in this regard contemplate that the limitations of any particular study concern potential weaknesses that are usually out of the researcher's control and are closely associated with the chosen research design and other factors (p.156). Likewise, my study also has certain limitations that are the reasons for it being the way it is today. Those limitations are related to the time constraint, participants and cite.

Despite having the interest to know more, considering the academic nature of my research that was conduct to fulfil certain requirements, I could not do it longer as auto/ethnography would go by its real definition. This opens the possibility of exploration of many other ABLT methods used by my participants and many other. Next is the choice of the participants. I chose two female teachers of primary level to explore the world of others. It was mainly because primary schools in Kathmandu in general have female teachers. Nevertheless, I am aware of the possibility of different insights had my participants been male teachers. Finally, the research site selection of

a private school. If my research site was more than one school or a government school, then maybe my research would have a different angle to its exploration and discoveries. Thus, numerous possibilities are the limitations of my research as I had decided to do it the way I have done it and not many other possible ways.

### **The Stimulated Sense of Giving Back**

One of my professors once rightly suggested to me that *auto/ethnography demands sharing with other knowledge holders* and that I too believe is the essence of adult learning as proposed by transformative learning as a whole. Galaczi, Nye, Poulter & Allen (2018) assert that learning is a social endeavor, and learning gains from programs are most pronounced where teachers work as a team and participate in collaborative professional learning with peers and/or mentors (p. 13). In the light of this, in this section, I share the sense of giving back to the community of practice of ELT that got stimulated during and after my research. First, I share an addition of a theoretical tenet to the existing body of knowledge: Transformative Learning Theory and next, I share my endeavors of sharing my knowledge with my fellow ELT teachers of Nepal with the objective of sharing and growing together.

As the most important question that the researchers must answer through the experiences collected and analyzed in their research is theorization from the in which they add or subtract the concept(s) of an existing theory. Additionally, there must be a proper logic behind the theorization and the effect the added or subtracted concept will make on the existing theory (Zhou, Shafiq, Adeel, Nawaz & Kumar, 2017, pp. 267-268). So, small or big, a research must have a theoretical contribution drawn from its whole process. I too have a small but significant contribution to the existing theory of Transformative Learning Theory propounded by Jack Mezirow. My research as an auto/ethnography became a tool by which I sought my/others journey of

transformative learning of ABLT (Boyd, 2008, p. 214) with its major tenets of adult learning through critical reflection, rational discourse and perspective transformation. However, the whole process of my research starting from collection of information to their analysis to excavating its discoveries has enabled me to inform Transformative Learning Theory with 'Passion' as an added essential attribute to adult learning. Further, in the 1970s and 1980s adult learning was described as voluntary, self-directed, experiential, and collaborative. The discoveries of my research hint at similar driving factors. Nevertheless, the adults' *going back to school* that were thought to be anxious and lacking self-esteem based on their earlier childhood experience (Cranton & Taylor, 2012, p. 4) is replaced as the 'adults' *going forward through professional development platforms and passion* for self-transformation.

*Miss White: Passion is a driving force that causes me to go and explore further.*

*Miss Rainbow: No money spent in professional development of teacher will be fruitful if we are not passionate for our self-growth.*

*Miss Scarlet: Passion has helped me cultivate the culture of exploring, learning, sharing and growing together.*

Passion, which is based on commitment, is at the heart of effective teaching (Serin, 2017, p. 61). Through countless experiences, for adult learners, learning fuels passion and passion energizes learners toward their goals. Passion is a very powerful tool (Davis, 2013). If we allow our passion to drive us forward, we want to make sure that our passion is focused on the single area of focus that we have for our professional development (Anderson, 2018). Hence, with the motive of self/other's professional development that were discovered by my study, I decided to share my knowledge with fellow ELT teachers of Nepal. The writing of the dissertation and

sharing my knowledge with my fellow knowledge holders went hand in hand. On 3-4<sup>th</sup> April, 2019, I got an opportunity to share my knowledge on ABLT to English

Teachers of grade 1- 10 of a school in Kathmandu.

There I shared how ABLT tools like drawing, music,

role-play and craft work could be used in ELT. My

participants made story wheel and performed

reader's theatre too. Next, I got to share similar

activities with the primary

grade teachers of another school in Kathmandu on 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2019. All of them were

female educators given a platform by their institution to enhance their creative ELT

skills. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of the same month and year, my school's principal suggested my

name to facilitate a session on the use of storytelling for the primary grade and subject

teachers of a school in Lalitpur. I named the session as '*Art-Based Language*

*Teaching: Stories in Our Classrooms.*'

The meaning of adult education through professional sharing experience and my perception of those experiences and future experiences were seen through the lens

of the perspectives developed from past experiences about the importance of

professional development platforms (Mezirow, 1991). Further, I got another platform

to conduct a virtual session titled, 'Storytelling for Current Digital ELT' in a 4-Day

Online Training Organized by NELTA Sunsari on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 followed by



Figure 5.32: Knowledge sharing with fellow ELT teachers of Nepal (Source: My photo gallery)

another session named, ‘Storytelling: A Multi-Colored Butterfly in ELT Classrooms’ in Scholars’ in a Virtual Conference organized by Scholars’ Association of Nepal in the same month. I shared similar ideas in one of the three days’ webinar organized by KUSOED on June 2020 named as Study Skills in English for Young Learners. Furthermore, my passion for self/other’s development of adult education opened more doors for me in the year 2021. I conducted a workshop titled as ‘Creative Response in ELT’ organized by NELTA Sunsari on 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2021. Then, in the time of second phase of lockdown, I shared art-based strategies for engage listening in ELT in one of the five days; virtual workshop on Learner-Focused Techniques in ELT organized by KUOED from 5-9<sup>th</sup> June, 2021. Ending up the list, I shared my knowledge on ‘Art-Based Education,’ in a five-day webinar on issues and directions in Education organized by KUSOED on 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2021. Hence, I am in the process of construction of the meaning of adult education, professional development and transformation of ELT teachers based on my past experiences of acquiring knowledge (Cranton & Taylor, 2012, p. 8).

As I shared my knowledge about the issues related to ABLT that I explored through my research, I feel a two-way professional development for self and others. This again answers my research query about the ways ELT teachers grow to become ABLT teacher. This process is continuous for me. I have been evolving through sharing and getting a sense of ‘serving the community’ in return with the focus on the five Ps of Professional Development suggested by Anderson (2018): purpose, personalization, priority, passion and professional learning communities for myself and my community.

## **Conclusion**

*A transformed traveller,  
a teacher,  
a researcher  
and researched  
from one end  
stands on the other side of the road  
with the keys to my query,  
reflective to the journey  
with some recommendations,  
and new knowledge*

My overall journey of exploring ABLT methods of English language teachers in Nepal has landed me to the discovery of the answers of the questions that I had set before starting it; draw some insightful reflections; make recommendations for future studies related to my issue and finally, contribute to the existing theory. Firstly, the exploration of my query on the ways English language teachers of Nepal grow to become ABLT teachers revealed to me the significant role of professional development platforms like training, workshops, conferences, webinars, books, education, blogs, online sources, scholarship, courses etc. in the ELT teachers' careers. Particularly, ABLT exposures result in the related growth. Nevertheless, apart from these adult learning platforms that get connected to the Transformative Learning theory, passion as an added key factor of ABLT teachers' growth and transformation came into light during my journey. Secondly, the observation of the practices of my participants not only enabled me to confirm that we do use various art forms like drawing, images, storytelling, songs/music and thinking marks in our classrooms, but

also find that they are the significant ABLT tools that enhance our teaching-learning process.

Hence, with the answers to the queries of my research, today, I can reflect that learning and transformation is a continuous process. This realization makes me recommend to the future researchers the significance of continuous update in ELT teachers' lives in order to fill in the ever-widening generation gap between them and their learners. Another reflection of my journey makes me understand the value of art, not only as a separate creative subject since ages and a medium of entertainment but significantly, but significantly as effective tools to facilitate language teaching as the focus of my study. Nonetheless, it opens avenues for the researchers of other subjects to excavate the relationship of art and their subjects as I believe that creativity and learner engagement are at the centre of every subject. Lastly, the journey of exploration to find the answers of my query has also enabled me to contribute to the existing theory of Transformative Learning Theory. My study has added one more tenet: passion as a driving force in adult learners like ELT teachers for their growth and transformation to its existing tenets like adult learning through 'rational discourse', 'critical reflection' and 'perspective transformation.'



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