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Research Article

## **English Language Teachers' Perspectives on Transfer of Training Skills**

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### **Abstract**

Transfer of training is ongoing process of applying the content, instructional knowledge, and skills learned during the training session into classroom practice. This study aimed to explore secondary-level English language teachers' perspectives and the areas in which they get support in the transformation of training skills. The study was conducted using a narrative inquiry method applying semi-structured interviews as tools to get the required information. Four trained English language teachers teaching in four public schools in Rupandehi district were selected purposively. This research revealed that English language teachers had positive perspectives on the transfer of training skills. However, pedagogical transformation through training remained limited as they partially transferred the training knowledge and skills during the classroom delivery. The study can contribute to providing insightful ideas to the teachers in the transformation of training skills.

**Keywords:** class management, collaborative culture, instructional strategies, professional development, TPD training

## **Introduction**

Training is a process designed to enhance workers' attitudes, knowledge, and skills to improve their job performance. Training is a short-term, task-oriented activity closely tied to specific job functions. It equips workers with essential tools for effective performance (Bhatia, 2005). In education, the transfer of teacher training refers to the ongoing application of instructional knowledge, skills, and teaching methods in classroom practice. Teacher preparation includes both content and methodology, helping teachers acquire fundamental strategies and approaches, especially beneficial for novice teachers in pre-service education programs (Richards & Schmidt, 2005). Through training, teachers update their skills, enhance their professional growth, and learn to manage classroom activities effectively. Proficiency in teaching requires specific knowledge, skills, and competencies. Wallace (1991) argues that training prepares individuals for specific job-related skills (as cited in Khanal, 2006). Teachers can only teach effectively once they gain adequate knowledge and skills, as effective teaching requires a unique set of competencies. During training, teachers practice new techniques in the classroom while being observed, monitored, and provided with feedback from colleagues (Farrell & Richards, 2010). This process of supervision and feedback is crucial to the effectiveness of training.

Teacher preparation programmes provide practical skills, particularly in classroom management and instructional strategies (Balsara, 2004, as cited in Khanal, 2006). These programs equip educators with the skills to translate theoretical knowledge into classroom practice. Professional development in teacher training enables educators to learn relevant theories and gain practical knowledge essential for handling classroom activities and addressing teaching challenges. Essential teaching skills include lesson planning, classroom management, and strategies for introducing and practicing new materials while providing constructive feedback to students (Richards & Schmidt, 2005). Teacher preparation courses thus offer the foundational skills and techniques critical for effective teaching.

Without this professional proficiency, educators may struggle to deliver quality education using effective methods and techniques, highlighting the need to

stay updated on current developments in teaching. This study seeks to explore secondary-level English language teachers' perspectives on training transfer and identify areas where they receive support in integrating training skills into classroom practice. To accomplish this research study, I formulated the following research questions.

1. How do English language teachers perceive the transfer of training skills in classroom practices?
2. In which areas do they get support in transforming training skills in their classroom teaching?

### **Literature Review**

In this section, I conceptualize transfer teacher training and review the previous studies related to it.

#### **Conceptualization of transfer teacher training**

Teacher training is one of the most studied topics in Nepal, and it is explored by government and non-governmental organizations as well as individual researchers. Transfer in the workplace refers to how well trainees transfer their newly acquired information and strategies to the professional world. The design and delivery of the training in a real work environment determine how effectively knowledge and skills are transferred (Bhatia, 2005). Customized training, refresher training, information and communication training (ICT), in-service training leadership training, material development training, and teacher professional development (TPD) training are offered by the Education Training Center (ETC) throughout the country. TPD training raises awareness of teachers to improve their performance in classroom practices. Teachers must develop not just didactic and pedagogical abilities, but also educational reform skills, such as critical thinking, curriculum design, and implementation (Snoek, 2017). Teachers are provided with pre-service or in-service training. The transfer of learning depends on training inputs that include the trainee's characteristics, training scheme and work atmosphere (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). TPD training becomes successful only when these core components are incorporated properly.

Trained teachers require improving the standard of instruction. The transfer of training skills is the application of pedagogical knowledge and skills learned during training to trainees' employment (Cheng & Ho, 2001). Teachers add new professional

knowledge and skills and maintain their knowledge of theory and practice to feel more assured about what they are teaching and to get better results from their pupils (Farrell & Richards, 2010). They apply the training-based knowledge and abilities to classroom activities. In this line, Subedi (2004) mentioned that the effectiveness with which trainees transfer their learning from a training context to the workplace is known as the transfer of training.

While designing the training curriculum, the needs of individual teachers and institutions need to be considered. By improving their pedagogical abilities, instructors become more professional and effective in changing the quality of education (NCED, 2017). TPD training that does not relate to the real classroom world, local context and trainees' mental constructs, needs and expectations, cannot achieve the desired goals. Training materials that do not take into account real-world classroom issues, the local setting, and the requirements and expectations of the trainees cannot achieve the desired objectives. Training content that does not consider real classroom problems, local context and trainees' needs and expectations, cannot achieve the desired goals (Gnawali, 2008).

Classroom management, lesson preparation, use of teaching materials, appropriate techniques, child-friendly environments, and motivational methods were not effectively implemented in classrooms (NCED, 2013). Teacher training has been unsuccessful in transferring pedagogical skills and practical knowledge to real classroom settings (NCED, 2014). The learner's experience with the instructional program is enhanced when teachers can apply theoretical knowledge in practice, making them effective planners and skilled practitioners in their professional lives (Acharya, 2019).

Similarly, a study by Malakar (2003) found that most trained teachers did not apply the knowledge and skills acquired during training in their actual teaching environments. This failure resulted in the expected student performance not being achieved. Regarding classroom practices and training transfer, CERID (2004) discovered that in Nepal's primary schools, teachers dominate the teaching and learning processes, focusing more on their instruction rather than on the students'. The focus was on rote memorization of textbook content, and child-centred education was not implemented in classroom procedures during teacher training.

Likewise, Giri (2007) investigated the transfer of training skills among B.Ed. graduates, finding that trained teachers successfully applied some training skills in the classroom, demonstrating strong subject knowledge and confidence. However, barriers such as insufficient physical facilities, untrained peers, resistance to change, diverse classrooms, and inherent challenges hindered the full transfer of these skills. Similarly, Singh (2007) explored the reasons for the non-transfer of training skills, highlighting issues like lack of subject matter expertise, low motivation, flawed training delivery, and misconceptions about workload and focus on results. Bhandari (2011) found that although Nepalese teachers learned new teaching methods, the education system saw little improvement due to ineffective teacher training, exacerbated by a lack of standardization in training design and delivery (Education Research Center, 2014). This underscores the need to assess the current state of teacher education reform.

Desimone and Garet (2015) identified five key characteristics for effective professional growth in the U.S.: group engagement, continuous duration, coherence, and content focus, aiming to enhance professionalism and tangible results. Capraro et al. (2016) showed that training improved students' academic performance, particularly in varied classroom settings. Budhathoki (2017) emphasized the importance of teacher training for professional development, while Joshi (2017) found that NCED's training program benefited English language teachers in teaching skills, methodologies, materials use, content, and professional growth. Kshetree (2018) identified the main causes of TPD training failure as lack of oversight, motivation for change, and systematic training by trainers.

Bhandari et al. (2022) revealed that pedagogical changes from training in Gandaki Province were insufficient to improve student performance, despite positive attitudes among teachers, trainers, and head teachers toward training's contribution to quality education. The study identified some barriers such as teachers' lack of commitment, outdated government policies, irregular monitoring, and inadequate school facilities. Shrivastava (2023) concluded that teachers' training levels significantly impact students' academic performance, indicating that training programmes can enhance pedagogical skills.

Thus, to my knowledge, in Nepal, few studies have been conducted in the area of the transfer of training skills. They showed that TPD training could not bring the

expected transformation in teachers' classroom activities and students' achievements. They are also not very specific on the issue of instructors' perception of the transfer of training skills. However, they have made the teachers aware of the need for learner-centred learning activities. Therefore, my study is different from the previous ones as I found a theoretical, contextual and thematic gap therefore, my study is different from the previous ones.

### **Methodology**

I chose a narrative inquiry research design because it effectively captures the social setting and culture where instruction and learning occur (Webster & Metrova, 2007) and aligns with the lived experiences of my participants. I conducted semi-structured interviews to gather data and explore their perspectives on the transfer of training skills into real classroom practices. I purposefully selected four trained teachers from four public schools in Rupandehi, Nepal, to include those with in-depth knowledge of specific issues (Cohen et al., 2007). Through in-depth interviews, I gathered their accounts of training skills transfer, using their first language to gain deeper insights and firsthand knowledge. In-depth interviews are the best and most efficient way to provide detailed information on the subject matter planned by the interviewer through straightforward communication (Morris, 2015). I interviewed each English teacher to gather relevant information on their perspectives regarding motivation, presentation, practice, methods and techniques, and evaluation systems in teaching, analyzing their transfer of training skills. To maintain privacy, I used pseudonyms for the participants. The face-to-face interview data was classified and categorized by topics. Since the study was qualitative, I transcribed and analyzed the data descriptively.

### **Social Constructivism Theory**

Learners construct their understanding and knowledge of the real world in which they live and work by experiencing and creating various things and reflecting on them actively. Vygotsky (1978) considers that the roles of culture and society, language, and interaction are important in understanding how humans learn. It provides a comfortable learning space as knowledge is socially and culturally constructed using interaction. When the teacher faces some problems in teaching, then sharing ideas they come up with the solution. Learning takes place through

interactions with peers, teachers, and the world at large with the experience possessed by other individuals (Vygotsky, 1978).

## **Results and Discussion**

This section presents the collected information taken from the narratives of the participants with analysis and interpretation under two main themes.

### **Teachers' perspectives on the transfer of training skills**

Language teachers' perception influences how they teach in the classroom and what they do reflects their beliefs. Transfer of teacher training can be in the form of classroom practices such as methods, procedures, materials, interactions, and instructions (Borg, 2003). To understand how teachers transfer training skills, it is crucial to explore teachers' beliefs, perceptions, and thinking processes which are according to classroom practices (Richards & Lockhart, 2007). I made an effort to comprehend the participants' perspectives on the transfer of teacher training through the analysis of the interview. They were found to have more or less the same perspectives on it. They revealed good perspectives and positive views toward it.

In response to my question regarding the perspectives toward the transfer of training skills, Mohan stated, "Transfer of teacher training is the application of what is learnt in the training either in pre-service or on-the-job. It prepares teachers for the application of their skills in the teaching career." His narrative indicated that he had good perspectives on the transfer of training skills. Through teacher preparation, teachers can improve and enhance their teaching abilities. His view is in harmony with Bhatia (2005). He stated by transferring the knowledge and fundamental abilities learned during instruction, training supports teachers in providing successful instruction in the classroom. So, teacher training prepares teachers for professional preparation in tackling real pedagogical classroom problems.

Regarding the transfer of teacher training, Sanju asserted, "TPD training helps me transfer the learnt skills and new teaching trends and practices in real classroom teaching." Her narrative supported that if TPD training is suited to the learners' real classroom cultures, they could transfer the learnt skills easily. Instructors can learn best by being involved actively in the training session (Lazar, 2009). They learn about

current teaching trends and methods through workshops and teacher training programmes.

Thus, teacher training helped teachers grow professionally with proper teaching skills, methodologies and techniques to impart quality education. It is, therefore, training is essential and indispensable. Training is a crucial component of teachers' professional growth since it helps them become more competent and self-assured. Training programmes that rely on theories of knowledge transformation may not be successful in achieving the desired transformation (Adey & Hewitt, 2004).

Krishna shared his views thus, "TPD training programmes develop professional knowledge, and skills in teachers. Training should be contextual, need-based so that teachers can improve their performance in their job." His perspective on teacher training revealed the fact that training needs to be contextual and need-based as individual learners' interests and needs are different. Trainers should provide training to the trainees according to their needs, demands, available resources and local classrooms. Participants' views are supported by Hada (2011) who asserted that teacher training education creates a favourable teaching-learning atmosphere to conduct effective teaching in the classroom.

In this context, Manju mentioned, "I know that one size does not fit everywhere." So, I differentiate the instruction to address the mixed ability learners." Her experience showed that a particular method does not fit everywhere; therefore, the selection of the method depends on the type of material being discussed, the background of the students, teachers' prospects, institutional constraints, and sociopolitical and socio-cultural contexts. Her view is supported by Dincay (2011) who claimed "One method that works well with a certain group of students may not be suitable for others" (p. 58). I also believe a particular method of teaching does not fit everywhere. Therefore; I also use different teaching methods to suit heterogeneous learners and the nature of the subject matter to be taught.

### **Areas of Getting Support in the Transformation of Training Skills**

Teacher participants transferred the training skills in the following areas.

#### ***Teacher motivation***

Motivation is essential as a teacher's motivation positively influences the transformation of training. The secondary level trained English teachers could motivate their students to learn. In this line, Mohan asserted, "I am familiar with



motivational techniques, but I practice them in their instructional practices occasionally." This clearly shows that teacher training assisted teachers in how to transfer professional skills into practice although he admitted using them rarely. Regarding this, Sanju asserted, "I usually begin my new lesson only after motivating my students either by asking questions, showing pictures or telling a joke for their better learning opportunities."

Sanju's lived narratives showed that strongly motivated learners could learn something better and faster. Asking the class questions from the previous lesson is a kind of motivating the students toward the lesson. Thus, the effectiveness of instruction and learning rests on the efficiency of motivation. She claimed that she usually begins the lesson only after motivating students so that they can pay attention to the lesson. This clearly showed that she had the idea of motivating her students. Without motivational techniques, teachers cannot make effective teaching. Students are motivated when teachers' teaching is relevant to their needs, interests and levels. Despite the significance of teacher training in the majority of school districts, the impact of teacher training on pupils is not well documented (Jacob & Lefgren, 2004).

### ***Planning and using teaching materials***

Planning and using teaching materials play a vital role in making teaching effective and permanent. They support teachers to create a better learning environment. In this regard, Mohan claimed, "I usually do not make formal lesson plans but I enter my class with a plan on what to teach. I usually do not use teaching aids while teaching my students." During the interview, he responded he entered the class with a plan on what to teach but usually, he did not use teaching materials in his class. Teacher training helps teachers use appropriate instructional materials in classroom teaching (Hada, 2011).

Regarding planning and use of teaching materials, Sanju stated, "I have the idea of constructing teaching material and lesson plan however, I rarely spend time at home in advance and apply it in real teaching." Her life story clarified that she also taught without planning and using specific teaching materials that were required for a particular lesson. She spent little time for the preparation of teaching-related activities in advance at home. Common training themes include classroom delivery techniques, the use of teaching and learning aids, and enhancing subject-matter knowledge and teaching abilities where teachers have difficulty (ADB, 2017).

### ***Classroom management***

Classroom management is another crucial component of teaching and learning in instructional transformation. It is a planned and coordinated action and process which allows teachers to effectively teach creating the conditions in which learning can take place effortlessly. Classroom management is challenging as it involves the equal participation of students in multi-tasks and teachers to solve classroom-related problems. Thornbury (2006) claimed classroom management is the organization of teachers that directs learners learning effectively using the available time and resources (as cited in Hall, 2011). Maintaining student discipline, organizing daily lessons and tasks, establishing balancing and continuity of the classroom momentum, involving students in a variety of tasks, balancing the variety and challenging them, and establishing proximity are all components of effective classroom management (Stronge, 2008).

Regarding classroom management, Krishna shared his experience and stated, "I sometimes divide the class into groups having both talented and weak students. I go round the class to facilitate them maintaining discipline and establishing a good rapport with them." His lived experience confirmed that he had practical ideas for managing his classroom. He further added, "I usually ask them to change their seats based on rotation, provide group work and pair work, and establish a good rapport with them." His narrative indicated that he had some partial classroom management skills. Thus, without classroom management skills, it is difficult to create a positive teaching-learning atmosphere and ensure the success of learning. He was skilled in managing students into pairs and groups. It is, therefore, the most effective use of instructional resources and the guarantee of equal learning participation that helps them learn better in the classroom.

### ***Classroom presentation and practice***

Teachers' presentations and students' learning are intimately related. Teachers who have poor presentation and practice skills, cannot make their teaching effective. The more you talk, the less opportunity there is for the learners (Scrivener, 2005). In this regard, Manju stated, "I usually use the target language in class but when the content is difficult, I use Nepali so that my students can comprehend the text. I try to implement the skills that I learned from training while teaching." Her expression indicated that she mostly used the target language and rarely used learners' L1 and

made her teaching effective by applying the learnt skills. It explored that only the trained teachers could make presentations and practice effectively in the language classroom.

I also believe English teachers need to teach English through English. As far as possible, there should be an English environment in the classroom to improve students' English. The participating instructor was competent at putting theory into practice in the classroom. Considering the use of the target language as a teaching medium, she used the target language but partially she was using students' L1 as well. Thus, she presented lessons based on students' levels, needs, backgrounds and interest as well as she made them practice. She handled the class in a friendly way.

### ***Instructional strategies***

Effective and efficient teaching and learning of the English language need the use of proper methods and techniques. To satisfy the demands of today's learners, the learning environment must be centred on the students. It is challenging to give learners the chance to participate in an innovative and productive learning environment in ELT without employing the proper methodology. Therefore, using a single technique exclusively is not appropriate (Bhandari, 2020). Regarding this, Krishna exposed his views, "I sometimes use group/pair work, and project work in my class but I do not apply all the new methods and techniques frequently in real classes that I learned in pre-service and in-service training."

The above participant's lived story indicated that he was familiar with student-centred teaching even if he did not use all the new methods and techniques frequently in the tutorial room. He was partially competent at incorporating interactive teaching techniques. The above activities of the participants proved that the transfer of training was not at a satisfactory level.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

The purpose of this study was to explore English language teachers' perspectives and the areas in which they transfer training skills in the real teaching context. The findings of the study reveal English teachers' positive perspectives on the transfer of pedagogical skills for quality education however; the teachers' perception and professionalism toward the teacher preparation programmes are not sufficient in applying skills for the job. It shows that trained teachers in most cases are not found

to be successful in transferring the acquired pedagogical skills in classroom application. Although training skills support the teachers in updating and constructing new information and skills, they partially transfer the learned instructional knowledge and skills in teacher motivation, planning and using teaching materials, classroom management, classroom presentation and practice and instructional strategies to their actual classroom situation. The study may provide insightful ideas to the trainers and teachers in the transformation of training skills. Therefore, this study indicates the huge gap between the teacher training environment and the actual setting.

This small-scale qualitative study only used in-depth interviews without observing their real teaching cannot be generalized. Therefore, another quantitative study with a bigger population needed to be carried out by future researchers.

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