

EXPLORING LEARNING AND PRACTICE OF INSTRUCTIONAL
LEADERSHIP AMONG PRINCIPALS: A NARRATIVE STUDY

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AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of *Binod Kumar Koirala* for the degree of *Master of Philosophy in Educational Leadership* presented on 26 October 2025 entitled *Exploring Learning and Practice of Instructional Leadership among Principals: A Narrative Study*.

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The study explored the ways principals learn their instructional leadership skills and the practices of instructional leadership they employ in schools within the contexts of Nepal. I purposively selected four principals of private schools from Bhaktapur district. I had in-depth interviews with them at their schools, as well as observed the school activities and their surroundings. I collected their stories as information for my study. I employed narrative inquiry as the research method and explored their stories through an interpretive paradigm. I followed the experiential learning theory of Kolb and Kolb and the instructional leadership framework of Hallinger and Murphy as the theoretical lenses for my study.

After exploring the narratives of my participants, I found that principals learned instructional leadership from their academic institutions, such as schools, colleges, and universities, where they studied to earn academic degrees. They can learn it from the workplace experiences. They can also learn it through professional development programs. Their learning is reflected in their school practices. This study offers insight that principals need to continue learning instructional leadership consciously to make teaching and learning more effective.

I discovered that principals, as instructional leaders, place an emphasis on regular communication with teachers, students, and parents to remain updated on ongoing issues at school and at home. They also emphasized the importance of co-learning from one another at school and in broader society. They revealed that monitoring and evaluating teachers' and students' activities are crucial for enhancing teaching and

learning. These activities make teachers and students more alert and conscious in the teaching and learning process. Principals emphasized the importance of creating a positive learning atmosphere at school. However, they were unable to do as expected due to lack of resources.

The study concludes that instructional leadership competence can be developed through reflecting on experiences and engaged practices. Professional development training can play a significant role in its enhancement. When instructional leadership competence among principals is well-practiced in leading instruction for teachers in the classroom and promoting a positive learning climate within the school, it becomes a significant strength in school development.

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26 October 2025

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शोध सार

शैक्षिक नेतृत्व तथा व्यवस्थापनमा दर्शनशास्त्रको स्नातकोत्तर डिग्रीको लागि विनोद कुमार कोइरालाको शोध प्रबन्धको शीर्षक “ प्रधानाध्यापकहरुको शैक्षणिक नेतृत्वको सिकाइ र अभ्यासको खोज : एक संकथन” ९ कार्तिक २०८२ मा प्रस्तुत गरिएको थियो ।

.....

चेत नाथ पन्त, पीएचडी

शोध निर्देशक

यस अध्ययनले नेपाली परिवेशमा कसरी प्रधानाध्यापकहरुले शैक्षणिक नेतृत्व सिप सिक्दछन् र उनीहरुको विद्यालयमा यसको अभ्यास गर्दछन् भन्ने कुराको खोज गरेको छ । यस अध्ययनको लागि मैले उद्देश्यमुलक भएर भक्तपुर जिल्लाका निजी विद्यालयमा कार्यरत चारजना प्रधानाध्यापकहरुलाई छानेको थिएँ । मैले उनीहरुसँग उनीहरुकै विद्यालयमा गहन अन्तर्वार्ता लिएँ र ती विद्यालय परिसर भित्र भएका केहि गतिविधिहरुको अवलोकन गरें । मेरो अध्ययनको तथ्याङ्कको रुपमा मैले वहाँहरुको कथाहरु संकलन गरें । मैले शोध विधिको रुपमा कथात्मक अध्ययन विधिको प्रयोग गरें र ब्याख्यात्मक प्रतिमानको माध्यमबाट उनीहरुको कथाहरुको खोज गरें । मैले मेरो अध्ययनको सैद्धान्तिक चक्षुको रुपमा कोल्ब र कोल्बको अनुभवजन्य सिकाइ सिद्धान्त र 'हालिङ्गर र मर्फिको शैक्षणिक नेतृत्व मार्गचित्र' को सहयोग लिएको थिएँ । प्रधानाध्यापकहरुको कथाहरुको अध्ययन पश्चात यो पत्ता लाग्यो कि उनीहरुले शैक्षणिक नेतृत्वको सिकाइ आफुले अध्ययन गरेको शैक्षिक संस्थाहरु, जस्तै: विद्यालय, कलेज र विश्वविद्यालयबाट गरेका रहेछन् । त्यस्तै, उनीहरुले यसको सिकाइ कार्यस्थलको अनुभव र व्यवसायिक अभिवृद्धि कार्यक्रमहरुबाट पनि गरेका रहेछन् । उनीहरुको सिकाइ आफ्नो विद्यालयमा गरिने काममा प्रतिविम्बित भएको देखियो । यो अध्ययनले एउटा अन्तर्दृष्टि दियो कि प्रधानाध्यापकहरुले आफ्नो विद्यालयको शिक्षण सिकाइलाई प्रभावकारी बनाउन आफ्नो शैक्षणिक नेतृत्वको सिकाइलाई निरन्तर जारी राख्नुपर्दछ ।

यो अध्ययनबाट यो पत्ता लाग्यो कि शैक्षणिक नेतृत्वकर्ताको रुपमा प्रधानाध्यापकहरुले आफ्ना विद्यार्थीहरुले घरमा र विद्यालयमा गर्ने कृयाकलापहरुको वारेमा जानकारी राख्न शिक्षक, विद्यार्थी र अभिभावकहरुसंग नियमित सम्पर्क र सम्वाद गर्ने गरेको पाइयो । उनीहरुले विद्यालय र वृहद समाजसंगको सहकार्यबाट हुने सिकाइलाई महत्व दिएको पाइयो । शिक्षक र विद्यार्थीहरुको नियमित कृयाकलापको निरीक्षण र मूल्याङ्कनले शिक्षण-सिकाइमा अभिवृद्धि भएको पाइयो । नियमित निरीक्षण र मूल्याङ्कनले शिक्षक र विद्यार्थीहरुलाई शिक्षण र सिकाइ प्रकृयामा सजग र सचेत बनाएको पाइयो । विद्यालयमा

सकारात्मक सिकाइ वातावरण निर्माण गर्न प्रधानाध्यापकहरुको महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका हुने पाइयो । यद्यपि पर्याप्त स्रोत र साधनको अभावले प्रधानाध्यापकहरुले सोचे जस्तो गर्न नसकेको देखियो ।

विगत र वर्तमानका अनुभव र सकृय अभ्यासहरुको परावर्तनबाट प्रधानाध्यापकहरुको शैक्षणिक नेतृत्व कौशलको विकास हुनसक्छ भन्ने यो अध्ययनको निचोड हो । शैक्षणिक नेतृत्व कौशलको वृद्धि गर्नमा व्यवसायिक अभिवृद्धि तालिमहरुको पनि विशिष्ट भूमिका हुनेगर्दछ । जब प्रधानाध्यापकहरुको शैक्षणिक नेतृत्व सिपले शिक्षकहरुको शिक्षण र विद्यालयमा सकारात्मक सिकाइ वातावरण निर्माण गर्ने कामको नेतृत्व गर्दछ, तब यो विद्यालयको समग्र विकासको महत्वपूर्ण शक्ति बन्दछ ।

.....

९ कार्तिक २०८२

विनोद कुमार कोइराला

उपाधि उमेदवार

The dissertation entitled *Exploring Learning and Practice of Instructional Leadership among Principals: A Narrative Study* presented by Binod Kumar Koirala on 26 October 2025.

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DECLARATION

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

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26 October 2025

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DEDICATION

This work is profoundly dedicated to my facilitators at Kathmandu University School of Education, my family members, teachers and staff at my school, my research participants, and their schools. Because of them, I was able to complete my research successfully.

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ABBREVIATIONS

B.Sc	Bachelor's in Science
CEHRD	Centre for Education and Human Resource Department
IL	Instructional Leadership
I.Sc.	Intermediate in Science
M.Ed.	Masters in Education
MPhil	Master of Philosophy
M.Sc	Masters in Science
NCED	National Centre for Education Development
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
SSRP	School Sector Reform Plan
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Instruction is a primary means of delivering curriculum content to facilitate learning for students. Teachers carry on instructions in the classroom. As a principal, a leader of teachers guides the instruction of teachers to enhance students' learning achievement. Principals learn instructional leadership (IL) through various tools, techniques, and events as a continuous process at different stages of their lives. They apply their learning to enhance teaching and learning at school. With this consideration in mind, this study has been designed. This chapter presents my anecdote as a principal, the conceptualization of instructional leadership, statement of the problem, rationale of the study, purpose statement, research questions, and delimitations of the study.

An Anecdote from My Past and Present as a Principal

I have been serving as a principal in a private school for the past twenty five years. I had to fulfill my multifaceted duties as a teacher, head of the teaching and non-teaching faculties, head of the finance department, head of the human resources department, and regular communicator with parents, students, teachers, and the education office. I had limited time to oversee the teaching process and monitor the students' learning. I had to take up to 6 periods daily, each of 40 minutes, as there were limited teachers at school. I was responsible for supervising and controlling all financial activities, which included managing the school's income and expenditure. I had to communicate with all the parents who wanted to talk about any issues related to their children. I was responsible for the selection, recruitment, and termination of human resources at school. I had to supervise the work of all the faculty members every day. I was responsible for handling all minor and complex incidents involving students, teachers, and parents at school. I had little time to monitor teaching and learning activities. As a principal, I was not well aware of the curriculum and its importance in the teaching and learning process. Textbooks were the primary teaching materials. Students' learning was evaluated only through summative periodic examination marks.

When I had the opportunity to participate in a month-long training program for principals by NCED, I came to realize the importance of IL for a school. At the same time, I attempted to bring some positive changes to the school's academic setting. After I joined the M.Ed. program at Tribhuvan University, I became more familiar with the various philosophical foundations of education, educational theories, and practices. After I enrolled as a student in the MPhil program at Kathmandu University, I gained more access to learning about the principal's leadership. My understanding of leadership is heavily influenced by the traits and styles of leadership exhibited by the teachers and heads of my school, college, and university. I had the opportunity to visit our partner schools in the U.K. three times, where I observed how the principals and teachers in those schools function. Importantly, I witnessed the leadership of some principals during my career, and I studied various dimensions of leadership at different levels of my formal education, which provided me with valuable insights into school management as a principal. I understood the importance of curriculum teaching. I realized my role as an instructional leader to lead teachers in developing the teaching-learning process in the classrooms.

My father was a teacher and a leading social activist in the village. His leadership style impressed me greatly and has shaped my current leadership role. When there was any social issue, he had to lead the solution. He never made his personal decisions but instead called a meeting of senior members in society and solved the issue through collaborative discussions. I saw that he was very busy at home preparing for his lessons to teach the next day in his class. These activities of my father became a motivation for my school leadership endeavour. Furthermore, I attended several leadership training sessions in my country and abroad. I had opportunities to read research papers and books on school leadership during the later phase of my career as a principal. All of them equipped my mind and heart with new ideas and spirits to realize and gradually transform my role as an instructional leader. The situation has changed a bit at present. I have reduced my classes to only one period a day. I have appointed academic coordinators to monitor and support teachers and students, intending to promote effective instruction and enhancing learning outcomes. I am more connected with teachers' everyday teaching process through the assistant principal and coordinators' reporting on it. I sometimes learn about teaching and learning progress through personal meetings with individual teachers and meetings with coordinators and assistant principals at various levels. I have meetings

with students to assess their learning status and gauge their satisfaction with the teachers' instructions.

I still believe that my work, as an instructional leader, in leading and supervising the curriculum and instruction that teachers implement to foster a learning climate in school (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985), is not satisfactory. I realize that my supervision and evaluation of teachers' classroom instruction and their curriculum delivery need to be increased. Teachers' professional development is now given a good space at school.

Conceptualizing Instructional Leadership

The principal's main contribution is self and teachers' capacity building on teaching and learning (Gurr et al., 2016). They can prioritize their time in learning so that they can share their knowledge with the facilitators. In the process, the principal can play a vital role as an instructional leader. An effective instructional leader engages in discussions with teachers to foster reflection and enhance professional capacity (Blasé & Blase, 2000). The principal is expected to be updated with newer and effective strategies of IL.

Education boosts knowledge and skills in humans. McKinsey (2007) states that schools are the places to produce new knowledge and human capital to meet every developmental demand of a nation. For this, attempts at strengthening the quality of education in schools should be a primary goal. Education quality mostly depends on curriculum design and its implementation through teaching and learning activities of teachers and students, respectively. To ensure students' learning achievement, principals play a leading role. Hence, they are referred to as instructional leaders. Principals motivate and support teachers and students as educators to enhance their current level of teaching, learning, and overall activities (Kafle, 2015). The principal takes the lead role as a leader for teachers' instructions in the classroom. An instructional leader attempts to meet three key dimensions: identifying the school's mission, managing curriculum and instruction, and fostering a learning atmosphere within the school (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). According to Murphy (1988), IL has two distinct concepts: the narrow concept and the broad concept. When a principal is confined only to developing teachers' instructions and students' learning, this comes under the narrow concept of IL. The broad concept of IL advocates for the principal's role in performing managerial functions in balance with teachers' instructions and students' learning. Aligning with Murphy, I also

believe that the principal's roles, both as the school manager and leader of teachers' instructions and students' learning, are equally important. Students' learning is always highlighted to improve their learning achievement. As an instructional leader, a principal can effectively balance both roles.

As principals are the heads of instructional activities in schools, they must facilitate, motivate, and monitor all teachers by providing proper instructions to students. The school's academic development depends on the principal's IL. Mathibe (2007) states that one of the important reasons for poor school results is that principals lack the necessary skills and training for effective school leadership and management. The schools with lower levels of student learning achievement in Nepal focus on skill development training for school principals. The principal is a learning fellow of IL skills and knowledge.

McEwan (2003) emphasizes that any dedicated educator has the potential to become a model instructional leader. For this, one must have an intrinsic desire to learn, accompanied by a commitment to apply the knowledge learned in day-to-day behavior. Hence, to change the school climate in teaching and learning, principals can commit to ongoing learning. They can explore the inner call of learning at any time.

Principals can enhance IL competency through many events and circumstances in life. Learning of IL among principals can be enhanced by their education and workplace experiences. According to Kolb and Kolb (2009), formal education and workplace experience are the primary sources that shape our norms and values, which in turn influence our behavior and views. I have found that formal educational institutions and work experience can help principals develop their IL. The leadership styles of teachers, department heads, and principals of schools, colleges, and universities in the past may influence leadership of the principals at present. Every bit of experience from the past at the workplace can add a developmental brick to the learning of IL.

My intention for this research was to explore how formal educational institutions and workplace experiences of principals contribute to the value of learning IL among them. I have been greatly influenced by my school, college, and university in enhancing my IL skills. I have learned a lot about leadership from my principals and teachers. Furthermore, my past work has significantly added to the value of my learning journey in IL. Through this research, I explored principals' ways of learning IL traits and skills. I believe the research findings will offer valuable

insights into developing IL skills among many principals in educational institutions, which will motivate school leaders to engage in the academic excellence of students and teachers.

Statement of the Problem

Effective instructional activities are crucial for achieving the school's targeted goals. Effective teaching and learning can only meet those goals. On the contrary, Shrestha (2021) reveals that school principals tend to focus more on managerial functions rather than supporting the school's pedagogical activities. He added that principals are often seen spending a lot of their time on out-of-classroom activities. I have seen that many of the principals engage more in administrative functions rather than in IL in Nepal. They are often busy with financial activities, student enrollment, outside meetings, social events, teacher selection and recruitment, among other tasks. Aureada (2021) states that school principals find it more challenging to lead teaching and learning than administrative functions.

Teachers' instructions can pave the best track to achieve an expected outcome when IL is practiced in school. In addition, Mathema (2007) asserts that community school in Nepal lacks teachers' morality. Consequently, these schools face several problems, including politicization, a lack of professional support, poor school management, inadequate resources, and ineffective leadership. He further states that the low level of teachers' morale deprives teachers of the ability to deliver quality teaching, and a high level of learning achievement from students can never be expected in such situations. Similarly, principals' morals are a determinant of the school's success or failure.

When principals fail to recognize the importance of IL, the teaching and learning of teachers and students cannot improve. Thapa (2016) reveals that poor student performance is mostly linked to poor leadership and teaching quality among principals and teachers, respectively. Failing to consider the IL role, principals may prioritize their administrative tasks over instructional supervision and support for teachers and students. This sort of behavior by principals does not support teachers and students, and they may become demotivated from teaching and learning. Such a situation will lead to a decline in the students' learning achievement. Gradually, this leads to a degradation of the quality of education throughout the nation.

Motivation for learning and favorable school policy help the development of IL of principals. As there exists a lack of principals' leadership competency in schools

in Nepal, there is an urgent need for professional development initiatives to enhance principals' competency for the overall development of schools (Thapa, 2016). As principals are the change agents, they need to engage in self-reflection and take initiatives to update themselves in their current roles. Naidoo and Petersen (2016) state that principals who habitually work as school managers need to work diligently to acquire knowledge and skills in order to transform themselves into instructional leaders. Hence, principals and teachers, as instructional leaders, can be professional and updated with knowledge, skills, and ideas to deliver instructions effectively.

Research conducted by Mathema and Bista (2006) conclude that effective principals are well decision-makers, goal-focused, determined, and change seekers. They found that the instructional leaders support, monitor, and supervise the instructional activities in a school. Therefore, the Nepalese government has launched various educational reform programs aimed at school development, including those focused on the professional development of principals and teachers. The government has included the issue of teachers' professional development in the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) 2016-2022. It has focused on enhancing teachers' qualifications and professional competencies for better student learning.

In the context of Bagmati Province, the Education Training Centre in Dhulikhel has been providing professional development training programs to in-service teachers at community schools in Nepal. It has also been providing management and IL training to principals. A few private professional development training providers have also been offering training programs to instructional leaders. These payable training programs are mostly attended by institutional school principals because CEHRD does not include those principals in their training opportunities.

During my review of previous research, I found that some researchers have conducted studies on issues related to IL in Nepali schools. Lamsal (2022) highlights the vital role of instructional leadership in enhancing teaching and learning in schools but did not explore how principals develop their instructional leadership skills. Few research works have explored the practices of IL among principals. I could not find recent research works conducted in Nepal that explored how principals learn IL. Instead, the research I have reviewed focuses on professional development programs for enhancing IL. Sapkota (2008) concludes that many of the past studies agree on the urgent need for an IL role for better student outcomes in Nepal, but they could not reveal how the principals could develop the qualities to act as instructional leaders.

This study explored the role of principals' formal educational institutions and their workplace experiences in uplifting their IL quality and implementation of learning in the school.

Rationale of the Study

As a principal, I always felt that principals should be well-connected with the classroom activities. They need to be informed about the progress in teaching and learning. On the contrary, my involvement in administrative and social activities was excessive, and I could not dedicate equal time to observing teaching and learning activities. Due to my minimal attention towards teaching and learning activities, the teaching efficiency of teachers and the learning achievement of students were not as expected. A similar situation existed in many schools in Nepal. To determine the real situation, I was determined to conduct research on instructional leadership, learning, and practices among principals.

This study provides the importance of IL learning and practices among principals. By exploring the ways principals learn IL from their formal educational institutions, their workplace experiences, and professional development programs, some important IL learning techniques and strategies are found. This study also emphasizes the importance of learning and practices of IL among principals to enhance and enrich their professional lives. The study emphasizes the importance of IL in schools and encourages principals to learn the best leadership strategies to guide teachers' instruction by exploring trends in learning and practices. This study also examines how the impact of learning IL leads to positive outcomes in teachers' instruction. Through the experiences of principals, a variety of IL dimensions were identified that can help others concerned with developing their ideas and skills in the field.

This study explored some of the ideas that will provide direction for school leaders to transform themselves into instructional leaders. It will be equally important for policymakers to use the study's conclusion to update their education policy or construct new ones, providing an important space for IL. In Nepal, the learning trends, styles, and practices of IL among principals are a relatively understudied issue. Therefore, I believe that this issue will add value to the improvement of principals' leadership nationwide. Khanal (2016) reveals that school education has been facing significant challenges, including students' poor learning achievement, dropout, and repetition. He claimed that better instructional leadership practices among principals

can lead to positive changes that uplift school education. Similarly, Mathema (2007) concludes that pedagogical activities had very limited functions in several community schools in rural Nepal, and there was no provision to support weaker students or the heads of those schools. At this stage, the study will play a crucial role in awakening stakeholders, including the government, school management committees, principals, teachers, students, parents, and the broader society, to consider changing the educational climate and achieving greater effectiveness.

Purpose Statement

This study explored the ways principals learn their instructional leadership skills. This study further unpacked their practices of instructional leadership in schools.

Research Questions

- a. How do principals narrate the stories of their learning of instructional leadership?
- b. How do principals reflect on the learning of instructional leadership in their practice?

Delimitations of the Study

This study is delimited to exploring principals' learning of IL from their formal educational institutions, which include schools, colleges, and universities, as well as from their experiences in workplaces and various professional development programs. Similarly, this study is delimited to exploring principals' IL practices in the IL areas, such as managing and implementing instructional activities and enhancing a good learning atmosphere at school.

Chapter Summary

I started this chapter with an introduction to my study. I wrote an anecdote from my time as a principal to provide context for my research topic. I mentioned my academic teaching and leadership journey. I explained how I developed into an instructional leader. This guided me towards the main issue, which helped me develop the statement of the problem. A clear understanding of the problem helped me develop the rationale for the study, its purpose, and the research questions. Finally, I concluded this chapter by establishing clear boundaries for my research, which serves as a delimitation of my study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are various views and discussions on the issue of IL. I begin this chapter by exploring those concerns and discussions through the earlier research works.. I attempt to link those concerns on instruction and IL to my issue of learning and practices of IL among principals. After reviewing the literature, I identified a knowledge gap that needed to be addressed. Then, I explored policies related to my topic and tried to find some policy gaps. After that, I explored some educational leadership and learning theories to link them with my study.

Educational Leadership

A school seeks a strong leader for its growth and development. The educational leader is committed to taking every action necessary to achieve the set goals and vision. Connolly et al. (2017) state that educational leaders motivate the stakeholders to serve their educational needs. Educational leaders set goals and mobilize stakeholders, such as teachers, students, parents, and the community, in various ways to achieve them. Bush (2007) advocates for the need for effective educational leaders and other stakeholders to ensure quality education. He adds that educational leaders must work diligently to develop highly skilled human resources. In my experience, educational leadership fosters a dynamic process of acquiring new knowledge to drive innovation within a school's educational setting.

Instructional Leadership

I have an experience that the major activities in school are instructional activities. The purpose of instruction is to meet the learning objectives through the collaborative efforts of students, teachers, and principals as instructional leaders. Lamsal (2022) reveals that when principals adopt and implement the components of instructional leadership, the quality of teaching and learning accelerates. In connection with the importance of IL, Naidoo and Petersen (2016) state that an instructional leader focuses on everything that matters in the school and classroom to enhance students' work. Furthermore, Hallinger (2005) focuses on the functions of IL, which guarantee well-equipped classrooms with the necessary facilities to facilitate the pedagogical process. He also stresses the importance of planning the school's goals and aligning everyone's efforts to achieve them.

I have witnessed that many of the principals in Nepal lack attention towards monitoring, facilitating, and evaluating the pedagogical process in the classroom, and they are also unaware of the need for and importance of the IL role of the principals. They are often busy with school management roles. Murphy (1988) identifies several hindrances that prevent principals from practicing the IL role. The hindrances are that principals have limited knowledge of curriculum and instruction, professional standards, stakeholder expectations, and the IL role. However, Murphy (1988) reveals two aspects of IL definitions: narrow and broad. For him, the former deals with classroom teaching and learning-related leadership functions, whereas the latter incorporates both pedagogical and managerial functions of the principals. In my experience, principals can balance their managerial functions with their IL roles. They can focus equally on their IL roles to enhance teaching and learning. They can offer various professional development opportunities to teachers, which help promote students' learning achievement.

Principal as Instructional Leader

As per my experience, principals are the core instructional leaders. There is no single, well-informed consensus on defining IL. For Geleta (2015), there are no specific guidelines that an instructional leader follows. Every scholar agrees on the fact that principal, as instructional leaders, deals with teachers for the best IL practices in the classroom. Aureada (2021) notes that school principals who are aware of instructional leadership fulfill functions related to the school mission, including maintaining a better instructional atmosphere, managing and implementing the curriculum, supervising students' learning achievements, and monitoring and supporting teaching. Similarly, Jenkins (2009) states that the role of instructional leaders includes designing visible goals, providing resources, supervision, monitoring, and evaluation within the school. Hence, IL focuses on the management and implementation of teaching and learning activities.

Instructional leaders can have their own ways of working to achieve their goals. Reitzug et al. (2008) advocate that a type of instructional leader seeks to enrich teaching, learning, and the overall school atmosphere by fostering positive personal relationships with teachers and students. They added that some instructional leaders focus on stimulating discourse and inquiry to enhance teaching and learning. Others emphasize developing the school community to achieve moral visions. Furthermore, every principal may want to develop better class instruction and learning

achievement. For the same reason, they can adopt some type of IL practice in their educational leadership journey.

An instructional leader keeps learning the best leadership techniques to enhance students' learning achievement. The principal undergoes various modes, styles, and theories of learning in the process of learning leadership. Gurr et al. (2016) reveal that a principal's style of leadership, his personality, and his individual values and belief system influence and encourage students' productivity.

Principals are at the center of all the instructional activities in school. IL is expected to be sound in implementing pedagogical activities. When teachers are encouraged, facilitated, and monitored effectively to deliver their instructions in the classroom, students' learning achievement will improve. Therefore, principals can reflect on their actions continuously to improve their leadership skills. Based on my experience, for students to achieve better learning outcomes, principals should be well-connected with teaching and learning activities. They facilitate teaching and learning by providing a range of resources to teachers and students. They lead in curriculum management and its implementation. They work in maintaining the learning atmosphere at school. They have regular communication with parents and the school community. Similarly, they are intact in supervision and evaluation of teaching and learning.

Learning and Practices of Instructional Leadership

The previous studies related to the preparation and practices of IL among principals have been summarized and presented here. I found very few research works that were conducted that aimed to explore the ways principals learn their IL skills and their practices in school.

Koirala (2020) stated that head teachers' opportunities and determination to learn instructional leadership impact the enhancement of students' learning achievement and teacher motivation in quality teaching. Schools can open the opportunity of learning and practicing IL for principals and teachers to promote effectiveness in teaching and learning. However, Khanal (2017) found a mismatch between the perception and practices of instructional leadership in schools. Inconsistency in the saying and doing of instructional leaders prevails in many schools. Although leaders theoretically emphasize planning-based teaching and learning activities, they are rarely implemented in practice at schools. Emphasizing the importance of learning and practicing instructional leadership, Pande (2021)

mentioned that principals' IL skills and practices determine the organizational health of the school. Principals need to have proper training and learning exposures to implement their IL roles appropriately for the establishment of a better teaching and learning atmosphere at school.

A study conducted by Pan and Chen (2020) concluded that principals need to facilitate and encourage teachers to enhance their leadership capacity. Principals may further strengthen themselves with leadership and subject knowledge. To boost teachers' instructional competency, Hosseingholizadeh et al. (2020) suggested that principals can create opportunities for teachers to participate in learning programs, such as peer observation and discussions about instructional issues, through various teacher meetings. However, Lunenberg (2010) stated that instructional leaders focus more on students' learning than teachers' teaching. For the same reason, they remain closer to both students and teachers, helping them build their pedagogical practices more effectively.

Similarly, research on leadership for learning conducted by Hallinger (2010) found that principals improve their IL quality using their own values, beliefs, and expectations in relation to the school's values. The research has also concluded that contextual leadership has a better impact on teaching and learning. The greater the principals' ability to correctly interpret their context and adapt their leadership to the needs, the more successful IL they practice. Likewise, research carried out by Brazer and Bauer (2013) on preparing instructional leaders: a model stated that principals, who are aspiring instructional leaders, prioritize problem-based learning as the primary pedagogy model. Researchers claimed that leaders learn from the experience of leading, rather than from the classes they attend on leadership. They have mentioned that instructional leaders possess sound knowledge of pedagogical content relevant to their role, which primarily focuses on teaching and learning. I have an experience where principals can learn more about their leadership from their context and experience.

Likewise, a study carried out by James et al. (2007) concluded that the focus of the instructional leaders should be on leading learning. The study has revealed that IL development in principals is possible through the knowledge they bring to the table, gained from their present experience, understanding, and learning from past actions and enthusiasm. James et al. added that principals can develop leadership

competency even with the help of collaboratively constructed knowledge, which might be the product of social interactions.

Similarly, research conducted by Noor et al. (2018) revealed that instructional leaders undergo framing curriculum programs, engage in supervising and evaluating teachers' instructions in the classroom, and manage remedial actions for problems that occur. However, research conducted in Nepalese schools by Singh (2016) stated that the determination level of the head teachers of higher performing schools towards their institutional and pedagogical progress at school seems praiseworthy, whereas the determination level of the head teachers of lower performing schools towards their institutional and pedagogical progress at school seems very low, as these schools' principals are not clear of their duty as an academic head of the school.

Likewise, a study conducted in Nepali institutional schools by Khadka (2020) found that private school principals in Nepal employ both transformational and transactional leadership behaviors to motivate teachers and learners to enhance their teaching skills and learning competencies. They practice idealized influencing behavior, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration. This is the primary reason why learning achievement appears to be higher in institutional schools than in public schools in Nepal.

Fullan (2001) revealed that principals, as instructional leaders, practice collaboration with teachers to shape the school as a better workplace. They consistently focus on the professional development of teachers, shared goals, teacher commitment, and student learning outcomes. Similarly, Shelton (2011) found that instructional leaders are the primary individuals responsible for ensuring academic standards and students' optimal learning, utilizing the knowledge and skills required by the curriculum. Thus, IL seeks to maintain teachers' and students' personal and professional care to comfort their path of teaching and learning.

Mitgang (2012) concluded that principals need to shift from school managers to instructional leaders. They should shift their focus from managing the school's finances and infrastructure to managing and mobilizing capable teachers to ensure better educational outcomes. Hence, the IL function of principals demands them to act more as academic leaders rather than administrative managers.

Research carried out by Walker and Qian (2020) on the IL practices of Chinese principals revealed that these principals place a high value on building a supportive learning environment for teachers and expanding their capacity as

educators. Principals provide impressive support for teachers' on – the – job learning and view qualified teachers as the most valuable resource. They believe that teachers' professional development can bring about significant positive changes in students' learning outcomes. However, research conducted by Kilag and Sasan (2023) revealed that, although instructional leadership practices have a positive impact on teacher professional development, school leaders face several obstacles when implementing these practices. Very limited resources at school to carry on teachers' professional development remain a barrier to developing teachers' competency. Learning from Experience

Warnick et al. (2014) stated that experiential learning is a powerful method of developing higher cognitive skills. They further stated that learners' own experiences and others' efforts and experiences add enormous value in leadership development. I know that principals, as leadership learners, have a significant accumulation of experiences from their formal education at schools, colleges, and universities, as well as from their past and present work. All these experiences help support their leadership learning.

Principals can reflect on the leadership traits and functions of the heads of their schools, colleges, and universities, and recall and integrate the best practices they observe into their own leadership approaches. Roland (2017) revealed that one can develop the professionalism needed for their workplace with the help of lifelong experience and reflective practice. Based on my experience, principals can learn better leadership skills by reflecting on their own past practices. Likewise, there is an important role of motivation in learning process. Learning enhances when it is backed up by motivation. Otermans et al. (2024) mentioned that intrinsic motivation plays an important role in developing deep learning among learners, as autonomous motivation is crucial in promoting learning outcomes. Extrinsic motivation can be the base of intrinsic motivation.

The above reviewed studies from scholars concluded with some clues to enhance principals' IL. Principals can develop their IL by reading the contemporary context. When principals distribute and integrate their leadership role among teachers, the instructional outcome will be better. Principals' accumulated understanding and insight are a very powerful source of IL. Principals develop leadership skills and pedagogical content knowledge as a continuous process to become an IL practitioner. They work on developing their IL competency by adopting transformational and

transactional behavior to help teachers deliver quality instruction and students learn better.

Some studies showed that history, experience, and local context can strengthen IL among principals. My concern is about how they are motivated and are able to prepare and practice IL. Some scholars have emphasized the importance of contextual and shared leadership practices as effective strategies for leadership preparation. My focus is on how their formal educational institutions and work experiences played a significant role in enhancing their IL competencies, which added value to their practice.

I could find a few research works conducted in Nepal on instructional leadership. They basically focused on IL practices of principals. They did not explore the various ways principals adopt to learn IL. However, some research has been conducted on the issue, giving more priority to professional development programs as a tool for developing principals' IL skills. Some research studies conducted in other countries have concluded that there are additional learning tools for IL. Most research work employed quantitative research design. Still, I realize that there is a knowledge gap to be discovered. Through my study, I explored more techniques and tools principals use to learn their IL skills. I employed a qualitative design with a narrative approach to dig out my issue. I believe the findings will be an asset for all principals, teachers, students, educational researchers, policymakers, and other education stakeholders, enhancing overall educational quality in Nepal and beyond.

Policies Related to Instructional Leadership

In Nepal, there are few programs to develop the professional competency of principals. The government has implemented these programs as part of its educational development policies. The National Education System Plan - 1971 has implemented the policy by including professional qualifications of teachers in addition to academic qualifications. According to the Education Regulations (2010), the head teacher's primary duty is to monitor and oversee the pedagogical and managerial functions in the school (Nepal Law Commission [NLC], 2002). National Education Policy (2019) has emphasized capacity development programs for principals and teachers to make them competent in educational management and institutional development. Similarly, the National Education Policy has also aimed to hold principals responsible for the best practices in teachers' teaching and students' learning activities. In recommendation of the school sector reform plan, the government aimed at providing

management training to all school leaders by 2020 (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2009).

Similarly, the Education Training Centre in Dhulikhel provides in-service training to head teachers at community schools on school management and leadership. The education regulation has identified 31 functions that a head teacher is required to perform. Out of those 31 functions, only four functions are closely related to IL, and the rest are related to the administrative role of the head teachers. The School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) for 2009-2015 and the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) for 2016-2023 have provided a suitable platform for conducting professional development programs for principals and teachers, contributing to the overall development of the education system in Nepal. Institutional schools develop their own policies for upgrading the skills and knowledge of their principals and teachers. They arrange some professional development training programs for their principals and teachers at their own expense. Similarly, the School Education Sector Plan, 2022/23-2031/32, has focused on teachers' education and training to improve the prevailing teaching-learning and evaluation system. It has also focused on developing school leadership to hold leaders accountable for their roles. Likewise, the School Education Sector Plan 2022/23 – 2031/32 has focused on developing the capacities of teachers and head teachers to regulate and ensure quality education during and after various crises, pandemics, and emergencies. It has emphasized the use of ICT in education more.

After reviewing the policies related to my study in Nepal, I could not find sufficient policies that could encourage and help facilitate teachers and principals in self-learning, contextual learning, and experiential learning. I explored more dimensions of IL learning and practices among principals. The policies do not focus sufficiently on principals' professional development issues compared to those of teachers.

Theoretical Referents

I employed two theories as theoretical lenses to inform my study. The theories I employed in the study were experiential learning theory and the IL framework developed by Hallinger and Murphy. As the entire study centered on the learning and practice of IL, the theories were selected based on the needs of the main terminologies and the demands of the study's issue.

Experiential Learning Theory

Humans can learn a lot from life experiences. According to Kolb and Kolb (2009), the philosophy of experiential learning is based on the notion that human life experiences, work, and education are powerful resources for acquiring new knowledge. Based on my experience, principals' leadership is significantly influenced by their experiences in past and present work, as well as their formal education in school, college, and university. Past experiences shape present beliefs, and these beliefs, in turn, influence future behaviors (Priest & Seemiller, 2018). Observing the leadership behavior of school, college, and university heads can help model principals' leadership behavior to some extent. Similarly, learning is a continuous process. Every event adds a brick to the progress of learning. Every event principal is involved in supporting better events in the future. They reflect on the tasks they have done and gain more confidence to accomplish future tasks. Hansen (2000) reveals that to experience is to live through something, feel it, and internalize it. Hence, every bit of experience is an asset that supports the acquisition of new knowledge. Principals encounter numerous experiences during their formal education at schools, colleges, and universities. They have had several experiences at their workplaces as well. Similarly, they have extensive experience with the professional development programs they attend. My research participants valued their experiences of learning and leading to enhance their instructional leadership practices. It reflects our culturally embedded metaphor "Padera vanda parera janinchha" (More learning happens through experience than study), which well captures the knowing, doing, and being dimensions of experiential learning theory (Beard & Wilson, 2013). Experience is important to enhance principals' instructional leadership competence. Therefore, I have chosen experiential learning theory to align with my study.

Kolb (1984) presents the experiential learning cycle, which posits that human experience progresses through four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. According to him, concrete experience is a stage when one is exposed to a new experience. The experience processes and reaches the stage of reflective observation. At this stage, he reflects on the experience he was exposed to. After this stage, he reaches the stage of abstract conceptualization, where he makes meaning of the reflection and gains some learning from it. Finally, he goes to the stage of active experimentation. It is the stage when he practices learning at his workplace. The knowledge and experience gained at

schools, colleges, universities, workplaces, and through professional development training are valuable experiences for principals at the beginning of their careers. The concrete experiences are reflected through the mental process of reflective observation, and the principles reach the stage of abstract conceptualization. Finally, they make meaning of their experiences, which they apply in schools, to transform the status of teaching and learning for the better.

Instructional Leadership Framework of Hallinger and Murphy

The instructional leadership framework referred to by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) state that the IL functions of the principal encompass several dimensions, such as composing and defining the mission of the school, managing and implementing the instructional activities, and enhancing a good learning atmosphere at school. These three dimensions of IL role are subdivided into their functions. Under the dimension of composing and defining the school's mission, the major functions of the principal include designing and articulating the school's goals. Likewise, under the dimension of managing and implementing instructional activities, the principal monitors and evaluates teachers' instructional activities, coordinates the curriculum, and assesses students' achievement. Similarly, under the dimension of enhancing a good learning climate, the principal functions are preserving instructional time, developing teachers' professional competence, and providing teachers with better incentives.

The IL framework of Hallinger and Murphy (1985) has served as the baseline for my study of IL. I explored the learning and practices of some of the important functions of IL among principals. Particularly, I explored principals' IL practices in the IL areas, which are: managing and implementing instructional activities and enhancing a good learning atmosphere at school. I dug out the ways principals learn to accomplish some of these functions in the course of their past and present workplace experiences. My participants equally emphasized the role of professional development programs in developing their instructional leadership competence. It strongly helped them to create meaningful learning spaces at school by fostering collaboration and coordination among the principal, teachers, and students (Nzambimana et al., 2020)

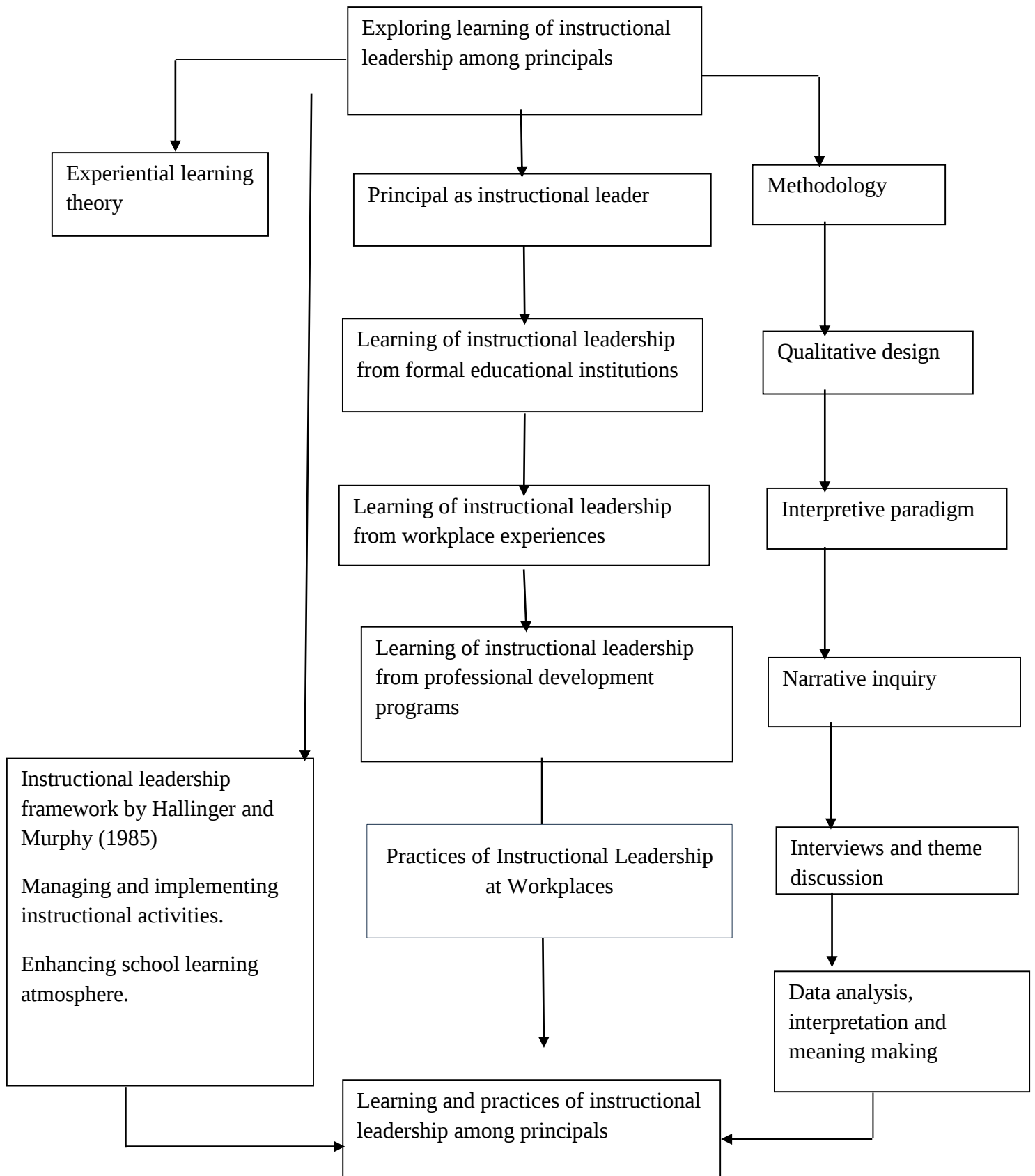
Evolving Conceptual Framework

The following framework is not rigid but evolving, which guided my study. The framework illustrates the interrelationship among various aspects that are linked

to the research questions of my study. It eased my journey of research and exploration of the learning of IL among principals.

This research explored the ways principals learn IL from their past work experiences, from their formal educational institutions, and from professional development programs. Experiential learning theory serves as the foundational theory for this study. The meaning and function of IL for this study are derived from the IL model of Hallinger and Murphy (1985). It also explored principals' IL practices in the IL areas, such as managing and implementing instructional activities and enhancing a good learning atmosphere at school (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). For this, the study employed the instructional leadership framework of Hallinger and Murphy as its baseline. The research employed a qualitative design with a narrative inquiry approach. The narratives of the principals on the ways they learned and practiced IL were collected, transcribed, storied, analyzed, and interpreted. Finally, discussion and meaning-making were accomplished to reach the conclusion.

Evolving Conceptual Framework



Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I explored and reviewed several journal articles, dissertations, empirical studies, and policies related to the instructional leadership of principals and teachers. I began this chapter with a thorough description of educational leadership, instructional leadership, and the principal as an instructional leader. I explored the learning and practices of instructional leadership in Nepal and abroad through a comprehensive study of various articles, books, and policies related to my research. After this, I connected my study with established theories, specifically the experiential learning theory and the instructional leadership framework proposed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). These theories served as theoretical lenses of my study. Finally, I present the theoretical framework, which outlines the connections between the theories and methodologies throughout the research.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explores the philosophical foundation and research paradigm of my study. The research paradigm helped me choose my research design and approach. This chapter also determines the study participants, study tools, process of fieldwork, and information analysis, as well as the meaning-making process. Then, it ensures the credibility of the study and considers ethical implications.

Philosophical Foundation of the Study

In philosophy, ontology deals with the concept of existence. Al-Saadi (2014) states that our beliefs about nature and the kind of reality are the focus of ontology. I explored the reality of how principals learn IL and how they practice it. I found that there are different ways and techniques for learning IL and its application with respect to each individual principle. They learnt instructional leadership in different ways from their schools, colleges, universities, workplaces, and various professional development programs they attended. I came up with multiple prospects of reality after analyzing the lived stories collected from the principals.

Epistemology deals with the way of knowing something. It focuses on how we learn about reality. Epistemology is the approach to examining the world and deriving meaning from it (Crotty, 1998, as cited in Al-Saadi, 2014). In the case of this study, principals applied various techniques while learning IL and their practices of it. In this context, my epistemological concern was to explore the ways and ideas they applied to learn and practice IL. I generated knowledge from this study through the collected stories from the participants.

Axiology deals with how people value something. Every human is different in their thinking and doing. Saunders (2009) asserts that axiology identifies the role of values and ethics in a research study. It addresses the issues of how a researcher navigates their own values in conjunction with those of the research participants. Respecting all participants' values and beliefs, I applied my values to give meaning to the data I collected. The guiding values inform my study of school leaders, such as integrity, honesty, trust, and collaboration.

I followed the interpretive paradigm. Thanh and Thanh (2015) argue that the interpretive paradigm provides researchers with the opportunity to view things from

the participants' perspectives. I dug out the stories of the principals on how they learned and practiced IL. I wanted to learn from them if this leadership learning is a lifelong process or a one-time effort. The understanding of truth or reality may be different from one principal to another in terms of their learning and practice of IL. I interpreted the lived experiences of the principals to gain a deeper understanding of their practices of IL.

Research Design

As I explored principals' learning and practice of IL using an interpretive paradigm, I employed a qualitative design for my research. This encouraged me to use a personal narrative approach to collect in-depth information from the participants. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) state that narrative inquiry captures and investigates human experiences. Additionally, Butina (2015) mentions that the narrative approach involves seeking out additional information about the participants' culture, past and present experiences, way of life, and identities. Through narrative inquiry, a researcher can gather, analyze, and interpret human stories about events, beliefs, values, and experiences. Similarly, Wang and Geale (2015) note that narrative inquiry, as a research methodology, is a strong medium for uncovering the experiences and practices of study participants. I have chosen this approach for my research because I know that principals can convey their experiences more effectively through storytelling techniques. With the help of the principals' stories, I gathered valid information to explore how they engaged in the learning and practice of IL.

Selection of Study Participants

I selected four private school principals purposively from Bhaktapur district as my research participants. I chose Bhaktapur as my study site, as it is the smallest district in Nepal with many schools, nearby where I live. I collected stories from four principals from four different private schools within the same district. My participants are inclusive in terms of gender. I selected three males and one female principal. I chose the principals from the private schools to explore the practices of IL among the principals working in those schools. Cohen et al. (2000) state that researchers can select participants for their study based on the specific needs and purpose of the study. The selection of participants was done purposively. My preference for selecting participants was for those principals who had been in that position for more than 10

years. I tried to find my research participant principals who were aware of instructional leadership.

Based on my experience, every principal is either directly or indirectly aware of their role in IL, but the level of awareness may vary among them. In connection to it, Gawlik (2018) argues that a principal is expected to bring the different dimensions of instructional leadership into practice knowingly or unknowingly as it is a key responsibility of a leader. However, I included experienced principals, in terms of their working tenure as principals, who were aware of IL's importance and its practices, as they had more time dedicated to learning leadership. I believed they could share their worthwhile experiences in this regard. I received assistance from the local government's education department, which provided access to their database to select the right principals who were knowledgeable about IL and had more experience as school principals. I also observed the results of the students of grade 8 and Secondary Education Examination (SEE) of those schools in the education office and found that the results were good. The education officer also recommended that those principals were conscious of IL practices. Moser and Korstjens (2018) reveal that conceptual requirements determine the study participants. The participants and settings provided the information needed to fulfill the research issue's demand. I have included below the personal profiles of my research participants, which provide details about them.

Pramod

My first participant, Pramod (name change), is a school principal at Gatthaghar, Bhaktapur. Originally, he is from Siraha. He has been the principal at his own school for 30 years. He is 56 years old. Despite his age, he is active and conscious of his responsibilities. He enjoys meeting students and teachers to discuss their teaching and learning. During interviews, he was open to sharing his experiences. He lives near his school. He comes to school early in the morning at 8:00 am and remains till 6:00 pm almost every day. He began his career as a teacher immediately after completing his intermediate degree in science. After completing his I.Sc., he joined the management faculty to pursue his bachelor's degree. He has a deeper passion for teaching and leading a school. He completed a master's in Business Administration and a PGDE from Kathmandu University. He has one son and one daughter. His daughter is a lawyer, and his son is studying in college. His wife works in the same school where he is the principal.

Rita

Rita is my second participant. She is 58 years old. She has been the principal at her own school for 20 years. She has completed her education at schools, colleges, and universities in Darjeeling and North Bengal, India. After completing her M.Sc., she came to Nepal and began teaching science at a college. She taught in various schools and colleges in the Kathmandu valley. After she started her own school in Bhaktapur, she has been the principal there. She is highly influenced by schools in Darjeeling, and she tries to emulate those schools at her own school as well. She focuses more on students' discipline and moral values. Therefore, she motivates the students and teachers to learn and practice meditation. She wants her students to develop their reading culture. To promote a reading culture, she has enriched her library with a range of books of interest to students. She lives with her husband, son, and daughter-in-law on the top floor of the school building. She has a daughter who lives in the USA. She still teaches science as a part-time instructor at several colleges, in addition to her role as principal at her school.

Hari

Hari is my third participant. He is 65 years old. He has been the principal at his own school for 41 years. His school is in Byasi, Bhaktapur. It is a secondary-level school that caters to students from Nursery classes to Grade 10. The school premises are spacious and open, providing a wide range of areas for children to play various sports. His students seem well disciplined, and the premises look neat and tidy. There are many plants inside the premises. He started teaching after completing his I.Sc. As he lost his father and mother at an early age in his childhood, he learnt to work hard in life for his self-survival. He taught in both government and private schools during his early career as a teacher. Later, he started his own school. He was a top student in his classes during school and at the college level. He passed his B.SC. from Tri-Chandra College. He is an active and visionary principal. He seems to have good leadership competence. His wife also works at the same school as the vice principal. He has two sons. One son works at his school. Another son lives in the USA. He is a Scout leader. He has implemented many of the Scout ethics and rules at his school to enhance the learning and discipline of students, teachers, and staff.

Sundar

Sundar is my fourth participant. He is 46 years old. He has been a principal at an institutional school for 11 years. The school is in Thimi, Bhaktapur. It is a secondary school. He started teaching as soon as he completed his twelfth grade. He is originally from Butwal. He completed his secondary education in Butwal and then came to Kathmandu to pursue further studies. He passed bachelor's and master's degrees in education with Mathematics as his major subject. As he wished to be a good instructional leader, he joined the MPhil in Educational Leadership at Kathmandu University and completed it in 2023 AD. He has a good knowledge of mathematics and educational leadership. He no longer likes to talk. But he was open with me during the interview. He engaged in the topic of our discussion, as he was a skilled practitioner and learner of instructional leadership. He lives with his wife and son at Lokanthali, Bhaktapur. He works at his school from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. His school is situated in a silent area of Thimi. The school premises are neat and tidy. The classrooms are big and wide. It is a one-story building.

Information Generation Strategies

Clandinin (2006) states that human beings tell stories about their lives, out of which we can make meaning in our lives. It helps develop our lives and societies. Similarly, Creswell (2013) notes that narrative researchers seek stories told by participants about their everyday experiences, which undergo a process of development through dialogue and interaction. Thus, narrative interviewing was my major tool for information collection. I focused more on encouraging the principals to share their stories on the research issues. I used a tape recorder to record the conversation for further processing, with the participants' consent. I also had casual observation of the school premises, activities taking place there, and classroom settings to gain a deeper understanding of their IL practices.

Process of Field Work and Information Collection

I visited the natural site of the participants, i.e., the school, to conduct interviews for their story collection. Despite my request to conduct the interviews outside the school premises, they requested me to conduct the interviews at their schools. They mentioned that they would manage time for it, and it would create no disturbances to them in their regular duties. The participant principals were informed in advance of the interview schedule. Then, with their permission, I went to meet them. As they requested to take interviews in their office, we sat there for information

collection. Firstly, I communicated with them informally to develop rapport, making it comfortable for both of us to discuss the issue. Baden and Niekerk (2007) state that a researcher using a narrative inquiry approach remains an active listener and views the participants as storytellers. His interview agendas are open to change and development. Regarding this argument, I met with the participants at least three times during a suitable gap in the course of my study. These meetings helped me gather the necessary information and verify it. Second meetings were more comfortable for my participants to open up with their in-depth sharing of their stories. It might be because we developed a good rapport within the first and second meetings and became familiar with each other. While they were telling the information, I consciously observed my participants' gestures and expressions. I also visited the school premises. I observed several instances where principals communicated with teachers. My first interviews with the principals went for 1 to 2 hours. The second and third interviews were shorter than the others. As per the demand of the narrative inquiry approach, the information was in the form of field notes, interview transcripts, and storytelling. An audio recording was also made with the participants' permission. Audio recordings helped ensure the credibility of the transcribed data (Creswell, 2007) from all four individual interviews conducted with the four participants in my research. As narrative inquiry demands an in-depth understanding of the study issue, preset questions are not suitable. Therefore, I employed an open-ended interview approach, developing guiding questions followed by probing questions. Emerging questions were asked when necessary. I was able to build close relationships with my participants; as a result, they were comfortable sharing their experiences openly.

Meaning-Making Process

One of the most important aspects of research is presenting the collected stories in a systematic manner. Data processing, analysis, and interpretation are vital components of qualitative research. This process serves as proof for finding. For information analysis, a researcher delves deeply into the information and focuses on those segments that may provide insights into their research questions. The researcher interprets what participants said and makes meaning out of that to address his research problem (Butina, 2015).

As a narrative researcher, I collected the stories of my participants through interviews. I also took field notes and developed a habit of journaling. I recorded the interviews with each participant's permission. I listened to the recording several times

in due course of transcribing the recorded data. I also drew on the field notes for my transcription. I transcribed every bit of information shared by my participants. I made no addition, no subtraction, and no deletion as I was conscious of meaning distortion by doing so. I revisited the research sites to rearrange and reconfirm the information of the participants. I conducted casual observations at the research sites to collect in depth information related to my research problem. With the help of the transcribed interviews and observations, I identified various themes and sub-themes related to my issue, utilizing the thematic approach (Riessman, 2008). Then, I made an analytical description. After interpreting the collected data, I developed findings for the overall study and provided a conclusive interpretation from my perspective.

Quality Considerations of the Study

I have adopted quality standards, including credibility, critical reflexivity, temporality, sociality, and spatiality, to maintain the rigor of my study. Credibility encourages researchers to get towards reality. To enhance the credibility of my research, I made a concerted effort to establish a good rapport and demonstrate trustworthiness with my research participants, ensuring they felt comfortable participating in the communication. I visited the natural setting where the participants were located to collect information. Taylor (2014) focuses on developing deep understandings through prolonged engagement with participants' opinions. I visited them three times to communicate, understand, and verify the data. I used the probing technique to clarify the questions and deepen the participants' responses. I allowed space for the emerging questions to gather additional information on the issue. I analyzed and interpreted the data fairly, ensuring that the participants' meanings were not distorted.

The dimensions of temporality, sociality, and spatiality are used in my inquiry to uncover individuals' lived experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). They stated that temporality refers to the interconnection of events with the present, the past, and the future. In connection with this, I explored how the stories of principals regarding their learning and practice of IL were influenced by their past and present experiences, and how these experiences were expected to shape their future learning and practice. According to Connelly and Clandinin (2006), sociality refers to the social, cultural, and personal influences on human experience. I dug out how my research participants' learning and practices of IL were influenced by their society, culture, and themselves. Similarly, Connelly and Clandinin (2006) assert that

spatiality refers to the influence of place or surroundings on people's experience. My study examined how principals' learning and practices of IL were influenced by their location and surroundings. I included 'rich and thick description' and 'critical reflexivity' as credibility tools to enhance the quality of the narratives. Through the process of critical reflexivity, I reflected on my experiences and positionality to connect with the information during data interpretation and discussion.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics is a human virtue. It is an integral part of any study. According to Arifin (2018), respecting and protecting human subjects by applying proper ethical principles is a crucial task when conducting a study. Such an important virtue was kept in the center while conducting my research. I started collecting information from the participants after having their permission for this. I ensured that no harm or risk was posed to my participants during their participation in the research. I neither forced them nor influenced them to answer my questions. I always maintained friendly relationships with them. I respected my participants' privacy and confidentiality while describing, analyzing, and interpreting the data. I never used the original names of the participants and schools in my research to maintain anonymity. I tried to be a good listener to their stories and experiences, without judgment or interference. I adhered to the ethical guidelines for conducting research issued by Kathmandu University.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described the methodological roadmap of my study. I began the chapter by detailing the philosophical foundation of the study, followed by an explanation of my research design, which employs an interpretive paradigm and qualitative approach. It followed the narrative inquiry as the research method. I further described the selection of study participants, followed by the preparation of information-generating studies and the process of fieldwork and information collection. I then discussed the processing of information, the analysis and meaning-making process, and the credibility of the study. Ultimately, I mentioned some ethical considerations.

CHAPTER IV

NAVIGATING LEARNING OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

This chapter presents the narratives of participants based on their motivation towards teaching and instructional leadership, including the role of schools, colleges, and universities, learning from experiences at the workplace, and learning from professional development programs. The themes have been generated from navigating the narratives. I have woven the narrative threads to generate themes and make meaning.

Role of School, College and University to Nurture the Seeds of Instructional Leadership

Schools, colleges, and universities are institutions of learning. Students gain exposure to and practice knowledge and skills in various subjects through these institutions. Teachers' instructions and students' learning are the key activities at these places. Students can be motivated towards teaching and instructional leadership when they are exposed to and inspired by different aspects of teaching and learning processes and environments.

My Anecdote as a Learner

When I was studying in grade 9, I was impressed by my Nepali subject teacher. He was a caring and informative teacher. Every Friday, he would tell some interesting English stories in class, translating them into Nepali. He used to tell a story in the series and complete it within a few weeks, depending on the length of the story. I was spellbound by the way he told the story. I still remember the stories from dramas like *The Merchant of Venice*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare, which my Nepali subject teacher told in an enchanting way. He used to encourage us to read the stories he shared from the original book to know the detailed story. I was motivated to read the original books of the stories. To do so, I got a membership at the British Council Library in 1987. As soon as I arrived home from school, I changed into my uniform, had some snacks, and headed to the British Council Library, which was approximately a 25-minute walk from my residence. I found the book I was searching for and read it. It was quite tough to understand the language of the story, so I consulted my pocket dictionary to find the meaning of the difficult words and make sense of the sentences. I was motivated to read and understand the language, which

significantly enriched my vocabulary. I continued visiting the library on a regular basis (at least twice or three times a week) for five years until I completed my Intermediate level. I also borrowed books to read at home. It helped me develop my English language skills and established my reading habit. This is reflected in my leadership as a principal. The way my Nepali subject teacher motivated me to read through his storytelling impressed me greatly and inspired me to work as an instructional leader in the past and present. The school leaders at my school encouraged students and teachers to read books of interest and necessity, especially storybooks, to the primary-grade students. We place a strong emphasis on vocabulary learning (including spelling, meaning, and pronunciation) in earlier grades.

My school leadership experience, spanning over two decades, informs me that motivation plays a crucial role in pursuing a leadership journey and makes it impactful in creating a meaningful learning space at school (Panta, 2022). The narratives of my participants crystallize the role of schools, colleges, and universities in learning instructional leadership. The following section incorporates the reflections of the participants.

Reflection of Pramod: Learning as a Continuous Process

It was a day in April 2024 when I went to meet Pramod at his school. It was around 11 am when all the classes were running at his school. As I had got appointment to meet him earlier, he was waiting for me. He welcomed me warmly in his office. When I informed him about our interview, which might last up to two hours, he called his receptionist and informed her that he would remain busy with me for around two hours, and she should inform all visitors to come later to meet him. I had a very peaceful environment to listen to his stories.

Pramod is a principal with 30 years of experience in school leadership positions. He started teaching immediately after completing his Intermediate Science (I.Sc.). He continued his higher education in management. However, his passion for teaching inspired him to continue in this profession, acquiring more knowledge and skills to be a competent teacher. Initially, Pramod was unsure about how to teach students effectively. He believed that new teachers would imitate the style of teaching of their teachers at schools, colleges and universities. They would imitate the best part of their teachers to teach their students. He added that the teachers remained happy thinking that they had taught well, like their role model teachers. He had to look after the progress of each student in school. He felt that learning one subject was

not enough for his position as school principal. Afterwards, he completed BBA and MBA. He realised that he needed to study education to learn better about education. Therefore, he joined the PGDE diploma course in education at Kathmandu University. The course was interesting and interactive. He learnt the collaborative approach of teaching and learning from that course. He also learned how to plan his teaching and design a curriculum. After completing that course, he developed a new concept of pedagogy to ensure meaningful student engagement in learning.

From Pramod's sharing, it is clear that the teacher, as a role model, leaves a lasting impression on learners. He recognizes that conventional pedagogical approaches are insufficient for effective teaching and learning. A teacher needs to continuously learn, unlearn, and relearn pedagogical approaches to achieve a deeper understanding (Maheshwara & Rifai, 2023). He emphasizes a collaborative approach to teaching and learning. In this connection, Le et al. (2017) argue that collaborative skills and strategies are crucial to optimize meaningful learning through effective learner collaboration. One day, after our interview, I visited an eighth-grade class with permission from the principal and teacher. I saw that the students were working in groups to accomplish a task in the Social Studies subject. The students in the groups were having discussions on the issues they had. Every member participated well in the discussion. Students' participation in the class is important to enhance their meaningful learning. Zinjay (2022) argues that classroom participation is essential for a student's remarkable learning improvement.

Reflection of Rita: Role of an Inspirational Teacher to Foster Learning

It was the month of April 2024 when I met Rita in her school office. It was raining heavily on that day. The security guard in her school welcomed me with an umbrella and took me to the reception. The receptionist showed me the way to Rita's office. There were many school blocks, and the school compound had many trees and flower gardens. As I had informed Rita about my visit earlier, she was comfortable to meet me on that day. She told me that we could sit in her office and have our interview. Her office was full of books and various photos related to school activities on the wall. She prepared two cups of black tea herself in her office, and we started our conversation with sips of tea she prepared.

Rita is a principal with 20 years of experience in a school leadership role. She completed her education at the school, college, and university levels in Darjeeling and West Bengal, India. She has a deeper influence from her school and college in

Darjeeling on her leadership style. She began teaching immediately after completing her M. Sc. She wished to develop her school like the one she studied in Darjeeling. She added:

I studied at a strict school in Darjeeling. My schoolteachers were genuinely committed to their profession. Homework was less, but they used to check it strictly. They used to check homework once a week. We had a library, and it was compulsory for us to read a book in a week. While I was studying for my B.Ed., we had to create a lesson plan each day, and during that time, I learned many valuable lessons. My college teachers were supportive. They inspired me to be simple yet think highly. Studying in various schools and colleges, I have reflected on many things that have strengthened my skills in teaching and instructional leadership. I frequently tell all my fellow teachers that we need to work hard. Everything is not only about money. One of my role models was my mother. She used to teach in a Primary School. I learned a great deal from her about preparing lesson plans for upcoming classes, developing teaching materials, setting exam questions, and checking exam papers, among other things, which greatly encouraged me to pave my way towards teaching and instructional leadership. I started leading this school with all the confidence and motivation I had to make a difference. I started with Nursery to Grade 5. I had to teach all the subjects when the school first started. I still teach one period in Grades 7, 8, 9, and 10 each week. Sometimes, teachers may face difficulties in completing the course on time. At such times, I just assisted the teachers in completing the course.

Rita highlights the role of inspirational teachers in developing her positive thinking and attitude. In connection with this, Jensen et al. (2014) state that an inspirational teacher leaves a positive impression on students' learning. Similarly, Rita views a strict school as a good school that maintains discipline and holds students accountable for their responsibilities. When I happened to observe the staff room of the teachers, some of the teachers, who had leisure time, were busy checking students' assignments and preparing teaching materials. The guards and helpers at the school looked attentive. I found the school's environment to be strict. As far as my experience is concerned, a strict environment at school does not seem to contribute to effective learning, as the students might feel psychologically unsafe. In this regard, Panta (2022) strongly mentions that in the name of maintaining discipline, many

schools are paralyzing their learners, curtailing their autonomy of choice and expression by dehumanizing education. Similarly, Robinson (2016) blames schools for killing learners' creativity by creating a disempowering school culture.

Reflection of Hari: Appreciation as a Power of Learning

It was a sunny day in April 2024 when I went to have an interview with Hari at his school. The security guard at the school gate took me to the reception. The receptionist requested me sit on the sofa in her room. I sat and waited to be called. After around 15 minutes of waiting, Hari himself came to receive me and took me to his office on the 3rd floor of the building. His office was spacious and well furnished. As I sat, a lady came with tea for me and Hari. He informed the receptionist over telephone that he should not be disturbed for around two hours as I had informed him about the purpose of my visit on that day a couple of days earlier. It was a peaceful environment for both of us to discuss on the research agenda. Hari went into the depth of his sharing of his stories.

Hari is a principal with 41 years of experience in school leadership positions. He began teaching immediately after completing his SLC. His life in his childhood was painful, as he lost his parents when he was six and twelve years old, respectively. However, he managed to study hard up to grade 7 in his village school, and then he transferred to another school to complete his education. Hari's father worked in the education office. He was an active member of society. His father used to be in and out of the village for his work. After his father passed away, his mother started a small business in the village. There were no classes of grade 8, 9, and 10 at any school in his village. Therefore, he and his brother went to stay with their uncle in another village, which was a day's journey away from the place where they lived. Our teachers loved us very much. We studied diligently, and our teachers also noticed how hard we worked. Our teachers were impressed by our work specially in mathematics, so our math teacher gave us a notebook as a prize. Mathematics was a subject that interested him. He did well in his 8th grade examination, so his teacher gave a trigonometry book as a prize to him. He was in the 3rd batch of SLC of 1966 AD. He performed well in his board examination of SLC and achieved the 1st division marks, which was great news for everyone at that time. He set an example in that school.

Hari shares the transformative power of appreciation to foster his learning. In relation to it, Waters and White (2015) mention that appreciative inquiry can transform the status of the students to be more positive and creative, as appreciation

goes a long way. He mentions the lack of parental care and supports due to the earlier demise of his parents, which hindered his learning. When he was sharing it, his eyes were full of tears. I found that he was in severe pain because of the loss of his parents. According to Schmid and Garrels (2021), parental support and involvement in their children's education play a crucial role in their academic success. He also talks about his loving and caring teachers who have contributed to shaping his future. Caring fosters an interpersonal relationship with each other, which helps individuals discover who they are (Noddings, 2003).

Reflection of Sundar: Teacher Motivation as a Driving Force

It was some day in April 2024 when I went to meet Sundar at his school. It was 3 pm when the classes were running. As I had talked to him a couple of days earlier about our meeting, he was not surprised to see me at his office. After the security guard inquired about the purpose of my visit, he handed me to one of the sisters who took me to the office of Sundar. He welcomed me warmly. We sat on the sofa side by side. His office was a big room with well furnishing. It was peaceful with no disturbances. He informed the receptionist that he would remain busy for around 2 hours in his office. He turned his cell phone into silent mode. Then, with his permission, I explained the research agenda. As he was ready, I started the interview. He shared his stories openly. We had an interview for 1.5 hours that day.

Sundar is a principal with 11 years of experience in a school leadership position. He began teaching after completing his 12th grade. He was fascinated with the profession of teaching from an early age, at primary school, when his teacher asked him to tutor and guide some of his low-achieving friends in mathematics. In this connection, Sundar added:

I was the first student in class at my school, and during that time in government schools, there was a trend that if you were good at studies, then teachers would ask you to teach other students. It added more attraction towards teaching. There was a Primary School in my village, where I taught my friends. Through all these experiences, I came to realize that teaching is a better profession for me. When I completed my SLC and started my Plus 2 with a Major in Mathematics, I was further drawn to teaching. Upon completing my Plus 2, I was offered a teaching position in a private school. I came to Kathmandu in 2001 AD for my bachelor's and master's degrees. After completing my master's degree, I continued working as a part-time teacher.

Being a part-time teacher and part-time student was difficult, but I took them in parallel. In 2003 AD, I finally started teaching secondary-level Mathematics in an institution. After completing my master's degree, I considered pursuing further studies. I then joined the M.Phil. program in Educational Leadership at Kathmandu University.

From Sundar's sharing, it is clear that the teacher's motivation is crucial in fostering learning. His face was bright when he shared that he was well-motivated by his teachers. They loved and cared for him for his hard work. Motevalli et al. (2020) state that motivation is a driving force for students to speed up their journey of gaining knowledge and learning new things. He gladly mentions that he has developed a passion for teaching because he got an opportunity to teach at school, as he was a bright student. Serin (2017) states that passionate teachers develop unwavering desires and enthusiasm for learning and teaching, which enable them to create a positive learning atmosphere in the school. They always demonstrate their passion for learning by taking different courses at universities. Dahal and Bhat (2024) argue that continuous learning enhances the learner's mindset to cope with the changing demands of the contemporary world, thereby contributing to their success.

In a nutshell, all my study participants agree that they learned from their schools, colleges, and universities about the generative power of teachers' efforts in motivating students to enhance their learning. They highlight a teacher as a role model for students. Pramod and Sundar mention that their school and college environment motivated them towards continuous learning, which gradually developed their passion for learning. The teacher's role is important in encouraging students to develop their habits. Pramod learnt from his college teachers the importance of student engagement and class participation. He says that it is essential to brainstorm ideas by sharing and completing tasks. Rita was nurtured in a strict school where she was taught to follow strict rules and regulations. She believes that it helps maintain good behavior and discipline. Sundar was well appreciated by his principal at school, which energized him to work harder. It provided him with valuable learning experiences that would benefit his future career as a principal. The overall sharing of the participants aligns with the intent of the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984), which states that learning progresses through the steps of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. The participants reflected on

the experiences they gained at their schools, colleges, and universities, which helped them generate new knowledge to drive change at their institutions.

The participants' remarks indicate that teacher and student motivation accelerate learning. Motivation fuels students with mental energy and happiness to continue learning. Schools and teachers can work to develop an environment where every student is encouraged to continue learning. Teachers' proper care and guidance lead students to develop a passion for learning. Some rules and regulations to bind students into a system might be beneficial in helping them develop their discipline. Students' regular engagement with the lesson and activities in the classroom would help promote their learning. Educational institutions can play a crucial role in promoting hard work in students by establishing a student-friendly culture within the school.

Learning from Instructional Leadership from Experiences in Workplace

People accumulate different experiences at their workplaces. Principals and teachers encounter various activities and situations related to teaching, learning, and other administrative management within the school. Each situation and activity in the workplace leaves an impression on learning. They help principals and teachers add knowledge and skills to become competent instructional leaders.

My Anecdote as a Learner

In 1991, I began teaching at a village school in the Kathmandu Valley. It was a primary-level private school. I began teaching the English language to students in grades 3 through 5. As I was new to teaching, I worked hard until late at night and on holidays. I read the course book, made important teaching notes, and noted down the difficult words and their meanings, so I was well-prepared for the next day's class. My principal did not like to sit in his office but was often seen walking around the classrooms and school premises, overseeing the activities that were taking place. He entered the class or peeked through the door or window to inspect how the class was going. He used to call me at least once a week from his office to discuss the classes and the challenges we were facing. As he was also an English language teacher, he advised me on how to teach vocabulary, poetry, and some of the grammar items to the students. As it was my first teaching experience, I vividly recall the instructional leadership of the school principal. It has left a lasting impression on my leadership style, both past and present.

In my experience, all the activities in our workplace, whether at school, college, or any other educational institution, rigorously teach us newer dimensions of teaching and learning. It continues to strengthen our knowledge and skills, enhancing our instructional leadership. The narratives of my participants put clear pictures of the role of workplace experiences in their learning of instructional leadership.

Reflection of Pramod: Encouragement for Self-directed Learning

In the course of working as a principal, Pramod started prioritizing the low achievers in the class. The low achievers are struggling to learn. He worked on uplifting their knowledge and skills. By being more engaged with those students, he became familiar with their problems and learned how to teach them effectively.

Pramod further shared:

I always try to understand how to work with individual students. I plan the teaching strategy, keeping the students in the center. I try to understand the psychology of the students. I act as a motivator to help them solve their problems themselves. I get closer to students and show good behavior with them. I am eager to uplift their achievement. My students are my motivation for learning about my instructional leadership. Every child is unique and learns in a distinct way. So, every child cannot be taught the same curriculum. The curriculum must provide a minimum space for diverse learners. We develop activities in line with the curriculum's intent. The role of the principal is very important in this regard. As a principal, I have the dual roles of trainer and coordinator. I have knowledge of the subject matter. I focus more on teaching and learning matters rather than administrative matters in teachers' meetings. Meetings are like short training sessions. I employ a situational management style, which is effective in achieving better outcomes. I try to instruct the teachers in this way so that they do not feel as though they are merely learning. I am trying to create the school as a learning organization.

From Pramod's sharing, it is clear that the teacher stands as an inspiring facilitator to help solve his students' problems. He instructs students on ways to motivate themselves to solve their problems. According to Dahal and Bhat (2023), teachers promote students' problem-solving skills by facilitating scaffolding and providing guidance, while also encouraging them to engage in self-directed learning. Pramod mentions that he learns a great deal from his students. For him, students are the intrinsic motivation to foster his instructional leadership skills. In connection with

this, Akhtar et al. (2019) state that students are more likely to open up about their learning attitude when they experience feelings of control and security in the classroom. They love a teacher who helps create such an environment in the classroom. Pramod focuses on addressing the individual differences of the students in the classroom. He believes that every child has different competencies in learning. One way of teaching may not be viable for every student, as one size does not fit all. Building on his view, Savita (2021) advocates that teachers should address the individual differences of their students, and each student should be cared for with love, respect, and cooperation.

Reflection of Rita: From Disciplinarian to Caring Leadership Journey

Rita has influential learning experiences from her past workplace. She learnt the impact of strict rules and regulations in maintaining discipline between students and teachers. She believes that teachers and students should adhere to the rules and regulations established by the school. She learnt about the importance of developing reading habits in students and teachers. In this connection, she added:

When I worked at the Police School, there was a strict environment regarding students' uniforms, their physical appearance, including their nails, hair, and tidiness. Teachers were also required to adhere to specific dress codes. Students' manners and behaviors were expected to be good. Students were cautious about following all the codes of conduct; otherwise, they would face penalties for breaching them. There were several teacher training sessions at school. I got more opportunities to learn. There was a big library. Teachers and students could visit the library to read or borrow books. The library had a wide selection of books that helped develop students' reading culture. I learnt a lot from that school to shape my instructional leadership. The school was financially sound and had enough teaching and learning resources. Due to the limited financial resources, I can provide limited teaching and learning resources at my school, which, I feel, hinders the expected progress of my school. When I worked at a college in Bhaktapur, there were many students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds. They could not even afford to buy the necessary books and stationery. But many of them had an eagerness to learn. Some were frustrated due to their poor family status. I used to motivate and counsel some of them by teaching them extra time and giving them ideas on how they could score good marks in the examination. They were happy

when they were cared about. All these things helped me sharpen my leadership.

Rita appreciates the level of strictness in her school for maintaining discipline and shaping students' behavior. As she also studied in a school with strict rules and regulations in Darjeeling, she thinks that a moderate level of strictness in school is necessary for better student learning. She believes that it also helps promote teachers' attentiveness and discipline in their responsibilities. Fekadu (2019) states that students who follow school rules and regulations sincerely develop good behavior. Similarly, she appreciates the way students and teachers utilize the library for reading books of their choice. She is fascinated by the resourceful library in her school where she teaches. The range of books and other learning resources was really helping to promote learning in both students and teachers. She demonstrates that reading culture is essential for academic development. Her view aligns with Matias and Bastos (2021), who mention that the school library is located next to the classroom as an alternative learning zone, where teachers can innovate various pedagogical methodologies and students can engage in multiple learning experiences. Principal B further highlights the role of teachers' personal care and support for needy students, enabling them to understand their problems and help solve them. She believes that a frustrated student can overcome tension with the small care and support of a teacher. Willans and Seary (2020) state that caring teachers develop a supportive classroom atmosphere and foster positive interactions to engage students in a collaborative manner.

Reflection of Hari: Leadership as a Journey of Unlearning and Relearning

Hari has learnt more about instructional leadership from his personal experiences. His formal education at school, college, and universities has added something to it. His continuous and extensive teaching journey in various schools equipped him with the knowledge and skills necessary for his leadership responsibilities. In this connection, he added:

After completing the SLC examination, I taught for six months at our village school, where I studied up to grade seven. I learnt there how to teach effectively. During my third year of undergraduate studies, I received a proposal to teach at a school in Khotang. I accepted it and went there to teach. I taught there for a year and then returned to Kathmandu to complete my B.Sc. Sc. When I was studying, one of my friends at the Intermediate level

told me that he was opening a new school in Bhaktapur. He asked me if I could come and teach there. I accepted his invitation and started teaching at that school. I used to teach there up to Grade seven. I taught almost all the subjects there, i.e., Nepali, Science, and Social Studies. When I worked there, I also worked as a hostel warden and handled accounts. Later, I was promoted to the position of Vice-Principal there. It provided me with many more ideas and experiences to draw upon as an instructional leader in the past and present. After quitting my job, I returned to Solukhumbu to teach at my village school. I taught Science and Mathematics for four years. I took tuition classes in my free time in the morning and evening. There was an ongoing conflict between Sherpas and Lamas at that time. Due to their conflict, the school was not running smoothly. As I had already worked as the Vice-Principal here in Bhaktapur, the Principal of that school assigned me various important tasks to accomplish. I also provided training for the students. I worked hard that year. In return, 7 students out of 13 who participated in the SLC examination that year passed in the first division. The principal appreciated my work and gave me credit for the grand success, which gave me a great deal of strength, enabling me to do more in the days to come.

Hari mentions that his instructional leadership has been strengthened by his lifelong experiences. He focuses more on his experiences than on his formal study and training for the development of his instructional leadership skills. Focusing on the importance of experiential learning, Pandita and Kiran (2023) argue that experiential learning is a highly effective tool that has a profoundly positive impact on learning. Hari believes in the importance of continuous learning for achieving success. He admits that his continuous learning from his workplace experience has taught him a great deal about how to be a more effective instructional leader. In this connection, Ambon et al. (2024) note that continuous learning enhances teachers' pedagogical skills, leadership abilities, and problem-solving skills, ultimately developing their teaching and leadership qualities.

Reflection of Sundar: Error as Catalyst for Positive Change

Sundar learnt more about instructional leadership from his workplace experiences at the schools where he worked. He learnt the role of instructional leader to check and balance the teaching-learning atmosphere at school. He wished to

become an instructional leader while working at a school to address the problems that hindered student learning.

Around 2003 AD, teachers with master's degrees were in high demand to teach students in grades 9 and 10. Most of the teachers in those grades were part-time. They used to teach one or two periods in one school and then go to the next school for another one or two periods. Such teachers were called part-time teachers or helmet teachers in those days. I also taught in two schools and two colleges. I taught mathematics, and one of my fellow teachers used to teach Science there. He went to another school to teach mathematics. One day, he came to me and said that he had already completed his mathematics courses in grades 9 and 10 at his previous school, and he had started revision classes for the students there. I was surprised to learn that I had just completed 70 percent of the course in my 9th and 10th grade classes. It was only half of the academic year, and completing the course seemed almost impossible. They would ask the students to practice during revision time, and they would be more relaxed and freer from the load of teaching. However, I did not like the teachers' practice because not every student could catch the teaching when they taught in a big rush to complete the chapter. Many of the students could understand what the teacher was teaching, but they had more confusion about the lesson being taught. I did not defend that teacher at that time. However, I immediately felt that I should change the teachers' thoughts through my leadership in education. Then, I joined the M.Phil. program in Educational Leadership at Kathmandu University to deepen my understanding of various dimensions of leadership. Later, I never allowed any teacher to engage in such practices under my leadership as an academic coordinator and principal in the schools where I worked.

Sundar mentions that he was badly influenced by the wrong practices of his friends in their profession. When teachers prioritize their personal comfort over effective teaching and learning, the quality of education suffers. The wrong practices of his fellow teachers inspired him to change this trend through his leadership in education. Tulis et al. (2016) stress that error shows the way for change. The learner analyzes the error and seeks to bring a positive effect to it. Similarly, Sundar believes in changing the wrong practices through his leadership. He believes in the power of practice to bring about sustainable change. Being a teacher, it is quite tough to change

the mentality of other teachers. But, being in some leadership role, it's quite easy to change it. Zainol et al. (2021) note that a good leader can encourage employees to accept and follow organizational change plans.

In a nutshell, during his long teaching career, Pramod realized that teachers should act more as facilitators for their students. Similarly, he realized that a teacher could learn a lot from students. When he learns about them well, he can find effective ways to teach them. He felt that every student has a special way of learning. As a teacher, he must understand each student and tailor his teaching accordingly. Rita prioritizes maintaining students' and teachers' discipline and behavior through strict rules and regulations at school. She witnessed the positive impact of it at the school where she worked. She learned from her previous workplace that students' reading habits are important, and the school must have a well-stocked library to provide books to both students and teachers. Similarly, she understood the role of the teacher's personal care and support in enhancing the learning of students who are in need. Hari admitted that he learnt more about instructional leadership from his previous workplaces as a teacher and a principal rather than from his formal education in schools and colleges. He emphasizes the importance of continuous learning from his past workplaces to enhance his instructional leadership competence. Sundar learnt from the mistakes made by his fellow teachers. He realized that he had to do something to stop the wrong practices of his fellow teachers. He was convinced that he could change the prevailing practices being an educational leader. In this connection, all the research participants expressed similar views, stating that they have learned about instructional leadership from their past and present workplaces. Beard and Wilson (2013) state that workplace experiences enhance learning of the practitioners, which helps them become efficient leaders.

In summary, it is evident that workplaces serve as learning platforms for teachers and principals. My research participants report having diverse learning experiences in their workplaces. They have found that student learning is enhanced when a teacher works as a facilitator. Being a facilitator, a teacher can understand the students' problems and support them according to their personal needs. Students' discipline and their good behavior are expected by parents and teachers. To maintain it, school rules and regulations play an important role. The school expects students to develop their reading habits. A good library is essential for it. Beyond group teaching in the class, the teacher's personal care and support for the needy students work more

effectively. A principal must be a continuous learner. He learns from his past workplaces. A teacher can learn from their fellow teachers' various mistakes and exemplary works, too, and an instructional leader can play a contributive role in turning adverse situations into positive learning experiences at school.

Learning of Instructional Leadership from Professional Development Programs

Principals and teachers continually update themselves on effective teaching techniques and tools. It helps make their teaching more student-friendly, which enhances students' learning. Professional development programs provide principals and teachers with more effective methods, techniques, and strategies for teaching and the learning process in the classroom. These programs are designed to produce qualified instructional leaders. Principals are important human resources to check, balance, and motivate teaching-learning activities at school. Professional development programs help them gain the necessary knowledge and skills for their professional growth.

My Anecdote as a Learner

I vividly recall a moment of inspiration that sparked my leadership journey when I attended a leadership seminar organized by the British Council in 2015. A professor cum international educational trainer, who was from the UK, led the session called 'School Leadership in the 21st Century'. He focused on the quality of an ideal educational leader of the 21st century. He emphasized the importance of teachers' motivation through professional development initiatives and the availability of learning resources at school. He also focused on students' motivation by providing them with a safe space to learn at school. According to him, teachers or schools should provide resources and instruct the students to engage or play with them to promote their creativity. He emphasized that students should be at the center of the entire teaching and learning process. Their active engagement in the teaching and learning process produces meaningful learning for them. After the session, I came back home and immediately felt the urge to implement some of the learning from the very next day. I prioritized and listed some of the changes to be made on the very next day and called for a senior leadership meeting, which included the principal, assistant principal, and school coordinators, to discuss the issue. We agreed to start a program called 'Running Library Programme' to enhance students' reading culture. In this program, students must purchase a book, read it, and review it in the format provided by the teacher. They then exchange the book with a friend and repeat the process.

Every student is required to read at least one book per month. Now, I can see that many students have developed the habit of reading books. They often go to the bookshop to buy a book of their choice to quench their thirst for reading. The quality of their book reviews is improving.

In my experience, continuous professional development is the backbone of learning instructional leadership. It fulfills our needs to be an effective educational leader. Training and workshops equip us with the necessary skills for our everyday work. Proficient facilitators help us develop effective and efficient ways of teaching and learning. Hence, it can be a continuous process in educational leadership. My research participants expressed their various views on the role of professional development programs in their learning of instructional leadership.

Reflection of Pramod: Positive Effect of Contextual Leadership

Pramod participated in various professional development programs. All the training programs provided him with enriching knowledge, skills, and ideas to enhance the teaching-learning process at school, making it more student-friendly. He feels that training is essential to uplift his instructional leadership competence. For him, training provided innovative ideas to solve problems and ease the teaching-learning process in the classroom. Pramod further shared:

While learning IL, I had opportunities to participate in a training program organized by the United Mission to Nepal. I learnt from training that hard and fast plans do not work well. There should not be a rigid plan. It should be flexible. The plan can be adjusted according to the situation. After the training, I have been a flexible planner. My plan may change if the situation demands it. Similarly, I participated in a workshop for school leaders, where the facilitators were a renowned education expert and a successful school principal. The educationist explained how a teacher can effectively teach low-performing students in a class. He advised us on two types of seating arrangements in the class for low-performing students. They should sit together with high-performing students during teachers' lessons, and they could share a table or desk among low-performing students only when a remedial session is held for them in the same or a different class. After that session, I planned to implement the advice in the classroom, and we applied the same idea to cope with low performers. It worked well for low-performing students.

Pramod emphasizes the importance of professional development training to enhance his instructional leadership skills. He learnt to be a contextual leader through such a training program. As a contextual leader, he does not adhere strictly to his pre-planned approach but is flexible in modifying it when necessary. In parallel to Pramod's practice, Vukotic and Mircetic (2020) suggest that a leader should plan according to their followers, always trying to address the individual differences of each follower for the best outcome. I also agree to some extent with Pramod. I think a pre-plan is essential, but some of the plans may need to be modified according to the demands of the situation. Many of them work efficiently. He emphasizes the importance of remedial classes for low-performing students to improve their academic performance. He claims that this is possible within the same class by grouping those students together and drawing the teacher's attention. Aligning with his idea, Rai and Penjor (2020) argue that remedial classes are an effective strategy to upgrade the performance of low-performing students in the class.

Reflection of Rita: Power of Discussion Method in Learning Process

When Rita got a job as a teacher at the police academy, she was required to participate in a 15-day teacher training program before starting her job. During the training, she learned how to promote discussion in the classroom and how students could develop presentations on curriculum issues. In this connection, she added:

I had the opportunity to learn how to prepare a PowerPoint presentation for the first time during the session. The discussions encouraged me to participate, and I learned a great deal from the participants' sharing. The session was intended to develop our skills in teaching and helping the students learn. As I had to teach Biology, I had to give a demo class with teaching methods that I am supposed to apply in my class. My facilitator and the participant teachers would observe it and give me feedback. It was beneficial for me to improve my teaching skills. Later, I had the opportunity to attend a workshop related to my subject in the USA. I gained a deeper understanding of the role of appreciation in teaching and learning during the workshop. I used to practice very little appreciation in my teaching before. I used to see the negative sides more than the positive ones before. After the workshop, I was completely transformed, and I began using appreciative inquiry as my teaching method in the classroom. As an instructional leader, I began to give it high focus.

Rita recalls the workshop and training where she came to appreciate the power of discussion in the learning process. She believes that the skill of sharing and learning from others through discussion is crucial in the teaching and learning process. Saira and Hafeez (2021) argue that discussion is an effective teaching method that enhances result-oriented learning in learners. Rita is impressed with the idea of peer teaching practice, which she has learnt in the teachers' workshop. She is well expressive while teaching in the demo class. She has learnt a lot from the feedback of the facilitator and the fellow teachers to improve her teaching in the future. In line with Rita, Keerthirathne (2020) states that peer teaching is a great strategy of peer learning when it is done under the supervision of an expert teacher. The principal also shares her deep impression of the appreciative inquiry she has learnt in the workshop in the USA. She shares the positive impact of appreciative inquiry when she starts applying it in her classroom and in her instructional leadership practices. Cho and Ardichvili (2024) state that appreciative inquiry yields positive results in individuals, groups, and organizations by fostering an appreciative culture.

Reflection of Hari: Role of Group Work in Students' Learning

Hari has been a Scout for many years. He had numerous opportunities to participate in national and international training sessions, workshops, and conferences related to Scouting education. From all these events, he primarily learnt that a task can be well accomplished when it is done by a group of participants, rather than by an individual. In this context, Hari further shared:

In group collaboration, participants enjoy the experience by mingling with each other, which fosters better socialization practices in them. On the other hand, the task would be successfully done through joint effort. I initiated organizing various Scout training sessions for students and teachers at my school. Almost all the teachers and many of the students participated in those training sessions. We divide our class students into several groups and assign names to each group. The group members would rotate from one group to another every week to become familiar with each group member. This kind of grouping is called a patrol in Scouting. We, too, call a group 'patrol' with some name in front of it, like 'cow patrol', 'dog patrol', etc. Remaining in a certain patrol, students become more responsible, learn leadership skills, and enjoy the experience, ultimately committing to accomplishing the given task successfully. I still recall a leadership workshop for school leaders that took

place some years ago in Dhulikhel. I am impressed by the technique of teachers' performance appraisal shared by one of the facilitators. I came to learn about the power of performance appraisal in enhancing teachers' motivation in their work from that sharing. After I returned to school from the workshop, I planned to implement the performance appraisal technique for the teachers at my school. We invited an expert to guide us in the whole process of implementing the performance appraisal at the school. After the session, we made the performance appraisal checklist to evaluate the teachers' performance. After the initial evaluation of the teachers, I met with some highly performing teachers individually in my office to appreciate their good work and solicit their advice on addressing the prevailing challenges. We conducted a workshop on classroom management, to which all our teachers participated. They were happy because they had the opportunity to learn the philosophy and techniques of classroom management. From that time onward, I have been using the technique of teachers' and staff's performance appraisal as an integral part of my academic leadership practice.

From Hari's sharing, it is clear that a group can perform any task more effectively than an individual. He emphasizes the importance of students' collaboration in accomplishing any task, whether in the classroom or outside. He believes that the joint effort in doing any work promotes mutual understanding, socialization, and responsibility. His view is supported by Mundelsee and Jurkowski (2021), who note that collaborative learning practices have a positive impact on both high- and low-achieving students in the class. It also benefits the shy students who hesitate to participate equally in the group. Most importantly, he focuses on the development of socialization through collaborative efforts of the students. A group activity encourages the equal participation of every member, helping them to get to know one another. Hari believes that this kind of practice enhances socialization in each group member. In line with this, Garibaldi and Josias (2015) argue that through the process of socialization, students acquire social skills that impact their learning and performance. They learn to care for others, to develop good relationships, and to cope with challenges. Additionally, he mentions teachers' and staff's performance appraisals as an important tool to enhance efficiency in their work. He knows that performance appraisal encourages teachers towards better teaching. In connection with it, Lay (2022) states that performance appraisal encourages teachers in teacher

education to develop their proficiency and competence in the teaching and learning process.

Reflection of Sundar: Principal as Leader of Teaching-Learning Process

Sundar had his first opportunity to attend a teachers' training program in November 1993, where he met with several authors and school leaders from renowned schools. Their sharing of experiences was valuable for him to learn about effective teaching techniques. They taught him the importance of entering the classroom as a prepared teacher. All of them inspired him to be a good and skilled educator. In the context of his learning journey, Sundar added:

Later, I participated in a workshop on "Quality in the Classroom" at the International Conference on School Education, held from April 4 to 7, 2013, jointly organized by UNESCO and the Ministry of Education. In various sessions, I learned about educational practices in other countries, including Tanzania. We compared educational policies and student academic levels across contexts, engaging in discussions on strategies to elevate our educational standards.

These trainings equipped me with insights into the central role of a leader in promoting teaching and learning within an educational institution. They highlighted how administrative tasks, when aligned with instructional goals, contribute to students' academic growth and teachers' professional development. Similarly, I had the opportunity to conduct research during my academic journey. During my research, I talked with some principals. Some of them used to think that sending the teachers to training meant hitting their legs with an axe. They used to think that if the teachers were trained, they might leave the school for better opportunities. I encountered many principals during my research who didn't train their teachers due to the same mentality. I think that this might also be due to Nepal's educational policy. However, we strive to support the professional growth of our teachers. I believe that professional growth among teachers has a direct or indirect positive impact on the classroom. We also need to focus on that part. Although there are limitations to resources, we send teachers to short-term training sessions, workshops, and seminars to stay up to date on recent trends in teaching and learning. We motivate teachers to attend short-term training or workshops by

offering them paid leave. In this way, we strive to help them enhance both their professional and academic development.

From Sundar's sharing, it is clear that training boosts teachers' knowledge and skills in teaching. It also opens a wider range of better teaching opportunities for them. It is normal that teachers may change their job from one school to another for better salary and facilities. The research findings by Catalano (2020) support a similar view, suggesting that teachers who engage in continuous training opportunities can make rapid progress in their professional development. However, the situation does not align with the findings above in Nepali schools. According to Gautam (2016), the lack of motivation among teachers to apply the knowledge and skills they receive in training prevents them from demonstrating better performance and enhancing students' learning achievement in the classroom. Based on my experience, continuous professional development programs are crucial for enhancing teachers' competence in teaching. Although it may prompt teachers to seek better job opportunities, we can retain our teachers by providing them with better career opportunities and facilities within our school.

In a nutshell, Pramod transformed him into a situational leader after he attended a training session. He learnt the importance of remedial teaching to uplift the low-achieving students. Rita is happy to learn about the power of discussion methods and peer teaching. She was influenced by the positive impact of appreciative inquiry methods as a teacher and an instructional leader. Hari was introduced to a collaborative approach in the teaching and learning process through a professional development program. He learnt the importance of group activities in class. He realized that these are effective teaching and learning approaches. He learned about teachers' performance appraisal, which helped him strengthen his instructional leadership competence. Sundar realized that training helped him, and his teachers worked more effectively. He believes that the lack of teachers' motivation may hinder them from effectively implementing the knowledge and skills in the teaching-learning process. All participants recognized the importance of professional development programs in enhancing their competence in instructional leadership, specifically in areas such as managing and implementing instructional activities, as well as fostering a positive learning environment in schools. In this connection, Hallinger and Murphy (1986) argue that principals can support teachers in enhancing their instruction by

providing them with opportunities for development through frequent training programs.

In summary, training can equip individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to be a situational leader. Through training, an educational leader learns the concepts to improve the academic performance of low-achieving students in a class. Teachers and principals have the opportunity to learn about the positive effects of discussion methods, peer teaching practices, and the appreciative inquiry method on teaching and learning practices. Professional development programs equip teachers and principals with the skills necessary for implementing collaborative teaching methods and engaging in group activities, thereby enhancing teaching and learning in the classroom. Principals have the opportunity to learn about teachers' performance appraisals, which helps motivate teachers to work more effectively. Training programs help teachers and principals create a more effective teaching–learning environment at school. However, principals should be aware enough to motivate teachers to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned from the training sessions to facilitate student learning in the classroom.

Theoretical Alignment and Meaning Making

My participants highlighted the role of their teachers' inspiration and motivation to enhance their learning of instructional leadership. The teacher remains a role model for students. Motivation energizes the learners to continue learning. All the participants believed that a deeper understanding is possible through the process of learning, unlearning, and relearning (Maheshwara & Rifai, 2023). Learning is lively when it is done in collaboration. Group activities encourage discussion and participation among learners, making learning a more engaging and meaningful experience. The participants agree that loving and caring teachers can significantly accelerate students' learning. It works more effectively for low-performing students, as they have the opportunity to be involved in the learning process. My participants have found that an appreciative culture has the power to enhance student learning. Each participant acknowledges that continuous learning for instructional leaders and students enhances confidence and fosters a proactive mindset for further learning.

Some of them are better informed about the practice of engaged leadership. They remain in regular contact with the teachers and students to understand the prevailing state of action. Every principal agrees that they learn the competence of instructional leadership through the process of reflective leadership practice, in which

they are equipped with leadership qualities from their past experiences. One of the participants strongly believes in the concept of self-directed learning. He believes that students are his intrinsic motivation to foster his instructional leadership competence. He learns from the trial and error of students. Continuous learning keeps shaping their professional journey. Individual differences among students provide them with ways to deal with their problems (Savita, 2021). Similarly, other participants believe in the disciplinarian approach to leadership and advocate that a moderate level of strictness and discipline in school promotes learning and discipline. She also admits that care and support of teachers can help remove frustration among students.

To me, professional development programs have provided me with ideas to enhance the quality of my instructional leadership in my daily leadership practices. Some of the principals have learned situational leadership skills through professional development programs, which have had a positive impact on teaching and learning process. Many of the participants are well informed about the power of teachers' performance appraisal to enhance their motivation. Teachers are motivated by providing them with more facilities, incentives, training, and resources. Lay (2022) states that performance appraisal motivates teachers to strive for better learning and higher-quality teaching and learning activities.

Based on my study, I came to realize that schools, colleges, and universities are great learning platforms where we are nurtured with the seeds of leadership and culture. The people we meet and the environment we are in leave a deeper impression on our thinking process. A person's present leadership trait seems to be deeply influenced by their past experiences at school, college, and university. Similarly, we acquire a range of leadership skills through various experiences in our workplace. Every bit of incident and event is a source of learning. It combines ideas and knowledge to become an efficient instructional leader. Likewise, various leadership strategies is learned from professional development programs. The more training we participate in actively, the more we are equipped with leadership skills. Every professional development program provides us with insights to enhance our instructional leadership capacity.

I made meaning of this section through the lens of 'knowing dimensions of experiential learning theory'. My participants learnt instructional leadership from multiple layers of experiences in their lifetime. The knowledge they accumulated became building blocks of their instructional leadership, as Beard and Wilson (2013)

assert that knowledge can help develop a strong form of experiential learning. My participants were confident in their instructional leadership roles in the later days drawing on their experiences of formal education in schools, colleges and universities, as well as their workplace experiences, and various training programs they attended.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I narrated the stories of my research participants related to their learning of instructional leadership. I critically explored and analyzed the ways of their learning instructional leadership with the help of different literature. After exploring their narratives, I categorized their experiences of learning into three themes: learning of IL from school, college, and university; learning of IL from workplace experiences; and learning of IL through professional development programs. I analyzed their experiences of learning, drawing on various theories, scholars' views, and my own experiences to make sense of them.

CHAPTER V

EXPLORING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AT WORKPLACE

This chapter presents the narratives of participants, based on their practices of communication with teachers, students, and parents, as well as their approaches to co-learning, monitoring teaching and learning activities, evaluating teaching and learning activities, and fostering a positive learning atmosphere at school. The themes were generated from the participants' narratives. I have woven the narrative threads to develop themes and create meaning from them.

Practices of Communication with Teachers, Students, and Parents

Communication is a medium of exchanging ideas and information. At school, effective communication among the principal, teachers, students, and parents plays a crucial role in strengthening the teaching-learning environment. The principal gets updated on the status of teaching, learning, and home activities of the students through communication with teachers, students, and parents. Communication among them can take place over the telephone or face-to-face as needed. Regular communication among these stakeholders supports each other in bringing quick solutions to address the problems at school.

My Anecdote as a Practitioner

As a principal, I maintained regular communication with the assistant principal, academic coordinators, and teachers. I met them in my office or at their workplace to discuss some issues with them. During the meeting with teachers, I provided guidance on the next steps for developing teaching and learning. Very few teachers expressed their opinions during the meeting. Many of the teachers hesitated to do so. Later, I developed a meeting calendar with teachers, coordinators, and the assistant principal. We started to sit for a meeting on the prescheduled date. In the first phase of the meeting, all the teachers were individually briefed about the progress and challenges of their students. I noted the issues raised by teachers and discussed with them to find ways to solve the problems. Finally, I instructed them on the plans and urged them to follow the school's rules and regulations strictly. During the meeting with the assistant principal and academic coordinators, we discussed challenges and development. We will soon begin implementing it. I always communicated with teachers when we needed to meet. We now hold regular meetings

on the scheduled dates. Every teacher and coordinator actively participates in the meeting, shares their experiences and opinions, and demonstrates their eagerness to collaboratively mitigate teaching and learning-related problems. Similarly, we met the parents when there was any issue with any student. We also spoke with the parents over the phone. Later, we started a parent-teacher meeting slot. This is a prescheduled program listed in the school's academic calendar. Many parents come to see and talk with teachers about their children's performance. Students also join with parents. This meeting is class-wise conducted on Saturday morning. Every class has 2 to 3 meetings in a year. In these meetings, parents and teachers discuss the child's performance openly, which helps teachers identify an appropriate teaching strategy and also facilitates seeking parents' support for the child's further progress. Likewise, we have regular communication with student representatives. Our assistant principal and academic coordinators hold a monthly meeting with two class representatives. The class representatives have a briefing on their class-related issues. They openly explain the strengths and weaknesses of their class. They jointly discuss possible steps to be taken. This meeting bridges the gap between the class and the school administration, allowing for prompt action to be taken to improve the situation.

My research participants have diverse experiences regarding their communication practices with students, teachers, and parents.

Pramod's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Nurturing Student Leadership for Effective Learning

Pramod's school had a students' council. It often organized meetings to discuss the problems students were facing. They discussed how to find solutions to the problems. They invited him as a guest to their meetings. He listened to their discussion. He offered his advice when needed. He wanted to create an environment at school where students got an opportunity to learn and practice leadership. Students continued to face pressure from teachers and parents to study more. They often received directions from others. He did not think that students were motivated by directions, but rather by mutual discussions, which could help them solve their problems. He listened to their ideas about changing themselves. They discussed with each other and found mutually agreeable ways out. He believed that students possessed ideas and knowledge related to selection and decision making. He also believed that it was impossible to make any plan successful and achieve academic progress without listening to students. Similarly, they called the parents when students

had any issues. They called the parents at school to inform them and discuss ways to assist in improving their level when students' performances were drastically low. They held parents' and teachers' meetings once in a term of 3 months. In the meeting, all parents were invited at different time slots, and teachers discuss their progress and other issues with them while parents shared their children's performance at home. They had a monthly meeting with teachers. They discussed ongoing issues in the meeting. As a principal, he led the meeting and took a bit more time to provide instructions to the teachers on what to focus on and what to do next to achieve better results. He enjoyed engaging in informal discussions with teachers in their classrooms, staff rooms, or in the school compound to stay updated of the problems and explored potential solutions.

Pramod focuses on how students can solve their problems through mutual discussion. As a principal, he allows them to form a student council to discuss any issues related to the school and their concerns. He aims to develop better leadership qualities in them through their collaborative effort. Xu et al. (2023) mention that collaborative problem-solving is a widely accepted and effective method for developing critical thinking in students. During my second visit, I saw Promod talking with the students' council members to support them in their studies and other issues. He explained to them how one friend could help others in the learning process through collaborative work in the class. He emphasizes the importance of parent-teacher meetings to enhance students' learning. They have several parent-teacher meetings throughout the year. In connection with this, Islam (2017) mentions that frequent parent-teacher meetings are effective in promoting students' learning achievement. However, Leenders et al. (2017) argue that teachers seem afraid of parents when they have to handle a difficult situation or conflict involving students. They seek their safe side in such situations. Pramod highlights his role as an important task in the teachers' meeting. He believes that such meetings can bring change at school in the current situation. Like him, Cherry et al. (2021) state that school heads are the major change makers who frequently meet with their staff members to share ideas, build connections within the school community, and foster progress at school.

Rita's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Practice of Communication for Learning Enhancement

Rita's school organizes frequent teachers' meetings. They conduct meetings with teachers approximately twice a month. When they encounter any urgent issue, they hold a meeting to discuss it. She visits personally to discuss important matters with teachers in the staff room. She calls the teacher into her office if there is an individual issue with a teacher. Rita further added:

When I observe the ongoing classes, I briefly speak with them if there is anything important, I need to inform them about. School coordinators maintain regular contact with teachers for ongoing communication. We do several formal and informal meetings with the school coordinators. I think meeting with teachers reminds us of our duties and motivates us to work well. Similarly, our class teachers call all the parents of their classes once a month. They keep a record of their calls in a paper where they mention the main point of their talk with parents. They submit it to their coordinator on the very next day and to the principal the next day. We follow our parents regularly. We inform parents about what's happening at school regarding their children and learn about their children's progress at home. It has developed a bond of relationships with each other, which is important in the journey of educating the children. It has helped manage various difficult situations and stresses that arise during the teaching and learning process. I also speak with parents randomly to verify whether teachers make calls to them on time. Likewise, we have class monitors, a boy and a girl, in every class. The academic coordinator holds a monthly meeting with class monitors to gather information about ongoing issues in the classes. Some class monitors share the issues in detail, while others do not. This meeting helps us identify issues in the class and makes it easier to resolve them in a timely manner.

Rita believes that the principal's meeting with teachers is a vital strategy for tracking teachers' performance and improving their effectiveness. She believes in talking to an individual teacher when there is an issue with that teacher. She felt comfortable solving any problem through individual discussion with the teacher. In this connection, Sofia et al. (2023) argue that a principal's positive communication with an individual teacher helps change the teacher's performance to be more effective. The principal's knowledge and expertise play a significant role in bringing

change to a teacher. She believes that effective communication with parents is crucial to understanding the current situation and working together to solve it successfully. In my visits, I saw her meeting with parents a few times. She shared that she talked with them about the progress of their children learning and received feedback from them. Bozic (2024) notes that effective communication helps mitigate various conflicts and tensions. Similarly, she stresses the importance of communication between an academic coordinator and the class monitors. In such meetings, through the class monitors, various ongoing issues in the classrooms and the whole school are discussed, which helps her become aware of the issues and plan solutions. Bucata and Rizescu (2017) state that communication fosters deeper interaction and develops interpersonal relationships among members of an organization. Through it, they come to acquaint themselves with the problems and challenges of the organization.

Hari's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Positive Role of Crisis Management at COVID-19

Hari's school has regular meetings with students, teachers, and parents. He believes that regular meetings with stakeholders make a positive difference in the prevailing situation. In this connection, Hari shared:

After the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world, we continued our classes online. Students had a habit of spending more time on screens. They enjoyed being with smartphones or laptops. In addition to their regular classes, they also had the opportunity to use those gadgets as a means of entertainment. They began to spend their free time with gadgets for entertainment. When they switched from online classes to face-to-face classes at school, it was very difficult for them to adjust for a long time. As a result, the achievement of students began to decline. Seeing this, we conducted a students' meeting class-wise and discussed the situations. We also listened to their problems and opinions. Finally, we advised the students to lower their screen time at home. We called the parents for a meeting and informed them about the excessive use of screens by their children at home and the decline in their learning achievement. We also advised them to encourage their children not to waste more time on the screen. The effort yielded a positive outcome. As a result, they started scoring good grades on the examination. Their learning achievement increased. Again, we called the parents and informed them about the good learning achievement of their children. They appreciated their

children at their work. Appreciation and encouragement are among the most important factors for achieving success. Meeting with parents and students helps us tremendously solve the prevailing problem. Teachers' meetings are regular in our school. I meet with school coordinators every week for a meeting. We discuss problems, challenges, and progress. We plan to implement it mutually. I have meetings with teachers once every three-month term. The coordinator meets with teachers once a month.

Hari does not recommend overusing digital gadgets in the learning process. He claims that the overuse of gadgets creates a kind of addiction and hinders learning achievement. Like Sunday et al. (2021), they argue that excessive smartphone use diminishes learning and academic achievement in students. However, Wang et al. (2024) argue that the use of digital devices enhances students' academic performance when they are used for intended academic purposes. He emphasizes the role of appreciation in motivating students to achieve higher performance. In one of my visits, I waited for Hari in the reception for half an hour as he was busy talking with students in the next room. I could hear well from the reception that he was thanking and congratulating the students for their good attempts in the drama show the previous week. In line with this view, Abdullah et al. (2016) suggest that appreciation is an effective tool for intrinsic motivation.

Sundar's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Impact of Frequent Meetings

Sundar believed that an instructional leader learnt a great deal from discussions and sharing between students and teachers. They had regular meeting schedules with teachers and students. The perspectives Sundar held as a leader was different from those of teachers, students and other stakeholders. To address students' concerns, they assigned class representatives to gather information, identify issues both inside and outside the classrooms, and proposed potential solutions. At least once a month, they conducted an interactive session with class representatives, coordinators, in charges, and other responsible authorities, including himself as the principal. Through brainstorming and collaborative discussions, they assessed the situation and adjusted their strategies to meet the needs of school community. They had a weekly meeting with teachers. Teachers shared the strength and weaknesses of students in the class. They mutually discussed ways to mitigate the problems. They conducted monthly meetings with parents over the telephone. They had face-to-face meetings with parents once in a term of three months. They heard from parents

about their children's activities at home. They discussed their progress and challenges for improvement.

From Sundar's sharing, it is clearly understood that learning takes place from anyone. It's not only the principal or teacher who teaches, but students can also be the source of learning. He believes that communication is a medium of learning. Likewise, Hands (2023) mentions that communication can foster a beneficial relationship between communicators by sharing the rich resources of knowledge and experiences they possess. He focuses on collaborative discussions among the school community to understand the nature of the problems being faced and to find ways to address them. Similarly, Deysolong (2023) states that collaborative discussion enhances a deeper understanding of the problem and stimulates the application of knowledge for its solution. On one of my visits, he shared that he had a meeting with some low-performing students after school that day. He wanted to interact with them on their problems and share ideas to help them overcome them.

In brief, all my research participants emphasized the importance of communication between principals and teachers, as well as their interactions with students. Rita and Sundar meet with the class representatives to discuss the issues they face in the class, whereas Pramod attends the students' council meetings at school, listens to the students' discussions, and offers his advice. Hari meets students when they have urgent issues. He has no provision for regular meetings with students. Similarly, all participants agree that regular meetings with teachers greatly benefit the teaching and learning process. Through these meetings, they can become familiar with the ongoing issues in teaching and learning activities and discuss the necessary steps to address them. They hold both individual and group meetings with teachers as needed. Rita and Sundar discuss issues with parents over the telephone, whereas Hari prefers to meet parents face-to-face when there is an issue with any student. Sundar meets his parents face-to-face once in three months. All of them intend to meet with parents, either over the phone or in person, to discuss their students' progress and challenges. They try to find ways to enhance students' learning through these meetings.

Regular communication between the principal and teachers, students, and parents appears to pave the way for promoting student learning. Through regular contact with each other, they encounter real-life situations and problems they are facing. It helps them develop ideas for solutions to address the problems. Principal

meetings with students, teachers, and parents are crucial for promoting effective learning. Overall, the participants' sharing aligns with the intent of the instructional leadership framework, which primarily focuses on managing and implementing instructional activities and enhancing the learning climate at school through regular communication with stakeholders. In this connection, Sofia et al. (2023) note that principals' regular and effective communication with teachers and students promotes teachers' and students' motivation and learning attitudes, ultimately leading to impactful teaching and learning in the classroom.

Practices of Co-learning

Co-learning is a practice of learning from each other. School is a community comprising the principal, teachers, administrators, students, parents, and the broader community. Each member of the school community is special in some aspects of knowledge. They can learn a lot from each other through sharing and discussion. Their collaborative efforts can help identify their issues and find solutions to them. The school can partner with various organizations to broaden the learning of students and teachers.

My Anecdote as a Practitioner

Through the British Council's Connecting Classroom Programme, our school has been a partner with some schools in the United Kingdom for many years. We enjoyed the partnership by working on various mutual projects that were demanded by the curriculum of both institutions. Students from both schools collaborated on a topic/issue mutually agreed upon by the teachers and students from both schools. They remained engaged in the project, working together to accomplish it as a group. Their collaborative efforts produced rich information, facts, and conclusions on the topic. As they accomplished the project, they shared the project documents through email with friends from both ends. They met and discussed the project via video conference at least twice during the project. The teachers at both schools also had discussions on the project. The project documents, which were received via email, were distributed in class for group discussion. Students learnt about the unique culture, customs, and various diversities of another country. They thoroughly enjoyed learning about it. We celebrated a day as United Kingdom Day, and the other school celebrated Nepal Day. On these occasions, we exhibit all the project documents done at both schools. We display and exhibit various books, pamphlets, pictures, dramas, and some informative short films or documentaries related to the school. We benefit

greatly from co-learning on both sides. Some of our teachers and their counterparts from the other school visited to learn about each other's educational systems. Some years ago, I went there. I appreciate the way they encouraged reading among their primary-level students. They put a range of books in the library and encourage students to read them. The students developed a habit of reading. Learning such practice of reading there, I came back and introduced a similar system to our primary class students. It has been working well now. The teachers visiting our school gained a wealth of knowledge about yoga and meditation practices from our yoga instructor and students. They took short-term training, fascinated by the practice of students. They applied these lessons in their school with the help of a yoga instructor. I believe co-learning is a great motivator for introducing innovative changes.

My research participants have various experiences regarding their co-learning practices.

Pramod's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Students and Parents as Sources of Learning Motivation

Pramod and his team of teachers emphasize working with students who have learning issues. Many of the students' learning issues are solved through their collaborative efforts. High-achieving students sit with low-achieving students on the same bench. High achievers learn faster and assist low achievers in learning together. In this connection, Pramod added:

The low performers would also excel in some aspects of work required in group tasks, which they helped the rest of the students with. We motivate students to solve the problem first, after instructing them in the steps of the solution. Students collaboratively try to bring solutions. Some of the ideas students bring are new to the teacher. Sometimes, proactive students discover easy steps to solutions that even their teacher has not thought of. I have frequent meetings with the coordinators. We discuss the problems and their solutions. Everybody participates in the discussion actively. We get bright ideas from some of them. I feel it is easy to decide most of the time when I put the agenda for discussion in the meeting. We get genuine ideas from some of the parents. Some are experts in some fields and share their knowledge to develop the school. We invited some of our parents, who were doctors and nurses, to provide health education and perform health check-ups at school. We can learn a great deal from one another.

Pramod emphasizes heterogeneous grouping for enhancing the performance of low-performing students. He believes that low-performing students have the opportunity to learn from high-performing students in the classroom. Kanika et al. (2022) state that heterogeneous grouping in regard to their competency produces better results in developing students' performance. Furthermore, he emphasizes the strength of proactive students as innovators of new ideas. Chen et al. (2021) argue that proactive students are deeply engaged and produce highly competitive results in their learning process. He focuses on parents' participation in the learning process, as they can contribute positive input based on their experience and knowledge. Regarding this, Raja et al. (2023) offer their views that parental involvement in the students' learning process significantly fosters students' learning achievement in a positive way.

Rita's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Learning from Diversities

Rita welcomed many foreign volunteers from various countries to her school. The volunteers visited the school as volunteer teachers to teach the students for a short period. They taught students about their culture, costumes, lifestyle, language, food, history, geography, and more. Her students enjoyed learning about all these things a lot. Simultaneously, they learned many new teaching and learning activities and were able to implement some of them in their classrooms as well. In this connection, Hari shared more:

Students had the opportunity to learn from the diversity of various places around the world. The teacher volunteers, who came to visit our school, engaged the students in various co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Some of them are unique and new to our students. Students enjoyed those activities a lot.

When I personally visited some schools in the USA, I found that the teachers emphasized reading books to their students. For that, they managed the students' books in the classroom or in the school library. Students were given a specific time to read the book, or they could borrow a book to read. When I saw this type of system, I was influenced by it. As students' reading practice was limited in our school, I thought of starting a reading practice here with our students, as I found that this is a robust way to connect with the world and broaden the students' learning horizon. When I mentioned starting a reading

practice at our school, my daughter, who lived in the USA, sent us a number of books for the students and teachers to read. She, too, motivated me a lot to start and continue reading culture at school.

Similarly, we have been collaborating with Bhaktapur Municipality to preserve its cultural heritage sites. In accordance with the municipality's proposal to maintain the cleanliness of one of Bhaktapur's heritage sites, we have selected the Lord Ganesh Temple for this purpose. Our students visit the temple once a week and clean its surroundings. Our students have been learning a great deal about socialization and the preservation of national property through this program organized by the municipal office.

Rita highlights the role of learning about diverse societies in the world. She believes that it is an important strategy for teaching and learning. In connection with this, Schwarzenenthal et al. (2019) state that learning about a culturally diverse society enables students to develop various worldviews and ways of life, which promote respect and acceptance of the world's diversity. He further emphasizes the importance of developing a reading culture in students, which, he believes, is crucial for broadening their learning horizons. Nmecha and Horsfall (2019) mention that reading enables us to introduce a problem that we encounter in our daily life and gives a solution to it. One day, when I went to visit their library, I found that a group of students were sitting there and reading books of their interests. When I inquired Rita about them, she said that they were reading books as part of their library time, and they had to write a book review and submit to the librarian after reading the book. Similarly, he prioritizes socialization as a crucial skill to develop during student life. He thinks that this skill can be learnt by engaging students in social issues. Garibaldi and Josias (2015) argue that schools can enhance students' academic, emotional, and social skills by engaging them in societal issues.

Hari's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Acceleration of Co-learning through Group Efforts

Hari was motivated in the field of animal welfare by one of his students. When the student shared with him that he was worried about a street dog that was in a miserable health condition, Hari was encouraged to rescue the dog. He adopted the dog and kept it at his school. After this event, his school initiated the adoption and care of the needy dogs on the street with the help of the Animal Welfare Club, led by students. The learning initiated by a student has been a great start for them. Their dog

rescue work has encouraged many others in the community to care for stray dogs.

Hari further shared:

One of our students in grade seven came to me and said that he was mentally disturbed by seeing the miserable health condition of a stray dog, which he saw every day lying down on the street on his way to school. He further told me that he had been unable to sleep the previous night, thinking about the condition of the dog. He asked me if we could help with it. The student made me think of something in favor of that dog. We had a meeting with a few of his class students, his class teacher, and his academic coordinator. Then, we decided to rescue the dog and bring it to school to keep it here. We went to where the dog was lying. We rescued it and kept it with my family at school. The next day, we again sat down and discussed the issue, deciding to form a dog rescue club comprising students from grades 7, 8, and 9. We started searching for a street dog in miserable health condition. We have found more dogs in this condition, and we have now tamed seven dogs in our school kennel.

A few students struggled with Nepali. They were confused about this subject. They could not even read Nepali properly. It was difficult for a teacher to improve every student in a day of teaching. She could look after 4 to 5 students a day personally. It was not possible to look after all of them in a day. In such a condition, we have engaged the high-performing students in the class to support the low-performing students under the guidance of the teacher. They were assisted in enhancing their reading, writing, and vocabulary skills. With such support from their friends, the low-performing students gradually enhanced their performance in reading and writing in the Nepali language.

From Hari's sharing, it is clear that students' self-determination and teachers' support can make a difficult task possible. The student's strong interest in rescuing the dog, combined with his principal's understanding of his concern, resulted in the dog's survival. In relation to this, Howard (2021) states that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to accomplish a task leads to positive results, where the teacher's support serves as a catalyst. Similarly, he highlights the energy created by group work. The rescue of the dog was made possible through the joint efforts of many students and teachers. And many stray dogs in miserable conditions are rescued with the group of students and teachers afterwards. In connection with this, Wilson et al. (2018) argue

that group effort fosters a collaborative spirit, enabling the group to achieve its common goal. Likewise, he emphasizes the importance of peer learning among both high achievers and low achievers. He is convinced that the high achievers can support and nurture the learning of the low achievers. Kanika et al. (2022) state that heterogeneous grouping in regard to their competency produces better results in developing students' performance

Sundar's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Collaborative Planning for School Development

At Sundar's school, open discussion is a fundamental principle. They hold weekly meetings with all academic and administrative staff, fostering an environment for open discussion on current issues. His approach is to discard outdated ideas and assumptions behind and focus on carrying forward valuable insights. Sundar believes that this process allows them to gain fresh perspectives and refine existing practices or plans. Sundar further shared:

I've found that I've learned a great deal from my colleagues. The younger staff have introduced me to recent technologies, enriching our school systems. The experiences and practices they share often provide valuable support in handling various conflicts within the school, helping us address issues with a collaborative and informed approach. Likewise, we have several meetings with the school management committee, during which we discuss the critical problems and challenges facing the school. During the discussion, we undertake a deeper analysis of the problems and challenges and provide our input. Some of the ideas proposed by the committee members are remarkably useful. It's a significant platform for learning from one another.

Sundar prioritizes open discussions between the principal and teachers regarding ongoing classroom issues. He believes that they can plan the steps ahead and bring positive changes in the present scenario through these discussions. Cherry et al. (2021) state that school leaders are the major change makers who frequently meet with their staff members to share ideas, build connections within the school community, and foster progress at the school. He values teachers' experiences and their views as strategies for planning further changes in the school. Hands (2023) mentions that communication can foster a beneficial relationship between communicators by sharing the rich resources of knowledge and experiences they possess.

In brief, Pramod and Hari concur that low-achieving students can benefit from the support of high-achieving peers in heterogeneous classroom groupings. Pramod has observed that some proactive students can help even teachers make teaching more effective. In such instances, teachers can also learn from students. He reveals that his parents are a source of support to him in planning for better learning outcomes. Rita focuses on learning from a culturally diverse society. She also emphasizes the role of local government in engaging the schools in some educational activities. Hari highlights that co-learning among teachers and students develops when they can understand each other's feelings. He gives priority to group work at school, which he believes promotes learning through collaboration and mutual support. Likewise, Sundar emphasizes the role of discussion between him and his teachers, in which they learn a lot from each other as co-learners. They discuss the prevailing issues and their solutions. All the research participants emphasize the importance of co-learning from the school community to foster instructional activities and a positive learning environment at school. In this connection, Supovitz et al. (2010) argue that principals and teachers can influence each other's instructional practices, leadership, and students' learning. They can learn from each other and enhance their practices.

Co-learning among heterogeneous groupings has brought good results in favor of low achievers. Parents and proactive students share and help a great deal with principals and teachers in promoting teaching and learning in the classroom. Principals, teachers, and students can acquire knowledge and skills from a culturally diverse society and schools. Local governments can also develop plans to engage schools in learning about social responsibilities by understanding each other's problems. Group activities encourage each member to participate in the discussion and help one another learn. Similarly, Principal and teacher meetings often begin with discussions among them, which identify ongoing problems and explore potential solutions.

Monitoring of Teaching–Learning Activities

Teachers teach as per the objectives of the curriculum. Similarly, students learn according to their teachers' instructions. In this context, effective teaching promotes better learning. Therefore, quality teaching is expected to enhance learning. Principals and school coordinators monitor the teaching carried out by the teachers and the learning performed by the students. They observe the teaching process of teachers and its effects on students' learning.

My Anecdote as a Practitioner

Initially, when I started working as a principal, I monitored teachers' teaching by visiting their classes. Sometimes, with their permission in advance, I would enter the class and sit like a student while the teacher was teaching. And sometimes, I used to observe the class from outside, where the teacher might not notice my presence. Through this monitoring technique, I was able to assess the status of both teaching and learning. I used to visit the school premises frequently to observe what was happening there. I cross-checked the notebooks of the students' completed assignments, which were marked by their teachers. Through this, I could determine whether the assignment was given, marked by the teachers, and completed by all the students. The students who did not complete the home assignments agreed to complete them. These days, there are some academic coordinators for preschool, primary school, and secondary school who typically perform all the above-mentioned tasks. They observe the classes and assess the status of home assignments, monitor the operation of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, and report the status to the assistant principal in both written and verbal forms. They even discuss some urgent issues. I read all the reports and listened to the briefings of the coordinators and assistant principal and made my points for intervention. There are many checklists of teachers' and students' job accomplishments. There are also checklists of coordinators' and assistant principals' job accomplishments. Academic coordinators cross-check the checklists related to the job of teachers and students. Similarly, the assistant principal cross-checks the checklists related to the job of academic coordinators, teachers, and students. The principal oversees the checklists for everyone's jobs and makes necessary interventions to promote positive change.

My research participants shared their experiences regarding their practices of monitoring of teaching–learning activities.

Pramod's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Principal as a Monitor

Pramod visits the classes when they are going on. Most of the time, he observes ongoing classes from the door or window, and sometimes he enters the class with the teacher's permission and sits to observe for a couple of minutes. In this connection, Pramod added:

The academic coordinators collect the homework notebooks of randomly selected students bimonthly to check if they are properly assigned by teachers and completed by students. All lesson planning documents are signed by the

academic coordinators. Through this, they can determine whether the teachers are preplanned for teaching or not. As a principal, I cross-check the coordinator's job through the checklists prepared. Sometimes, I visit the classes and talk with the students to gain a better understanding of reality. I also call the students in my office to discuss the activities going on. I frequently sit with teachers to talk about the progress in the class. We talk about the problems and challenges.

Pramod highlights the positive role of class observation. As Martinez et al. (2016) state, class observation is a valuable tool for improving the quality of teaching and learning through teacher appraisal and various other positive interventions. In one of my visits, I found Pramod sitting and observing the class in grade 8. When he came to meet me, he shared that he sometime visits the class with permission of the teacher and gives feedback to the teacher about the class on the same day. However, his visits inside the classes may appear disempowering and discouraging, which may disrupt the psychology of classroom engagement. He also shows the importance of the lesson planning prepared by teachers. He knows that this kind of planning prepares the teacher for an impressive class. As Farhang et al. (2023) mention, lesson planning is an important action that develops the teacher's teaching approach based on curriculum demands and students' levels of competence. Likewise, he demonstrates the benefits of communication with students to gain insight into the status of teaching and learning in the class.

Rita's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Students' Feedback as a Monitoring Tool

Rita and her coordinators review the lesson plans prepared by teachers daily to ensure they are well done. Her school coordinators monitor if the teaching materials are prepared and used while teaching. They also monitor how the course books and reference books are used while teaching and learning. In this connection, Rita further added:

We have a plan book, in which teachers record what they will be teaching the next day. I review the plan book every morning and write down my opinions, if any. We also have the logbooks, in which teachers record what they have taught and the activities they have conducted that day. Students comment on the writing of the teachers in the logbook every day. Through the students' comments, we can gain insight into their opinions about the class. We give

daily assignments to the students. We set a deadline for students to complete and submit their assignments. Coordinators verify that assignments are submitted and graded in a timely manner. My husband, who is the school's Director, helps me a lot by monitoring the teachers' and students' work at school.

Rita focuses on the management and use of teaching materials. Aina (2023) states that teachers should manage sufficient teaching and learning resources to make students' learning more interesting and effective. Similarly, she emphasizes the role of students' opinions on teachers' teaching and other classroom activities. She claims that the students' feedback on the teacher's teaching helps him act accordingly to enhance quality teaching and learning. One day, I found Rita talking with some students. Later, I found that she was discussing with grade 9 class representatives about their problems. She shared that she learnt more about the students' problems from themselves. Aligning with this, Zaim et al. (2019) mention that students' perceptions of the teacher's teaching support the teacher in creating an exciting class that addresses the students' interests. Likewise, she shows the importance of daily assignments for students. In connection with it, Ulum (2020) argues that assignments often connect learning from school to home. Through engagement with assignments, students develop richer learning experiences, which, over time, lead to behavioral changes in them.

Hari's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Role of Coordinator in Academic Monitoring

At Hari's school, most of the checking and monitoring work of the teaching and learning process is done by the academic coordinator. He executes and observes all the rules that are developed by the school board. There are some subordinates who work under the academic coordinator. They check the daily assignments and activity diary of the students once a week. As a principal, Hari frequently meets with the academic coordinator to update on everything happening at school. Hari shared more on it:

The academic coordinator and his subordinates make sure that the answer sheets of the examination are checked properly. They do this before the publication of the results in every terminal examination. They also make calls to parents after the publication of the results to discuss their children's performance. If necessary, they request the parents to visit the school for further discussion. Every two classes have one coordinator from grades 1 to

10. They monitor every aspect of teaching and learning in coordination with teachers, students, and parents to enhance students' learning achievement. We have yearly academic plans, which we divide into three terms: first, second, and final. We closely monitor all teachers to ensure they are well-qualified and informed about our annual plans and procedures. As a principal, I frequently meet with the academic coordinator to update on everything happening at school. I visit all the class premises one or two times a day. I meet with teachers and parents as needed to discuss matters.

Hari focuses on teacher-parent meetings after the test results are published. They discuss various aspects to improve students' performance in the future. Aligning with this, Islam (2017) states that parent–teacher meetings are highly effective in improving students' examination scores. Similarly, he emphasizes the role of academic coordinators in facilitating teachers in the teaching–learning process. Like Mangali et al. (2019), academic coordinators monitor whether teachers effectively teach curriculum content. They motivate teachers to improve their teaching. He emphasizes the principal's role as a lead change maker. He frequently discusses with teachers, students, and parents to communicate the prevailing situations and further plans for better change. As Kwalipo and Issacs (2022) state, the principal communicates with teachers about their daily teaching and learning activities. They further mention that he interacts with students and parents to fulfil academic goals.

Sundar's Anecdote as a Practitioner: 1000 Steps Around the Organization

Sundar begins monitoring teachers as soon as they enter the school premises. Teachers are required to use the attendance machine at the gate. This machine helps him track the teacher's regularity and punctuality. He and his subordinates also observed teachers' and students' activities outside the classrooms with the assistance of supportive staff, including coordinators. Inside the classrooms, they monitor teachers and students' activities through CCTV, record-keeping by class representatives, and feedback from teachers and students during direct communication. Sundar further added:

We plan and design the academic calendar at least one month in advance of the new session. As the new academic session begins, we proceed directly to its implementation. All plans and programs are executed according to the calendar. We monitor activities like teachers' teaching, classroom activities, assignment issuance, and feedback through the inspection method. We often

stay outside the classrooms to check if everything is going smoothly. I believe in a method called the 1000 Steps Around the Organization approach. If I do that, I get to know what is happening on the premises. I learned a great deal from this observational technique.

Sundar prioritizes the regular observation of teachers' and students' activities related to the teaching and learning process. In connection with this, Laska (2016) notes that monitoring enables us to collect important data and information about teachers and students, which helps improve the prevailing status of their teaching and learning. Likewise, he demonstrates his strong belief in the importance of punctuality and regularity among teachers for improved productivity. Therefore, he is attentive to monitoring teachers' punctuality and regularity. One day during my visit, I saw him tracking the attendance of the teachers from their daily attendance record in the computer. He said that he would observe the punctuality and regularity of teachers through the attendance record once a month and talk with them when necessary. Like Khan et al. (2020), they argue that when someone completes the allocated task within the allocated time, it enhances positive change in their behavior, which ultimately promotes their learning outcomes. Further, he has a strong impression on management by walking around, which he believes is effective in promoting teaching and learning at school. As Njelita and Eke (2018) state, management by walking around strengthens positive relationships with employees, provides proper motivation, and helps gather information from the workplace.

Pramod and Sundar prefer monitoring through class observation. Sundar likes walking around to observe the activities of teachers and students inside and outside the classroom. Pramod observes their daily lesson planning to check if they are well done. Rita emphasizes teaching materials. She monitors their development and implementation. She equally focuses on homework, which is assigned to the students. Likewise, she oversees whether they are regularly assigned and marked. She meets some students to hear their opinions about the classes. Hari monitors teaching and learning by meeting and talking with parents and academic coordinators. They share their observation about the teachers and students. Sundar observes the punctuality and regularity of teachers and students. All participants value the role of monitoring teaching and learning practices. In this connection, Hallinger and Murphy (1986) state that principals observe teaching and learning activities to ensure that the school's goals are addressed through teachers' instructional practices in the classroom.

There are various ways of monitoring teaching and learning activities. Some of the principals observe the ongoing classes to find their effectiveness. A principal can monitor teaching and learning activities by walking around the school. Similarly, they can monitor their progress by observing their daily lesson plans and teaching materials that they have developed, as well as their proper implementation during teaching and learning activities. They can check if homework is regularly assigned and marked. Similarly, principals can monitor teaching and learning activities through students, parents, and academic coordinators. He listens to their experiences and feelings about them. Students' and teachers' regularity and punctuality also become important tools for monitoring.

Evaluating Teaching and Learning Activities

Principals monitor the teaching process and determine its impact on students' learning. They grade teaching and learning for further improvement. They evaluate teaching through various tools of evaluation. They can go to the classroom and observe teachers' teaching. They can evaluate it through the learning achievements of students. Principals and teachers can grade students' learning through different tests and performances. They produce students' evaluation reports and submit them to the parents for their information.

My Anecdote as a Practitioner

At my school, we evaluated the teachers' teaching and students' learning through terminal examinations and some other unit tests. Those students were considered successful who scored higher marks in the examinations. Similarly, teachers whose students scored higher marks were recognized as successful teachers. Low-achieving students and teachers were not considered successful teachers and students. Coursebook competency was a high focus. Some students may excel in extracurricular activities, such as dance, fine arts, singing, martial arts, Scouting, music, and sports. If those students could not catch up with their studies and were unable to pass their exams, they were not considered good students. Over time, evaluation patterns have changed in my school. Currently, students' various formative and summative assessments, their involvement in extracurricular and co-curricular activities, and the completion of their assignments, among other factors, significantly contribute to their evaluation. We evaluate teachers based on their teaching methodology, which empowers students with the skills, knowledge, and attitude they need. We observe how teachers engage students in class, rather than delivering one-

way lectures, to ensure that students achieve meaningful learning. We evaluate teachers by observing their initiation in practical activities rather than rote learning to prepare for examinations. We assess how effectively teachers develop and utilize teaching materials in the classroom. We assign students to review at least two books within a three-month term after they have thoroughly read them. We evaluate students and teachers by observing how effectively they are involved in this program. We have a more formative assessment system these days. We have regular assessments of students through various project works and practical projects.

My research participants have diverse experiences regarding their practices of evaluating teaching and learning activities.

Pramod's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Students' Learning Achievement as a Tool of Academic Evaluation

Pramod frequently talks with students. Sometimes, he meets them in his office and also in their classroom. During our meeting with them, they expressed their feelings about their teachers. Through his students, he is aware of various aspects of teachers' performances. What he believes is that teachers' real evaluation is done by students. In this connection, Pramod further added:

Students share both positive and negative points about their teachers. Students often share their feelings about teachers with their parents as well. I invite some parents to discuss their children's activities. Sometimes, parents visit the school to discuss their children's performance. Parents also share their feelings about teachers' strengths and weaknesses that they are informed about by their children at home. Similarly, I evaluate the teachers' performance based on the students' achievements in various examinations. Generally, students of good teachers score better in examinations. The average result of all the students is good in their classes. After gathering information about teachers from various sources, I met with the teachers who were experiencing problems. I start the talk by sharing their strengths and then discussing their weaknesses to find mutually beneficial solutions. I also apply a similar strategy to students. I review the scores obtained by the students in both internal and external examinations. We check the performance status of their regular assignments. We also check their regularity and punctuality at school. We regularly update their participation

in various co-curricular and extracurricular activities, which are run at school and outside.

Pramod believes that students' feedback can be a powerful tool for evaluating teachers. According to him, students' experience of teachers' teaching and behavior can indicate their competency in the teaching and learning process. However, Hornstein and Law (2017) argue that students' ratings of teachers' teaching cannot be accurate in many contexts, as they may not be qualified enough to understand the pedagogy the teacher applies to teach in the class. Based on my experience, we can gather more information about a teacher's teaching effectiveness from their students. But we need to cross-check the students' opinions through our observation. Evaluation of teachers can be done through the observation of students and academic heads. Similarly, he emphasizes the importance of parental evaluation of teachers to enhance teaching and learning in schools. Parents learn about their children's teachers' performance from their children. Aligning with it, Letzel-Alt et al. (2022) claim that parents can be effective evaluators of teachers, who can help schools ensure quality education for the students. Likewise, he focuses on exam scores to evaluate students. Higher scores represent good learning achievement, while lower scores represent weak learning achievement. In connection with it, Kumar et al. (2023) argue that teachers can use tests as an important tool for evaluating students. The GPA students achieve is a strong basis for evaluation. However, Yambi and Yambi (2020) present a different view on evaluating students through formal tests. They claim that formal tests might give students the hint that learning is merely an attempt to find the right answers to the questions given.

Rita's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Positive Impact of Teachers' Professional Engagement in Teaching-Learning Process

Rita and her subordinates minutely observe teachers' activities at school. They observe teachers' arrival and departure times. They encourage teachers to be punctual and regular in their school and classroom activities. Rita further added:

We observe whether the teachers prepare and follow lesson planning every day. We check if the teachers cover the course according to the terminal plan. A few of the teachers are found to be not attentive towards the terminal plan issued by the school. We observe how they interact with students and how they are approachable to all students, helping them in the learning process. We ask students to speak in English at school. We check if the teachers cooperate in

encouraging students to speak in English. We maintain individual records of teachers who perform all these jobs at school. Similarly, we evaluate students based on their classroom performance, examination scores, assignment submissions, and participation in various school activities.

Rita prioritizes teachers' punctuality and regularity to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Agreeing with him, Maulana et al. (2021) claim that teachers' punctuality and regularity have a positive impact on students' learning achievement. He focuses on teachers' attentiveness and professional engagement in the teaching and learning process. Teachers' friendly behavior with students yields positive outcomes in the learning process. Like him, Majumdar (2022) mentions that the teachers' evaluation process is conducted through observation of their effectiveness in teaching in the classroom. Likewise, he emphasizes the importance of students' participation and performance in class for achieving better learning outcomes. In connection with this, Yambi and Yambi (2020) state that teachers should evaluate students based on their everyday activities and performances, both in and outside the classroom.

Hari's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Involvement of Parents in Evaluation Process

At Hari's school, they prepare a comparative development status of students' past and present examination scores and show it to both parents and students as soon as the exam results are published. They grade students' scores as A, B, C, and D. If they perform very well, they earn an A grade. When their performances are not as expected, the grades go in diminishing order, as per their performances from B, C, and D Hari further added:

We grant parents the authority to evaluate their children for 5% of the practical marks in subjects such as Social Studies, based on the student's behavior and activities performed at home. Similarly, students are evaluated based on their attendance and participation in class and school activities. We observe the students' behavior in relation to the school's codes of conduct. Likewise, academic coordinators evaluate teachers' performances. They frequently visit the classes to observe how the teachers are teaching. They meet with students and parents to gather feedback about teachers and students. We evaluate teachers based on their daily accomplishments, including homework assignments and feedback on them, the development and use of teaching materials, the application of effective teaching strategies, and

the care and coaching of low-achieving students in the class, among other factors.

Hari emphasizes the role of exam grades in evaluating students. He believes that the higher the exam grades are, the better the students are. Likewise, the lower the grades are, the poorer the students become. Like Kumar et al. (2021), students can be evaluated through their test scores. However, Yambi and Yambi (2020) put a different view on the testing system. They argue that tests might prompt students to find correct answers only to the questions posed. Similarly, he believes that parents can play a significant role in evaluating their children's academic progress. They observe their children's activities at home and outside, which helps them with the evaluation of their children. According to Munsengamana (2023), some parents continue to communicate with schoolteachers about their children's activities, progress, and behavior. I also have a similar experience that, through interaction with parents, teachers, and academic heads, the principal can learn a great deal about their children's activities and behavior at home and outside, which can help inform their evaluation.

Sundar's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Practice of Self-Assessment of Teachers

At Sundar's school, teachers are evaluated based on several factors, including regularity, punctuality, participation in various ECA and CCA activities, flexibility with scheduling, and their commitment to students' learning achievements. They also assess their teachers' regular communication with parents and department heads. He added:

We conduct classroom observations to assess instructional clarity, student engagement, and classroom management. Additionally, we utilize structured checklists to assess clarity, approachability, the ability to engage students in learning, and the motivational strategies that impact teaching effectiveness. During direct communication with parents, we gather their feedback. Recognizing the value of self-assessment in empowering teachers, we encourage them to reflect on their practices. We provide structured self-evaluation forms that allow teachers to analyze their performance, take ownership of their professional growth, and set personal development goals. Similarly, our primary tool for evaluating students is their performance in the examination. We observe their attentiveness and engagement in the classroom. We also see their willingness to participate in various ECA and CCA

conducted in school. We frequently meet with parents and teachers to receive updates on the students' performance in class and at home.

Sundar mentions that teachers can be evaluated through the effectiveness of the teaching–learning process they adopt in the classroom. The more effective it is for the students, the more successful they are in the teaching–learning process. Aligning with this view, Munna and Kalam (2021) claim that providing essential positive feedback to students and allowing them sufficient role-play enhances their confidence in the learning process. Furthermore, an active learning climate fosters students' learning achievement. Likewise, he thinks that parents are also a good source of evaluation for teachers. Parents' feedback about teachers helps to some extent in teachers' evaluation. Like him, Letzel et al. (2022) claim that parents can be effective evaluators of teachers, who can help schools ensure quality education. Furthermore, he focuses on students' participation in extracurricular activities as part of their evaluation. He mentions that ECA plays a profound role in the development of various skills in them. Aligning with this, Buckley and Lee (2021) argue that students' involvement in extracurricular activities, such as various clubs and social work, provides opportunities to expose them to diverse experiences, which help them develop essential skills and knowledge for their lives.

In a nutshell, Pramod and Hari agree that they evaluate students based on their exam scores. Similarly, Pramod and Sundar meet with their parents to listen to their opinions about the teachers. They believe that parents can provide constructive feedback to teachers. Likewise, Rita has found that parents can evaluate their children more effectively. Therefore, she gets support from her parents for the children's evaluation of their household activities and learning. Rita and Sundar agree that they can evaluate teachers based on their effectiveness and professionalism in the teaching and learning process. Pramod emphasizes the importance of students' feedback as a tool for the teacher's evaluation. Similarly, Rita gives priority to students' participation and performance in the class, while Sundar emphasizes students' participation in extra-curricular activities as a tool for their evaluation. Teachers' and students' evaluation and supervision are part of the principal's instructional leadership. In this connection, Osei-Amankwah et al. (2024) note that principals should regularly supervise and evaluate teachers' instructions by visiting classes to keep teachers alert during the teaching and learning process.

It appears that a strong tool for students' evaluation is their exam scores. Another tool for students' evaluation is parental observation and feedback. Similarly, parents' observation and feedback of teachers play an important role in teachers' evaluation. Another important tool of teachers' evaluation is their effectiveness and professionalism in the teaching and learning process. Students' feedback of teachers is also taken into consideration while evaluating teachers. Likewise, teachers' punctuality and regularity are highly valued in their evaluation. Students are evaluated based on their participation and performance in classes and various extracurricular activities at school.

Enhancing a Good Learning Atmosphere at School

A favorable learning environment is expected to foster students' learning. Students are motivated towards learning when teachers become supportive of their problems. Similarly, teachers seek support from the school's senior leaders and management staff. When they receive motivation from them, they carry out their teaching with enthusiasm. A good learning atmosphere is promoted by fulfilling the basic needs and aspirations of students and parents.

My Anecdote as a Practitioner

Around a decade earlier, at my school, teachers and students were completely focused on preparing for the upcoming examinations. Teachers supported students to prepare them to score better marks in their examinations. They focused on course books only. Reading books outside the course was not encouraged. Therefore, students did not read any books outside of their course. Teachers were not aware of the curriculum. They taught the contents of the course books that were taught at school. Teachers often taught students through lecture methods. They did not prepare daily lesson plans. They prepared annual course divisions for three terminal exams and followed them. There was no more exposure to experiential learning. Students learned everything through teachers' lectures in the classroom. However, we later came to realize that students' participation in teaching and learning is essential. We gradually began to change our teaching methodologies, in which teachers served as facilitators and students' participation and engagement were promoted. It was not easy to adapt this methodology at the beginning, as students were initially hesitant to participate in the class. These days, students are well-engaged in various activities in the class. Teachers encourage them to participate in classroom activities. Students must read at least two books of their choice for three months, review them, and

submit their reviews to the teachers. This has helped them develop their reading habits and reflection. Teachers use interactive teaching methods rather than lecture methods. They prepared daily lesson plans in accordance with the curriculum's requirements. They prepare teaching and learning materials as per the requirements of their lesson plans. Students participate in field trips and observation trips as part of their outdoor classes. Through these trips, students get exposure to learning in a natural setting. Every teacher must thoroughly read the curriculum to plan their lessons effectively. However, not all the teachers are equally active. Some of them like to enjoy their stereotypical teaching methods. Through regular training, we try to update all the teachers to ensure effective teaching techniques. We have a running library program through which students can exchange their books, read, and review them. This program provides students with the opportunity to read several books at no cost. My research participants have diverse experiences regarding their practices for creating a positive learning atmosphere at school.

Pramod's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Practice of Collaborative Learning to Develop Learning Atmosphere

Pramod tries to create a learning environment for the challenging students. These students are mostly low achievers. He and his teachers support these students in enhancing their learning by focusing on effective teaching. They give priority to these students in the classroom. They meet them separately to assist with their teaching. Teachers seek the support of high achievers in the class to guide low achievers in enhancing their learning. The collaboration of high and low performers has produced a good effect on the learning journey of both. In my casual observation within school premises, I found that high and low performing students are bench partners. This is done strategically to support the low performers from the high performers. Pramod frequently meets students to hear their issues. He lets students discuss finding solutions to them. Students' collaborative efforts give him ideas to explore solutions to their problems.

Pramod emphasizes a collaborative learning approach to enhance students' learning. He promotes students' collaboration to learn from each other by sharing their ideas and knowledge. Aligning with this, Emalia (2018) notes that collaboration enables students to work respectfully with diverse peers to solve problems with the support of one another within a team. This approach to learning helps students retain information in their memory for a longer period. Likewise, he encourages students

and teachers to discuss to help them learn new knowledge to combat emerging issues. Like Abdulbaki et al. (2018), they state that open discussions promote interactions, which in turn foster active learning, critical thinking, and a more effective expression of one's ideas and knowledge.

Rita's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Nurturing Teachers' Positive Thinking through Meditation

Rita offers a paid holiday to teachers who attend the 12-day Vipassana meditation course. She believes that the practice of meditation makes teachers positive and dedicated to their duty. She is quite mindful of nurturing the spiritual dimensions of teachers and students. She further added:

Vipassana Meditation also fosters personal and professional growth. The teachers who attended the course made remarkably positive changes in their professional behavior at school. They are working far better than before at school. We also encourage students to attend a three-day Vipassana meditation course designed for children. Some of them have already attended the course. We observed a significant improvement in the performance of students who attended the course.

To enhance the learning environment at school, Rita has promoted a culture of book reading. She has established a well-stocked library with a diverse range of books. She motivates both teachers and students to visit the library or borrow a book to read. She believes that reading a book is a powerful medium for forming connections with society and acquiring new knowledge.

From Rita's sharing, it is clear that she places a strong focus on developing reading culture in students. She believes that reading habits are essential in education. As Guo (2023) notes, reading enhances students' understanding of connecting with society, improves their language proficiency, and develops their overall personality. In my experience, reading engages the students in a positive learning climate. It develops their imagination skill and encourages them to develop creative writing. Reading prepares students for quality debates and dialogues. However, Diyoshak et al. (2022) argue that reading is diminishing in the present context. I agree with them. Students are not interested in reading, but they want to be more engaged with their digital gadgets. Our effort to develop a reading culture at school is urgent. Rita mentions the importance of libraries in promoting reading culture. A well-equipped library with a range of books is a treasure of the school.

Students can visit the library to read and borrow books, which helps them develop a reading culture. As Diyoshak et al. (2022) state, school libraries can significantly motivate students to enhance their reading habits by offering a range of books of interest to them. She further emphasizes the importance of mindfulness practices for teachers and students to foster positivity and peace of mind, which, in turn, she claims, encourages better teaching and learning. Aligning with this, Indriaswuri et al. (2023) argue that students can accelerate their learning achievement through regular practice of mindfulness. It helps them handle their mental, psychological, and emotional issues. In my casual observation within school premises at Rita's school, I found that every morning, in the first period, students and teachers together practice meditation for 5 minutes. After meditation, teachers start their lessons to teach.

Hari's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Combatting COVID-19 through Online Home Classes

Hari promptly managed to continue his students' classes during the severe COVID-19 pandemic. It was a challenging time of severe crisis. All the parents and students were in pain because of the disconnect in education. In this connection, he shared:

When COVID-19 hit the world, students were deprived of education for some time. We were able to start online classes immediately, thanks to the technical assistance of some IT experts. We had done great preparation for those classes. We managed regular training sessions for the teachers to ensure the effective operation of those classes. We ran full-day classes for the students. We paid the full salary for the teachers. As a result, teachers were motivated to teach the classes. We charged all the students the fees. Teachers worked hard. As students had enough classes, they were not deprived of education at such a critical time.

At Hari's school, they have been running a program called 'Birthday Charity,' in which every student and teacher donates a certain amount of money on their birthday. The money collected in a year is added to the school's special contribution and used for a noble cause. In this connection, Hari added:

We donate the money collected to support schools in remote villages, purchasing books to enrich their libraries. We have formed a committee comprising students, teachers, and parents to oversee this program. We have supported 27 libraries of various schools in Nepal to date. Our students have

learned a great deal about the importance of their responsibility towards the needy from this program.

Hari emphasizes the importance of effective crisis management in challenging situations. His leadership role in continuing the classes effectively online during the COVID-19 pandemic is notable. He appears visionary in his ability to cope with severe situations through effective crisis management skills. As Chatzipanagiotou and Katsarou (2023) state, some visionary and effective school leaders were quicker in managing professional development training for themselves and teachers to acquire the skills necessary during the COVID-19 crisis to continue students' interrupted classes. Hari equally emphasizes the importance of learning attributes such as compassion and empathy. Through these attributes, the students begin to feel the pains of others as their own. As Barton and Garvis (2019) state, teachers can nurture compassion and empathy in their students in schools. These attributes are important to feel and address many of the social and cultural issues. He emphasizes the importance of engaging students in various social activities. Students can contribute to helping the needy in various ways. Aligning with this, Coelho and Menezes (2021) mention that schools can encourage students to engage in addressing and solving the prevailing problems in society.

Sundar's Anecdote as a Practitioner: Upgrading Teaching Methodologies for Quality Learning

Sundar worked extensively on upgrading the school's teaching methodologies. To enhance the quality of education for students, he adopted a different approach from traditional methods. In this connection, he shared:

In recent years, the teaching-learning methodologies have undergone significant changes. Instead of using the traditional lecture method, teachers employ modern teaching and learning approaches, which are more effective and engaging. We conduct motivational classes and guest lectures as needed, inviting subject experts from various fields. To the greatest extent possible, we have endeavored to align our actions with recent trends and global best practices in student studies.

Sundar is convinced that teachers' motivation is crucial for enhancing teaching and learning in schools. He further shared:

There are different generations of teachers. We need different ideas or tools to motivate those teachers. Without motivation, we cannot retain teachers at our school for a long time. The leader may need to adjust the motivation method for each individual teacher. The case of one teacher, motivated by a particular method, may not be applicable to another. Increasing their salary might not be enough to motivate them. Teacher motivation needs to be the ultimate mission of an organization. If we couldn't encourage or motivate the teachers, the organization would not function properly. We offer various refreshment programs for teachers. We take teachers on refreshment trips, such as picnics or visits to in-country destinations. Small things matter, so when a teacher has a child's birthday, we send birthday wishes and a small gift.

Sundar places importance on recent trends and global practices in teaching and learning to prepare students for the contemporary situation. Like him, Goyal (2024) states that teachers must facilitate students' learning of 21st-century skills, through which they can engage in transformative learning experiences, enabling them to keep pace with the demands of time. In my experience, we can learn a lot from the practices in teaching and learning globally. We can personally visit the school to witness the practices, or we can share ideas with each other through communication. We can learn a great deal from one another. Similarly, he emphasizes the role of teacher motivation in relation to senior leadership. He further notes that motivation plays a crucial role in energizing teachers to work actively towards better outcomes. Aligning with this, Khanal and Phyak (2021) argue that motivated teachers are committed to accomplishing the goals they set.

The research participants reported various activities they had practiced, which helped create a positive learning atmosphere at school. Pramod places a strong emphasis on adopting a collaborative learning approach in teaching and learning activities. He emphasizes discussion methods to reach solutions to problems. Similarly, Rita prioritizes developing a reading culture at school. She has established a well-stocked library to provide students with a wide range of books of interest. She also focuses on learning and practicing mindfulness exercises for teachers and students. She believes that it is essential for teachers to focus on their talks and promote their moral values. Likewise, Hari was happy to manage the COVID-19 crisis by implementing online classes as soon as the pandemic broke out and was able to continue them. He prioritizes instilling compassion and empathy in students by

engaging them in various activities related to social responsibility. Similarly, Sundar emphasizes the development of teachers' knowledge and skills to keep pace with the latest trends and global practices in the teaching and learning process. He believes that the teaching and learning atmosphere improves when motivation originates from senior leadership. All the participants emphasize the importance of enhancing a good learning environment at school. In this connection, Salleh and Hatta (2018) state that principals must ensure the effective management of the school, which helps promote a good learning atmosphere by incorporating quality teaching and learning within the school.

Instructional leaders can promote various activities to enhance a meaningful learning atmosphere at school. They can prioritize collaborative learning approaches, discussion methods, book-reading habits, and mindfulness practices to embed in teaching-learning activities at school. These activities significantly enhance teachers' attentiveness and students' learning. Instructional leaders would be capable of handling a crisis at the time. Resilient instructional leaders did not keep their students' classes disconnected during the COVID-19 pandemic. They bridged the classes online. Principals and teachers can teach students the importance of compassion and empathy by engaging them in various social issues as part of their project work. Instructional leaders prioritize teachers' knowledge and skill development to stay informed about the latest changes in teaching and learning pedagogy. They prioritize teachers' motivation to keep them always ready to learn and contribute to improved teaching.

Theoretical Alignment and Meaning Making

All participants agree that a collaborative learning effort is effective in identifying problems and working on their solutions. Students communicate their problems so that the school administration can work immediately to find a solution. Regular communication between parents and teachers can help enhance students' learning. All participants believe that frequent meetings with students, teachers, and parents will help bring about change in the current situation. Every participant is informed about the importance of the principal's meetings with teachers to enhance their performance. Effective communication among teachers, students, and parents can help resolve various conflicts and tensions (Bozic, 2024). Similarly, communication fosters deep interaction, which in turn builds strong interpersonal relationships among the participating members. They believe that regular meetings

among parents, students, and teachers make a positive difference in the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, communication is a way of motivation and appreciation, which leads to higher performance of teachers and students. It helps the low-performing students to understand their problems and explore ways to solve them.

Many of the participants admit that co-learning in heterogeneous groupings of students enhances the learning of low-performing students. It also promotes proactive students as innovators of newer ideas. Co-learning provides space for parents to share their positive input based on their knowledge and experience. They can learn about the diverse societies in the world by partnering with various schools and institutions worldwide. Some of the principals use social issues to keep students engaged, thereby strengthening them academically, emotionally, and socially (Garibaldi & Josias, 2015). Their practice of empowering leadership has promoted students' self-determination and teachers' support, making difficult tasks possible. The school's collaboration with the local government has enabled students to participate in various educational activities, creating a conducive learning environment. Principals and teachers can engage in meaningful discussions that promote effective instructional practices, effective principal leadership, and student learning (Supovitz et al., 2010). The collaborative and engaged practices of co-learners develop valuable information, facts, and conclusions. They learn about each other, their unique culture, customs, and diversity.

I have found that all participants have highlighted the positive role of monitoring teaching and learning activities. They have given importance to the monitoring of teachers' preparation for teaching and students' learning. They are well informed about the proper development and use of lesson planning and teaching aids. Students' opinions about teachers' performance can be a valuable tool for teachers to use in self-monitoring. The status of assignment submission and marking, as well as students' exam performance, can serve as a strategy for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Principals and coordinators monitor teachers' performance and can motivate them to improve their performance. Monitoring helps improve the present level of teaching and learning (Laska, 2016). Principals monitor teachers' and students' punctuality and regularity. Most of them tend to monitor the activities by walking around. Through the monitoring process, principals are updated on the effectiveness of the jobs of people in various responsibilities.

Most of the participants agree that students' feedback is an important tool for teachers' evaluation. Similarly, academic heads and parents who follow the teachers' performance can evaluate them. Letzel-Alt et al. (2022) state that parents are good evaluators of teachers' performances. Similarly, formal test results can be used to evaluate students (Kumar et al., 2021). It is believed that the higher the grades are, the better the students are. Many participants believe that teachers are evaluated based on their punctuality and regularity. The effectiveness of teaching is another tool used in teachers' evaluation, where students are assessed based on their participation and engagement in classroom activities and extracurricular activities.

To enhance a good learning atmosphere at school, all participants encourage a student-centered approach in the teaching-learning process, where students' engagement is given high priority. Some of them have prioritized field trips and observation trips as part of outdoor classes. A few of them have initiated a reading culture at school. They have incorporated the book reading into their evaluation system. They have promoted a collaborative learning approach to enhance learning by sharing their ideas and knowledge.

Reading links with societies helps language development and promotes the reader's personality (Guo, 2023). To promote reading culture, they have developed a good library at school. One of the participants has initiated mindfulness practices for students and teachers to promote positivity and inner peace. Some participants were smart enough to handle the COVID-19 crisis by continuing classes at home with the help of an online portal. One of the participants focuses on teaching compassion and empathy, which he promotes through a special project that students must complete. Some of the participants allowed the students to get involved in various social and cultural issues, which helps develop their social and cultural awareness. They agree that teacher motivation is necessary to enhance their performance in the teaching and learning process.

The study reveals that effective communication among principals, teachers, students, and parents is crucial for enhancing teaching, learning, and overall school management. We learn about the necessities to fulfill through meetings and interactions with stakeholders. They suggest, through their knowledge and experiences, that we fill the gap in teaching and learning. Similarly, I get to learn the power of co-learning in enhancing teaching and learning at school. Principals, teachers, students, and parents can learn from each other and beyond through direct

and indirect interaction with them. It is possible to learn from anything or any situation in the world. For this, we need to extend our relationship broadly. Instructional leadership is well-practiced when we develop a close monitoring system for teaching and learning. Teachers and students are motivated and monitored. The regular monitoring of teachers' teaching and students' learning reveals the gaps that need to be addressed, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Likewise, regular evaluation of the jobs of teachers and students is essential to track both in terms of excellence. Teachers' evaluations can be conducted through performance appraisals, and students are assessed through various tests and their participation in the learning process. As an instructional leader, the principal works to foster a positive learning environment at school. They tend to transform classrooms into interactive zones where teachers remain as facilitators and students are active learners. Principals manage to develop the whole school premises as a supportive and favorable area for productive learning.

I made meaning of this section through the lens of 'being dimensions of experiential learning theory'. My participants learnt instructional leadership from multiple layers of experiences in their lifetime. They used what they learned in their contemporary workplaces as instructional leaders. Learning they accumulated through formal education, workplaces, and training programs was useful in transforming themselves into competent instructional leaders at their schools, as Beard and Wilson (2013) state that experiences are reflected in actions which can enhance one's ways of thinking, being and behaving. My study participants reflected their experiences of learning in their everyday actions as instructional leaders to enhance teaching-learning outcomes at schools.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I narrated the stories of my research participants related to their practices of instructional leadership. I critically explored and analyzed the narratives of their instructional leadership practices, drawing on various literature. After exploring their narratives of practices, I categorized their instructional leadership practices into five themes: practices of communication with teachers, students, and parents; practices of co-learning; practices of monitoring teaching and learning activities; practices of evaluating teaching and learning activities; and practices of enhancing a positive learning atmosphere at school. I analyzed the instructional

leadership practices of the participants, drawing on various theories, scholars' views, and my own experiences to make sense of them.

CHAPTER VI

MAJOR INSIGHTS, CONCLUSIONS, REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter begins with the major insights I have drawn from this study, gained through a deeper exploration of the information and the meaning-making process. These insights led me to draw a conclusion. I have reflected on the journey of my research and outlined the potential implications of the study.

Major Insights

Through the narratives of my research participants, I have gained insights into the meaning-making process. Based on my first research question, ‘How do principals narrate the stories of their learning of instructional leadership?’ I generated three themes. The major insights from the first theme, ‘Learning of instructional leadership from school, college, and university,’ are discussed below.

My participants gained knowledge and acquired skills in teaching and learning throughout their education at schools, colleges, and universities. They realized the strengths of collaborative learning, where every individual participated and learned from one another. It fostered meaningful student engagement in the learning process. They were exposed to the positive effect of motivation at their learning institutions, which became a catalyst for fostering their instructional leadership. They witnessed the loving and caring attitude of teachers at their schools, colleges, and universities. They fostered similar attitudes to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning at their institutions. They learnt that caring teachers could generate passion for meaningful student learning.

My research participants had many positive experiences at their workplaces, which they continued as learning from to develop their instructional leadership. They learnt that every student might have a different way of learning. Teachers can understand it and facilitate their learning. Through their workplace experiences, they realized that discipline and good behavior were essential qualities in students. They observed that reading books was essential to broaden their knowledge and understanding. They found that experiential learning was a powerful learning strategy to develop their instructional leadership competence. They came to realize that the main role of a teacher was to be a facilitator who helps students learn.

All the research participants had a positive impact of professional development programs in developing their instructional leadership. Training enhanced their knowledge and skills for teaching and leadership. Teachers needed motivation from the senior leaders to effectively implement the knowledge and skills received from the training. Professional development programs opened career opportunities for teachers by qualifying them. Instructional leaders could retain teachers in their jobs by providing them with additional facilities.

Based on my second research question, 'How do principals reflect on their learning of instructional leadership in their practice?', I generated five themes. The major insights from the first theme, 'Practices of communication with teachers, students, and parents' are discussed here.

My research participants found that communication among teachers, students, and parents strengthened the teaching-learning environment. Through such communication, they became familiar with the ongoing issues in teaching and learning activities. They got opportunities for meetings and discussions, and enhanced students' learning.

Co-learning in a heterogeneous grouping of students was fruitful for the group members. Low achievers were guided by high achievers in the learning process, which promoted the learning of low achievers. Principals learnt from parents' feedback about their children's education and activities, which helped teaching and learning. Co-learning promoted pair work and group work among students and teachers, which encouraged learning among them.

An instructional leader could monitor the teachers' ongoing classes by observation. They could walk around to monitor the activities of teachers and students inside and outside the classrooms. They observed the lesson plans, teaching materials developed and used by teachers, and the status of home assignments issued, submitted, and marked. They met parents and academic coordinators to get updates on their activities at home and school. They monitored the punctuality and regularity of teachers and students at school.

The primary evaluation tool for students' learning achievement was their exam scores. The research participants found that parents could evaluate some aspects of their children's learning more effectively. Teachers can evaluate certain aspects of students by listening to and discussing with their parents. Instructional leaders evaluated teachers by observing their effectiveness and professionalism during

teaching and learning activities. Principals got feedback from students about their teachers, which could help them evaluate the teachers. Students could be evaluated through their participation and performance in the learning process.

The participants believed that collaborative learning practices and discussion methods enhanced learning achievements. They emphasized the importance of developing a reading culture at school and prioritized the school library to enrich it with a diverse range of books. They found that mindfulness practices are important for increasing students' concentration and behavior. They focused on engaging students in activities to fulfill social responsibility. They prioritized teachers' professional development to enhance their knowledge and teaching skills. They completed all these tasks to help create a positive learning atmosphere at school.

Evolving Understanding and Contribution to Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership is learnt from schools, colleges, and universities. Numerous experiences and exposures at these places teach and inspire us to become instructional leaders. The behavior and teaching methods of teachers and principals, as well as the overall school environment, are key sources of motivation for becoming an efficient instructional leader. Similarly, IL is learnt at workplaces, too. The workplace situation leads and teaches us newer knowledge and skills to be better instructional leaders. While working as a teacher, anyone comes across a great deal of study and practice that equip them with confidence and ideas to enhance teaching and learning in classrooms. It is also possible to learn a great deal from coworkers, students, and parents. Likewise, IL can be learnt through professional development programs at various stages of professional journey as a school leader. These programs introduce a school leader to newer and innovative trends in teaching, learning, educational management, and instructional leadership. Training motivates and strengthens their knowledge and skills, enabling them to work efficiently as instructional leaders.

Principals reflect their learning of IL in their workplaces. They prioritize communication and meetings with teachers, students, and parents to accelerate the teaching and learning process. Regular communication with the school community promotes educational achievement. Similarly, a school can create an environment of co-learning, which motivates every individual at the school to learn from each other's practices. Principals, teachers, students, and parents can learn from one another, enhancing their knowledge and skills to achieve better performance. Likewise,

principals' monitoring of teaching and learning activities updates them on the current practices in the classrooms. They hold meetings with teachers and students and visit the classes to monitor teaching and learning activities. Likewise, evaluation of teaching and learning activities plays a vital role in developing teaching quality and learning achievement. Through the evaluation process, teachers are encouraged to implement best teaching practices, and students are motivated to improve their learning. Principals who are aware of IL tend to focus on creating a positive learning environment within their schools. They motivate the teachers and students by introducing various instructional plans and programs to promote teaching and learning. They make the whole school environment a learning zone.

My research explored the importance of instructional leadership and its impact on learning among principals. It has also explored some of the powerful ways in which learning IL is possible. While learning IL, the importance of schools, colleges, universities, workplace experiences, and professional development programs has been explored, and they are found to be impressive IL learning platforms. Similarly, the study has concluded that principals should prioritize regular communication with the school community and facilitate co-learning to promote the quality of teaching and learning. This study has explored that principals' continuous monitoring and evaluation of teachers' teaching, and students' learning will accelerate teaching and learning activities. It appears that the development of a good learning atmosphere in school encourages the school community to engage in advanced teaching and learning process.

Discussion

Arriving at this stage, I present evolving perspectives and understanding of instructional leadership in the context of Nepal. I theorize instructional leadership as a contextual and ecological phenomenon. Instructional leaders learn various dimensions of instructional leadership undergoing the layers of experiences in their lifetime. They reflect those learning in their practices in school to uplift the learning outcome of students. They remain in close connection with school community, i.e. parents, teachers, students, management committee and broader society for collaborating support to enhance a good learning atmosphere at school. The study reveals that leaders need to be rooted in their contexts and be mindful of ground realities to build a school as a learning organization. It also points that instructional leaders are caring, empowering, and motivational, and they maintain their own engagement and stay

informed. Instructional leadership is possibly a transformative journey that nurtures collaboration, self-reflection, and learner engagement. Similarly, experiential and situational learning helps develop a foundation for instructional leadership. Likewise, instructional leadership involves being inspirational, caring and culturally responsive. Overall, the study suggests that instructional leadership is an interconnected, proactive, and appreciative endeavor that fosters meaningful learning environments in schools.

Conclusions

After a deeper engagement with the narratives of the study participants, it becomes apparent that principals learn instructional leadership throughout their careers. Learning about instructional leadership is an ongoing process. They learn effective teaching and learning practices through various experiences at schools, colleges, and universities. Collaborative learning, a positive school culture, motivation in teaching and learning, and active student participation in the learning process all contribute to meaningful learning experiences. The loving and caring attitude of teachers also makes a positive difference in students' learning.

Principals also learn instructional leadership from their workplaces. Teachers' understanding of different learning styles facilitates the learning process. Principals can foster a culture of book reading among students, which broadens their knowledge and understanding. The principals nurture instructional leadership through experiential learning. Professional development programs are crucial events for principals to enhance their instructional leadership skills. Training and workshops enhance principals' knowledge and skills, enabling them to develop into efficient instructional leaders.

As instructional leaders, principals communicate with teachers, students, and parents to stay updated on ongoing issues and find solutions to problems related to the teaching and learning process. They encourage co-learning among the members of the school community. Meaningful meetings with teachers, parents, students, and other members of the school community provide an opportunity to learn from one another. Instructional leaders monitor teaching and learning activities at school. They visit the ongoing classes and walk around the school to supervise the ongoing activities. They observe the lesson plans, teaching tools, and home assignment status of teachers and

students. They monitor teachers and students through feedback from parents and students.

Teachers and students are evaluated based on students' learning achievements as reflected in exam scores. Parents can make effective evaluations of their children and teachers. Instructional leaders evaluate teachers' performance to ensure effective and engaging teaching and learning activities. To enhance a good learning atmosphere at school, principals, as instructional leaders, give space to collaborative learning and students' active engagement in their learning process. They can promote dialogic book reading habits, meditation and mindful practices, social engagement activities, and more to connect learning to real-life experiences, thereby cultivating collaborative, interactive, empathetic, and compassionate learning spaces for learners in schools. The study defines instructional leadership as a practice of collaborative, contextual, appreciative, and interconnected efforts within the school community, with the objective of cultivating meaningful learning opportunities for students and teachers.

Reflections

As a principal at school, I had to perform many leadership roles. I enjoyed performing as an instructional leader. I was always worried about making improvements in teaching and learning in the classrooms. I wanted to update my knowledge and skills to be an efficient and effective instructional leader. I did my bachelor's and master's degrees in education. I gained various insights into teaching and learning through those academic degrees. As time passed, education demanded newer pedagogy and tools. To fulfill my desire to acquire more knowledge, I decided to join the M.Phil. at Kathmandu University. I heard that this university taught students in a progressive way, which attracted me to join as a student there. I joined in the year 2020. After I attended university classes for one and a half months, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. The classes came to a complete stop at the beginning. However, the university soon continued the classes online. I took classes from home in the evening. I was a regular student in my class. I submitted all my assignments on time without exceeding the deadline. As I attended the classes regularly, the assignments did not cause me trouble. But I had to leave many of my responsibilities as a principal to attend my classes on time. I managed to do so after a discussion with my school management committee. I completed all my semesters online.

I started writing my dissertation proposal in March 2021 during my third semester. I chose the title of my dissertation, which reflected my interest in learning, as ‘Learning of Instructional Leadership among Principals: A Narrative Study’. I thought that I could get more opportunities to learn about different dimensions and aspects of instructional leadership through this study, which was my real thirst for knowledge. However, I was unable to complete my proposal at that time due to various tensions and problems at my school caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As the educational leadership department pressured me to complete my proposal, I went forward with it. The department mentored me through a research clinic, which encouraged and supported me in completing my research proposal. As I completed it, I defended my proposal, and my dissertation journey began. Due to the numerous hassles at my school, I was unable to allocate time to my studies regularly. The department used to remind me repeatedly to continue my writing journey. As I attended some of the research clinics provided by the department, I gained confidence and decided to continue my research, submitting my complete dissertation to the department before the deadline. I thought that, without taking a leave from school, I would not have enough time to complete it. Therefore, I took three weeks’ leave and sat in a room to study and write where I would have no disturbances. I reviewed some previous studies, from which I gained ideas on how to start and move forward.

I reviewed numerous research papers and books related to my study. When I gained new knowledge and insights through reading journals and books, I was excited and happy, and I thought of applying them at my school to bring about change. The journey of study and writing was nice. I was not tired mentally. Some nights, I slept only three to four hours and got up at 4:00 AM to start my studies. It provided me with valuable life experience, which gradually made me a resilient leader and a lifelong learner. My research participants were four principals from private schools. They always took time to discuss with me. They happily shared their stories. They permitted me to observe every corner of their schools. It was nice and worthwhile remaining with them. Writing was a tough job. I wrote some content, which I later deleted because I was not satisfied with it. Many rewritings were done. As per my supervisor's suggestions, I revised my writing several times and produced multiple drafts. While writing, I was excited to reflect on this study. I could relate to the participants when they shared their stories, and when I worked with the information they provided. I was totally committed to completing my writing without crossing the

deadline. Now, I am excited and happy that I did it. The journey of my study was a great learning experience for me. It encouraged me to continue learning for my transformation as a humble school leader embracing growth mindset.

Implications of the Study

Instructional leadership is essential for all principals, and it can be learnt from academic institutions, workplaces, and professional development programs. Due to a lack of learning attitude and inadequate learning opportunities, students and teachers are unable to produce good results. When the education system is effective, students have opportunities to learn more effectively, which in turn impacts their careers. Workplaces are another platform for learning instructional leadership. Systematic and well-led workplaces create a meaningful learning environment for all. Such workplaces are important for them to get a high level of learning experience, which helps them develop their career in the future. Similarly, principals can learn from different impactful practices in the global society. They can learn updated teaching and learning strategies that are effective in enhancing students' learning achievements. Regular professional development opportunities for principals and teachers are crucial. This study highlights the importance of learning instructional leadership among principals in developing a school's learning atmosphere. Instructional leadership connects with the broader society, encompassing teachers, students, parents, the local community, as well as national and international communities. Once principals and teachers begin learning instructional leadership, they will connect their classrooms to these local and broader societies.

Implications for Principals

The study indicates that principals explore various platforms of learning and practice to nurture and enhance instructional leadership. They need to explore the importance of formal educational institutions, such as schools, colleges, and universities, in developing IL competence in principals. They need to value the importance of workplace experiences and professional development programs to promote their IL skills. The study suggests that principals have regular communication among teachers, students, parents, and the school community to strengthen the teaching and learning process. Similarly, principals are required to provide adequate space for co-learning at school to enhance learning. Co-learning contributes to generating new and innovative ideas for learning enhancement.

Likewise, principals can monitor the teaching and learning process at school and provide feedback to improve the teaching and learning experience. They need to be aware of effective monitoring strategies. This study also provides principals with insight into the importance of timely evaluation of teachers' and students' jobs in promoting learning achievement. Regular evaluation makes teachers and students become sincere and dedicated to accomplishing their jobs. This study helps principals establish a positive learning atmosphere in their schools. They can rethink the prevailing learning environment and implement necessary changes to facilitate effective learning.

Implications for Policy Makers

This study suggests policy implications for the Ministry of Education, municipalities, and school management committees to reconsider developing competent instructional leaders and implementing effective instructional leadership practices in schools. Informed and skilled instructional leaders can only create an effective learning atmosphere at school. This study informs policymakers about the role of schools, colleges, and universities in sowing the seeds of instructional leadership in students. They may learn the value of past experiences and professional development programs in growing principals' instructional leadership competence. Past experiences are great sources of learning. Systems and cultures at institutions provide leadership exposure to the team members. Likewise, providing necessary professional development programs to teachers and principals is essential for developing their instructional leadership skills.

This study suggests that effective communication among stakeholders, including principals, teachers, students, and parents, is crucial for strengthening teaching and learning. It also focuses on developing more effective co-learning practices within the broader school community. It seeks national and international partnerships to learn from each other. It emphasizes the importance of a proper monitoring system for teaching and learning in schools. It seeks regular monitoring of the effectiveness of teacher and student performance. Policy makers are required to emphasize the provision of an effective evaluation system to track learning outcomes. The study highlights the role of educational institutions in fostering a student-friendly culture within schools. It highlights the need to equip schools with various learning resources to foster a positive learning environment.

Implications for Researchers

This study opens avenues for other researchers to conduct further research in this field, exploring and developing the IL competence of principals.

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