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Research Article

Student's Learning Journey with Generative AI: A Narrative Inquiry into the Transformation of Learning and Teaching Practices in Higher Education

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Abstract

The rapidly distribution of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools has reconfigured the epistemic, pedagogical, and ethical scenery of higher education. While growing body of survey based and experimental research documents the prevalence and effectives of Gen AI adoption, comparatively little is known about how Information Technology (IT) teachers narratively make sense of transformation of their student's learning journeys, particularly in resources centered higher education system. This study address gap through a qualitative narrative inquiry into the lived experience of eighteen IT teachers working in Nepalese institutions. Guided by interpretivist paradigm and informed by the conceptual lenses of five the theory and models, the study employed purposively sampling and semi structured narrative interviews to elicit teacher's story of pedagogical change. Data interoperation was conduct using a reflective thematic analysis approach, with eight themes: learning strategies before and after AI, changes in study habits, AI as a learning companion, faculty responses to AI, teaching innovations, assessment changes, academic integrity concerns, critical thinking and creativity. Finding disclose that GenAI has enhanced, personalization, scaffolded coding and inquiry tasks and prompted a reimagining of assessment toward reliable and dialogic forms, while simultaneously raising concerns about overreliance, surface learning and the erosion of foundational competencies. This study adds to a contextual grounded, narratively ironic justification that complements dominant quantitative work and offers practical implications for instructional policy, human resource development, digital and AI enable curricula and ethical governance of GenAI in higher education.

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Introduction

Higher education across the globe is undergoing a reflective digital transformation, intensified by the pandemic and the subsequent normalization of online, blended and hybrid learning ecologies(Jiang & Shen, 2023; Ramirez-Mera et al., 2025). With this sifted context, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has moved from peripherical research interest to a central pedagogical and instructional concern. Early application of AI in education focused on intelligent tutoring system, adaptive learning platforms and learning analytic dashboards, primarily oriented toward admirative efficiency and personalized content delivery (Sajja et al., 2024; Strielkowski et al., 2025). The release of ChatGPT in late 2022, however, a discontinuous moment, foregrounding a new class of generative AI(GenAI) system built on large language models (LLMs) that application makes clear, contextual situated and multimodal outputs in response to natural language prompts (Drakopoulou, 2026; Lee, 2025).

The pedagogical inference of GenAI is far success. Students now usually use to OpenAI-ChatGPT, Microsoft-Copilot, Google-Gemini, GitHub Copilot, Perplexity AI, and DeepSeek for academic task reaching from drafting essays and summarizing readings, to debugging code, generating practice questions and explaining complex concept in plain language (Gimpel et al., 2023; Sarsa et al., 2022). For IT students, in particular, GenAI has become inseparable from the everyday practice of learning to program, to design system and to reason computationally (Hazzan & Erez, 2025). Coding assistant such as Claudi AI and GitHub Copilot blurs the line between authoring and curating raising fundamental questions about what it now means to learn to code, to think algorithmically and to demonstrate competence.

Instructors, especially those in IT and Computing discipline, occupy a doubly precarious position in this evolution. However, they are expected to model responsible and innovative use of GenAI in classroom and laboratories, On the other hand, they must navigate students rapid and often opaque adoption to tools whose output are not reliable, transparent or pedagogically aligned (Kayal, 2024; Diyal et al., 2026). The outcome is a layered set of professional dilemmas concerning curriculum redesign, assessment integrity and future shape of their disciplinary identities.

The Nepalese higher education providers a distinctive and undertheorized vantage point for examining these dynamic. Several Universities and colleges in Nepal, have a long contended with infrastructural constrains, uneven internet access and limited investment in faculty development (Dahal & Khadka, 2025; Shahi et al., 2025). At the same time, Nepal introduces National Artificial Intelligence Policy, 2025; Nepalese IT students, often digitally fluent and globally connected, have embraced GenAI with striking speed, frequently outpacing institutional policy and faculty preparedness (Adhikari et al., 2026). This asymmetry between how teachers narrate, interpreted and respond to the transformation of student learning.

Although rapidly growing international literature on GenAI in education, much of it relies on large scale survey, controlled experiments and systematic review (Nikolic et al., 2024). These approaches, while valuable, often flatten the temporal, relational an emotional dimension of pedagogy change. Few studies have emphasized the storied

experiences of IT Teachers themselves and fewer have done on South Asia and specifically Nepalese context. There remains a clear gap in qualitative, narrative-oriented research that trace how IT teachers in higher education perceive the transformation of student's learning journeys with GenAI and how their own teaching practices are reshaped in dialogue with these changes.

Thus, the present study employes narrative inquiry to address the following overarching questions. 1) *How do IT teachers in Nepalese higher education narrate the transformation of student learning journeys 2) How do IT teacher in Nepal narratively construct and make sense, of their experience of GenAI as it disrupts, reconfigures and enhances their professional practices? and 3) What pedagogical adaptations do IT teachers describe making in response to GenAI and their own teaching practices in the era of generative AI?* By privileging teacher's stories, the study contributes a contextually anchored yet internationally resonant account of pedagogical change. The significance of the work lies in three areas, it extends narrative inquiry into the under explored terrain of GenAI mediate higher education; it focusses the perspective of teacher in global south context is too often absent from mainstream AI in education discourse and it generates practical insight to inform curriculum, assessment, AI literacy and faculty development policy.

Literature Review

Generative AI in Higher Education

The emergence of LLMs has catalyzed an unprecedented wave of literature on the education use of GenAI. Recent reviews characterize GenAI as a general-purpose technology for learning with applications spanning content generation, formative feedback, language support and personalized tutoring (Gupta et al., 2025; Moallem et al., 2026). Observed empirical review consistently establishes rapid and widespread student adoption Du et al. (2024) reported broadly positive student attitudes toward GenAI tools in higher education, Kazemitabaar et al. (2023) while documented near ubiquitous use of coding assistants in introductory programming courses. These outlines make parallel with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis & Granic, 2024), which attributes adoption to perceived usefulness and ease to use. Where student perceive GenAI as tools valuable for completing coursework and reducing cognitive load, uptake follows predictably and rapidly.

Thus, adaptation is not synonymous with effective or equitable learning. Critical method attentiveness against techno solutionist farming, highlighting concern about hallucinations, bias, environment cost and deskilling of fundamental knowledges(Aksoy & Kursun, 2024; Essafi, 2026). Since a constructivists perspective (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978), these concerns carry particular weight if GenAI assumes cognitive labor that learners need to internalize in order to develop competence, the scaffolding it provides many undermine rather than support the construction of durable knowledge structure. The tension between enthusiastic adoption and critical caution farms frames the broader inquiry of this study, particularly in exploring how IT teachers in Nepal navigate these completing imperatives in their instructional practice.

AI supported Learning and Digital Pedagogy

GenAI be seated within an extensive path of AI reinforced learning that contains intelligent tutoring systems, adaptive platforms and learning analytics (Almetnawy et al., 2025). Digital pedagogy underlines that technology combination is not a neutral intersection on existing practice but are mediating forge that reforms curricula goals, classroom interactions and learner characteristics (Becirovic, 2023; Petrovski et al., 2025). Inside this border, GenAI is best understood not as a tool to be added to instruction but as an actor that participates in the co construction of knowledge and restructures the division of cognitive labor between humana and machines.

The reradiation is usefully analyzed through the SAMAR modal (Puentedura, 2014) which distinguishes between four levels of technology integration: Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition. Most current GenAI use in higher education appears to cluster at the substitution and argumentations levels, replacing word processors or search engines with only superficial enhancement of pedagogical outcome(Albakri et al., 2025; Divekar et al., 2025). So far the transformative potential of GenAI its dimensions to redefine learning tasks altogether is hardly realized lacking internal pedagogical design. TPACK (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) provides a complementary lens, emphasizing that effective technology integration requires teacher to hold and coordinate technological, pedagogical and content knowledge concurrently. Emerging notations of AI-TPACK(Mishra et al., 2023) extended this framework by recognizing that the knowledge required to tech with GenAI is qualitatively different from prior form of technological knowledge, determine new literacies around prompt design, output evaluation and epistemological responsibility.

Student learning journey and Teacher adaptation

The concept of the learning journey highlights the temporal, biographical and affective dimensions of student development across the time and contexts. Recent studies show that GenAI accelerates certain phase of this journey particularly information gathering, drafting and debugging while complicating others, such as evidence evaluation, source attribution and the cultivation of authentic academic voice (Perifanou & Economides, 2025; Qin et al., 2025).These dynamics are through Transformative Learning Theory(Mezirow, 1978, 2018), which centers on the role disorienting Delima in triggering critical reflection and perspective transformation. Designed for learners, a meet with a convincing but truthfully incorrect AI response constitutes quite such a dilemma, it disrupts habitual reliance on authority and induces a more active, interrogate stance toward knowledge sources.

Faculty, in turn, essential familiarize their pedagogical performances in real time Berglund, (2023) and Li et al., (2026) argue that academies hesitate between enthusiasm, ambivalence and resistance, with positions often shifting as their experimentation depends. Such adaptation is rarely linear; it is mediated by disciplinary norms, institutional cultures and personal epistemologies. Narrative inquiry Clandinin, (2006) and Larsson et al., (2026) is particularly sound appropriate to capturing these non-linear paths, because it attends to how teachers story their professional experiences across time, place and relationship. In context such as Nepal, where resource constrains compound the

uncertainty generated by rapid technological change, teachers' stories of adaption may reveal forms of pedagogical resourcefulness and indigenous knowledge brokering that are largely absent from dominant Western literature (Bhandari et al., 2026).The constructivist framework further illuminates teacher adaption, educators who view their role as facilitating students zone of proximal development(Vygotsky & Cole, 1978) must recalibrate what the zone looks line when GenAI is available as cognitive partner.

AI literacy and Human AI Collaboration

The notion of AI literacy has emerged as a unifying construct for the competencies required to engage critically and productively and understanding AI system. Berber Sardinha, (2024) purpose a multidimensional model encompassing knowing and understanding AI, applying AI, evaluating AI and ethical considerations. Structure on this, more recent work centers generative AI literacy and prompt literacy as distinct but overlapping skill(Hwang et al., 2023). These competencies map onto the capability approach(Sen, 2005), which shifts attention from what learners prepare with AI to what learners are able to do the actual freedoms and functioning that AI use either expands or excludes. In resource constrained contests, AI literacy many expand access to high quality intellectual scaffolding previously unavailable to students, thereby broadening the range of education capabilities. However, where access in uneven or digital infrastructure unreliable, GenAI may deepen existing stratifications rather than ameliorate them.

Closely related is the framing of human AI collaboration, which positions GenAI not as a replacement for human cognition but as a partner is distributed cognitive works (Wilson et al., 2026). For IT teacher, cultivating collaborative dispositions among students has become a curricular priority(Bosio & Waghid, 2023).This orientation resonates with constructivist notations of scaffolded learning (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978), where the AI functions as a more knowledgeable other with the zone of proximal development, offering responsive, on demand assistance calibrated to the learner's immediate need. The critical question, as the transformative learning perspective underscores(Southworth, 2022), is whether such collaboration promotes deeper epistemic agency. A question that can only be answered thorough careful, context sensitive inquiry into students and teacher lived experiences with these tools.

Ethical issue, Academic Integrity and Assessment transformation

Academy integrity is perhaps the most visible flashpoint in GenAI discourse. (Ardito, 2023; Tsigaris & Teixeira da Silva, 2026) Article common concern about students submitting AI generated work without disclose, while weight the fundamental boundaries of detection technologies and the confrontational dynamics they produce. Researchers ever more argue that the appropriate institutional response is not observation but pedagogical redesign, including authentic assessment, process-oriented evaluation oral defenses and explicit AI use protocols (Liu, 2025; Perkins et al., 2024). Beginning transformative learning perspective(Mezirow, 1978), the crisis of academic integrity disorienting a systemic disorienting dilemma for institutions: it compels an essential re-examination of genetic traditions about authorship, originality and the very purpose assessment.

Moral concern ranges beyond integrity to encompass data privacy, algorithmic bias, intellectual property and equitable access. These concerns transfer particular tone in

resource constrained contexts such as Nepal, where internet connectivity is unevenly distributed, English language AI tools may disadvantage nonnative speakers and institutional policy frameworks are still emerging (Mullah & Zainon, 2026). The SAMR model(Puentedura, 2014) offers a useful heuristic for evaluating ethical risk: at the substitution level, where students use GenAI simply to complete existing tasks with less effort, integrity risk are highest, at the redefinition level where assessment tasks are redesigned to be inherently AI resistant or AI integrative, integrity concern are correspondingly diminished assessment transformation is thus not merely and ethical imperative gur a pedagogical one, requiring IT teachers to develop new form of TPACK+(Mishra et al., 2023) that incorporate assessment design knowledge alongside technological and content expertise.

The reviewed literature established that GenAI is reshaping higher education in pedagogically consequential ways, that students and teacher are adapting unevenly and ethical and assessment challenges are pressing, thus far four gaps persist. First, qualitative work that foregrounds teachers storied experience is scarce relative to surveys and experiments. Second, narrative, inquiries specifically focused on IT teachers, despite their disciplinary proximality to GenAI, are rare. Third, voice form South Asian and Nepalese higher education are underrepresented in the internal evidence base. Fourth, investigative analysis that bring constructivism, transformative learning theory, TAM, TPACK and SAMR into duologue around GenAI remain limited. The present study addresses these gaps directly.

Conceptual Framework

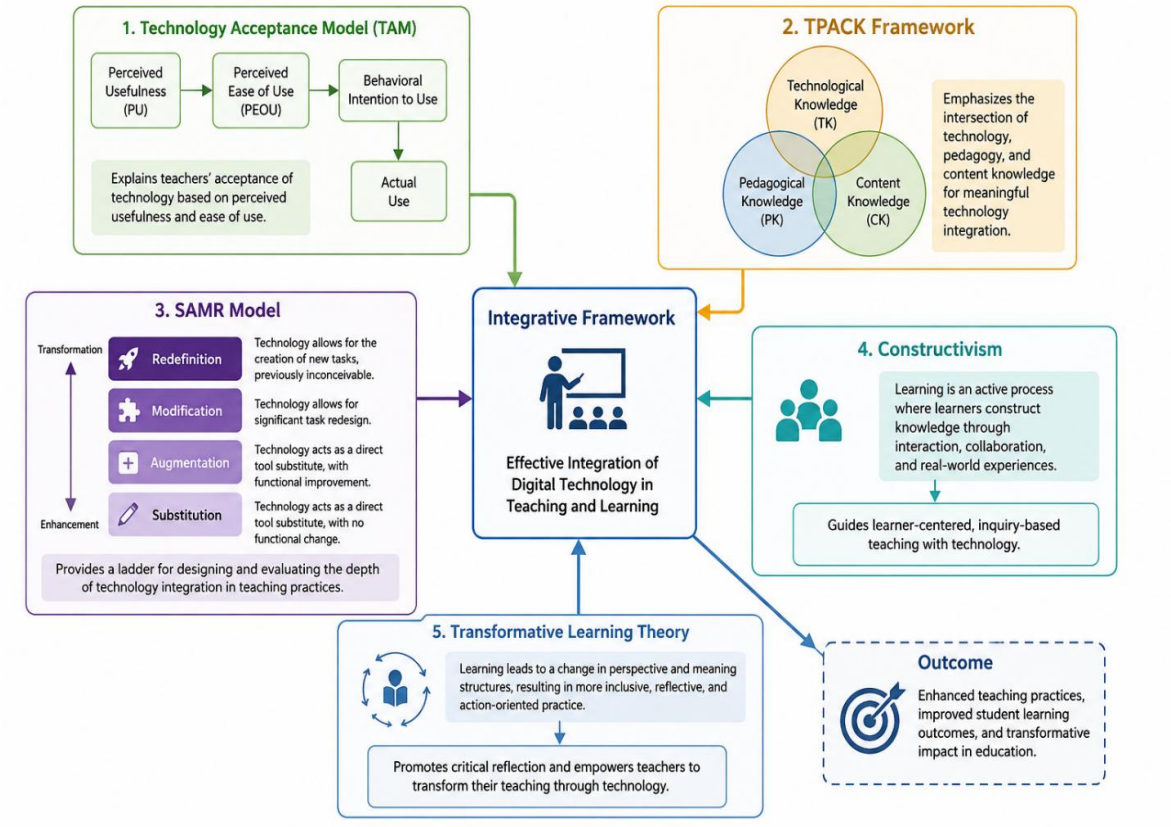

Figure 1: Integrative Framework for Integration of DT in TL

Methodology

Research Design

This study is grounded in an interpretivist paradigm, which holds that social reality is constructed through the meaning's actors ascribe their experience (Creswell et al., 2007). Interpretivism aligns naturally with the aim of understanding how IT teachers make sense of GenAI mediated transformation, privileging emic accounts over the imposition of predefined variables. Ontologically, the study assumes a relativist position in which multiple, situated realities coexist; epistemologically, it embraces a subjectivist stance in which knowledge is co construed between researcher and participants.

Narrative inquiry was selected as both methodology and method. Subsequent (Clandinin, 2006) three-dimensional inquiry space, the study attended to temporality (past present and future of teaching with GenAI), sociality (the relation webs connecting teacher, students, institutions and tools). Narrative inquiry was particularly appropriate give the temporal nature of "*learning journeys*" and the desire to capture the unfolding character of teacher adaptation.

Sampling and Participant

This study was conducted across institutions affiliated with six university in Nepal, Tribhuvan University (TU), Pokhara University (PU). Purbanchal University (Pur.U), Kathmandu University (KU), Nepal Open University (NOU), Far Western University (FWU) and Mis western University (MU). These institutions vary in size resource base and degree of digital infrastructure, providing a heterogeneous yet bounded setting from examining IT teachers' experiences. Recruitment was conducted across the Kathmandu Valley, Chitwan, Kaski, Surkhet, and Kailali to capture geographic and institutional diversity.

Eighteen IT teachers participated in the study, recruited through purposive sampling(Patton, 2015) to ensure variation across institution type years of teaching experience and gender and disciplinary focus. Programmes Bachelor of information and communication Education (BICTE), Bachelor of Science Computer Science and Information Technology (BSc. CSIT), Bachelor of Engineering in Computer (BE Computer), Bachelor of Computer Application (BCA), Bachelor in Information Technology (BIT), Bachelor of Information technology Management (BITM) and Bachelor of Education Computer science and Information Technology (BED CSIT) with computer science core courses. Inclusion criteria were a) full time or contract teaching responsibilities in an IT related programme at Nepalese university; b) minimum of four years teaching experience; c) willingness to participate in extended narrative interviews; d) demonstratable engagement with GenAI tools in teaching Learning or assessment. Male participants constituted 83.3%(n=15) and female 16.7%(n=3), reflecting structural imbalance in Nepal's IT teaching workforce. Teaching experience ranged from four to seventeen years. Similarly, University: TU (9), PU (4), PurU (1), NOU (1), FWU (1), MU (1), KU (1); Programme: BCA (5), BE Computer (2), BICTE (4), BITM (1), BSc. CSIT (3), Bed CSIT (1), BIT (2). Participant are refereed to throughout the findings using pseudonyms (Participant 1 to Participant 18) to protect anonymity.

Data collection

Data were collected through semi structured narrative interviews conducted at early 2026. Each participant engaged in one primary interview lasting between 60 min to 80 minutes, with a shorter follow-up conversation for clarification and member chickening. Interviews followed a flexible guide organized around four narrative prompts: tell me the story of how GenAI entered your teaching life; describe a memorable moment in which a student use of GenAI changed your understanding; walk me through a course or assessment you have redesigned; and imagine you're teaching five years from now. Interview were conduct in Nepali language. After translated and back translated to preserve nuance, all interview were audio recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim.

Ethical consideration

All participant provided written informed consent, which detailed the study purpose, procedure, risk, benefits and the right to withdraw at any point. Pseudonymous were used thorough and identifying institutional details were reduced form transcripts. Data ware stored in researcher devices accessible only to the research team.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was established following Lincoln et al. (1985) four criteria. Credibility was supported through prolonged engagement with participants, member checking of interview summaries and emerging interpretations and triangulation across participants and institutions. Transferability was facilitated by thick description of the Nepalese higher education context, enabling readers to assess applicability to their own settings. Dependability was addressed through an audit trail documenting analytic decisions, memos and coding iterations. Confirmability was supported by reflective journaling in which researchers interrogated their own positionalities as IT educators with prior experience of GenAI Integration

Data analysis

Transcripts were analyzed using (Braun & Clarke, 2006) six phase reflective thematic analysis- familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, constructing candidate themes reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing the report. Coding was conduct both manually and with support of software. Consistent with reflexive thematic analysis, themes were treated as analytic constructions rather than passively "emergent" categories, with researcher subjective acknowledged as a resource rather than a contaminant. Narrative resonance was retained by preserving extended quotations and by re storying segment of teacher's accounts were this interoperative coherence.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis generated nine interlaced theme that together compose a multilayered narrative of GenAI mediated transformation in Nepalese IT higher education.

Theme 1: Learning strategies Before and After AI

Participants narrated a marked shift in student learning strategies in the period since GenAI tools become widely accessible. Where students previously relied on lecture notes, textbooks, stack overflow and peer study groups, they now layer GenAI tools across nearly every stage of their learning, participant 7 reflected:

> *"Before, my students would come to office hours with a printed code error and a notebook. Now they come with a chat history. They have already asked Claude or ChatGPT many times. The questions they bring me are different, they are deeper, sometime but sometime they have lost the patience for the small steps."*

Several participants described a flattening of the early struggle that once shaped students' problem-solving identities. Participant 11 observed that students "skip the productive confusion stage", Moving from problem statement to working solution without dwelling in the diagnostic phase. This echoes with(Prather et al., 2024), who note that coding assistant can compress the cognitive effect traditionally associated with debugging. Not all narrative ware nostalgic Participants 18 argued that GenAI has expanded what student can attempt, enabling final year projects that previously whole have been considered too ambitious.

Over SAMR lens Puentedura, (2014), early student practices characterized switch and augmentation, while existing user increasingly enable modification and redefinition of learning tasks, particularly in coding and pragmatic research.

Theme 2: Change in Study Habits

Closely tried to shifting strategies were change in everyday study habits. Participants reported the students now study in shorter, more interactive cycles, often blending GenAI dialogue with their primary reading. Participant 1 explained:

> "*They tell me they read for fifteen to twenty minutes, then ask Gemini to summarizes, then ask Claude to give them five exam style questions. It is fast. Sometime too fast. Their notebooks are thinner than they used to be."*

Majority of participants worried that this iterative pattern, while efficient, undermines deeper consolidation and long-term retention. Other including participant 18, framed the same pattern

> *"She drafts nothing herself anymore. Essay prompt goes straight into the chatbot, she scans what comes back, swaps a few words so its sounds like her and submit, I asked her to write two paragraphs by hand last week and she started at the page like it was a foreign language. Not because she can't think. because she's stopped practicing the thinking."*

As an evaluation of metacognitive practice, with student using GenAI as a study coach. These rival narrative glass (Walter, 2024) finding that GenAI can both scaffold and additional for self-regulated learning, conditional on how it is incorporated.

Theme 3: AI as Learning Companion

A particularly vivid theme was the framing of GenAI as a companion in learning. Participants described how students personify their tools, colling them "my tutor", "*My coding buddy*", "*my guru*" or simply by name "*chate*". participant 5 recounted a student who said:

> *"Sir, I don't want to disturb you at midnight, so I ask Claude. It does not get tried and it does not judge me."*

This relation aligns with Shen, (2025) account of human AI collaboration as a co intelligent practice. Through constructivist perspective (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978), GenAI hare functions as a more knowledgeable other within the zone oof proximal development, available on demand, Participants noted, however, that the quality of this scaffolding depends on student's prompt literacy and critical evaluation skills, echoing Browne et al., (2009) emphasis on GenAI literacy.

Theme 4 Faculty Responses to GenAI

Faculties own responses to GenAI were blindingly mixed and evolved over time. Participant 6 described an early reaction of "*panic and prohibition*," followed by curiosity, experimentation, and ultimately integration participant 17 narrated a slow path, marked by doubt rooted in concerns about hallucinations and data privacy. Participant 4 spoken a more institutional frame:

> *"Our college had no policy for almost. Each teacher decided alone. Some banded it some embraced it. Students learned to read the syllabus carefully and to switch behavior form class to class."*

Li et al., (2026) and Berglund, (2023) describe academic answers to GenAI as wavering among enthusiasm, ambivalence and resistance. They also demonstrate Mezirow, (1978) code of disorienting problems, with numerous participants describing moments of pedagogical destabilization that prompted critical reflection on inherited assumptions about authorship, expertise and assessment.

Theme 5: Teaching innovations

Although the smoothness of instructional supports, teachers narrated significant innovations in their teaching. Several had redesigned their course and around flipped and project-based models in which GenAI is treated as an explicit resource. Participant 8 described an I augmented studio approach in a web technology course:

> *"I tell them: use any AI you want, but you must show me your prompts, your drafts and your reasoning. I graded the trail of thinking not just the final code."*

Other highlights bigdata as a new curricular element, the use of GenAI to generate test case or alternative solutions for comparative analysis and the integration of AI tools into the existing courses. These innovations exemplify the SAMR models higher levels of modifications and redefinition (Puentedura, 2014) and demand a reconfigured TPACK with AI (Mishra et al., 2023).

Theme 6: Assessment changes

Assessment was the domain in which participants reported the most extensive change. Several hands moved away from take home essays and unsupervised coding assignment toward in class problem solving, oral examinations project demo and reflective journals. Participant 3 explained:

> *"I now sit with each student for ten to twenty minutes at the end of the semester. They walk me through their project, their decisions, their use of AI. I learn more about their learning in those ten to twenty minutes than from any exam paper"*

Such reorientations toward authentic and dialogic assessment align with international calls to redesign assessment in light of GenAI(Kelli Nicola-Richmond et al., 2025; Khlaif et al., 2025). Participants also describe continuous and progress-based assignment, version-controlled portfolios and explicit AI use declarations as emerging practices. These changes have not been institutionally uniform, several participants noted ongoing pressure with examination boards still wedded to traditional written formats.

Theme 7: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity was a recurring and emotionally charged theme. Participants notated instances in which they suspected, sometime confirmed and occasionally misattributed GenAI use. Participant 2 recalled:

> *"I once accused a student of using ChatGPT because the writing was too polished. He cried in my office. Later I learned his elder brother had edited his work, I felt terrible. Now I never accuse. I only ask, can you explain this paragraph to me?"*

This narrative captures both the risk of false positives associated with stylistic detection and the affective burden of integrity work. Participants increasingly favor pedagogical responses, including transparent disclosure norms, formative dialogue and integrity by design assessment, over punitive surveillance, consistent with the directions advocated by (Sharma, 2026) and (Kickbusch et al., 2025). Several participants also raised question of equity, noting that students with weaker English may rely more heavily on GenAI for language polishing, rising fairness concerns when such use in criminalized.

Theme 8: Critical thinking and creativity

Participants expressed genuine uncertainty about GenAI effects on critical thinking and creativity. However, several described students producing more ambitious, well-structured work and engaging in richer comparative analysis across multiple AI outputs. Participant 14 stated:

> *"When they prompt three different models and compare the answer, that is when I see real critical thinking. They argue with the AI. They argue with each other. That is new."*

On the other hand, participants worried about a thinning of fundamental reasoning, particularly in early years coding courses. participant 9 observed:

> *"Some of my first semester student cannot write a for loop on paper. They can clove complex problem with ChatGPT, but they have lost the muscle memory of syntax. I worry about what happens when the tools fail."*

These diverse narratives echo with the boarder debate about whether GenAI influences or atrophies higher order thinking (Fan et al., 2025; Walter, 2024b). Through Mezirow, (1978d) transformative learning theory, the experience of comparing and critiquing AI productions can function as disorienting dilemma that catalysis deeper reflection but only when teachers explicitly design for such moments.

Theme 9: Future Expectations

Locking forward, participations articulated version ranging from cautions to ambitious, several anticipated a curriculum in which AI literacy is a foundational competency taught form the first semester. Participant 13 envisioned:

> *"In five-ten years, our IT graduates will not be evaluated only on what they can code, but on how well they collaborate with AI agents, when to trust, when to verify, when to override."*

Participants also entitled for institutional policies on responsible AI use, professional development for faculty and ethical guidelines for student conduct. More than a few highlighted the importance of background sensitive policy and admit the realities of Nepalese infrastructure, language diversity and economic constrains. These visions resonate with international scholarship on AI literacy but extended it by foregrounding global south Imperatives often absent from mainstream policy discussions.

Discussion

Across the nine themes, there integrative patterns emerge the together illuminate the transformation of students learning journeys and IT teachers practices in Nepalese higher education.

First, GenAI is reshaping the temporal architecture of learning. Students study habits, problem solving routines and assessment encounters have become shorter, more iterative and more dialogic with GenAI inserted as a near consent interlocutor. This progressive reform has both expansive and constraining effects, it enables ambition and access while compressing the productive struggle that has historically underpinned conceptual learning in computing. The constructivist vision that culture emerges through engagement (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978) remains relevant but essential now be reinterpreted in distributed cognition terms in which GenAI participates in meaning making.

Second, the role of the IT teacher is transforming form primary knowledge source to designer of human Ai learning environments. Participants increasingly position themselves as architects of learning experience in which GenAI is an explicit, participant 5. In the move demands a reconfigured TPACK that integrates AI specific affordance and limitations along with traditional TPACK (Mishra et al., 2023). It also draws on Transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1978e), as teacher story throwing problems that catalyze basic rethinking of their professional identities. The SAMR framework (Puentedura, 2014) is useful here in distinguishing surface level integration, where GenAI substitutes for existence tools, form deeper redefinition, where it enables entirely new learning tasks such as comparative prompting, AI augmented studios and dialogic assessments

Third, the adoption policy gap is acute. The Technology Acceptance Model (Davis & Granic, 2024). helps explained rapid student and teacher uptake, GenAI is perceived as both highly useful and increasingly easy to use, but it also underscores the importance of facilitating conditions, which in Nepalese institutions remain underdeveloped. The absent of clear institutional policy, training resources and infrastructure support means that adoption has outplaced governance, leaving teachers to improve individually. Thus, findings align with (Dahal & Khadka, 2025) and border Global South on the unevenness of digital transformation but extends it by foregrounding the specifically pedagogical and ethical dimensions of the gap.

The findings carry several practical implications. For higher education institutions, the study underscores the urgency of developing content. GenAI policy that balance opportunity with safeguarding, articulated through transplant, faculty informed progress. For the IT faculty, proactive engagement with prompt literacy, AI augmented pedagogy and dialogic assessment, supported by sustained professional development. For curriculum developers, AI literacy should be integrated as a cross aptitude across the program of study, not at a single only elective. For Administrators, investment in infrastructure, faculty development and equitable tools access is essential. For policymakers, particularly in Nepal, the findings argue for national guideline on responsible AI in Education that acknowledge resources asymmetries. For AI literacy programmers, the study highlights the need to address not only technical competencies but also ethical, critical and reflective dimensions. Finally, responsible AI implementation requires attendant to equity, language diversity and the affective experience of both and students.

Several limitations must be acknowledged in this research. The study draws on a single national context, Nepal and findings may not transfer directly to other system, although the thick description provided support analytic generalization. Another, the sample comprises eighteen IT teachers, while consistent with narrative inquiry norms, this restricts the range of perspective represented and excludes student voice, which warrant separate investigation. Also, the rapid pace of GenAI development means the participants accounts are situated in a particular moment some tools and practices discussed may already evolving. Again, the researcher owns positionally as an IT educator with prior GenAI experience inevitable data collection and interpretations, although reflective journaling and member checking were used to mitigate this influence. Finally, while narrative inquiry privileges depth and storied detail, it does not yield generalizable frequency, clams. Readers should interpret findings as analytical rather than statistically representative.

Conclusion

This study has explored, through narrative inquiry, how IT teacher in Nepalese higher education narrates the transformation of student learning journeys and their own teaching practices in the era of generative AI. Drawing on the sortied experiences of eighteen IT teachers and analyzed tougher six phase reflective thematic analysis, the study has identified nine interrelated themes that together composed a multi layered account of pedagogical change. Through, shifting learning strategies and study habits, for farming of GenAI as a learning companion, to faculty response, teacher innovations, assessment transformation, integrity concern, impact on critical thinking and creativity and visions for the future these findings illuminate both promise and the disquiet of the moment in higher Education.

The study contributes to international scholarship in three principal ways. first, it offers a narrative inquiry into GenAI mediate higher education in global South context that is too often absent from mainstream. AI in Education discourse, thereby diversifying the evidence based. Second, it brings conservativism, Transformation Learning Theory, TPACK, TPACK-AI, and SAMR into productive dialogue around GenAI, demonstrating how multiple frameworks can be woven together to illuminate complex pedagogical

phenomena. Third, by privileging teacher storied experience, it makes visible dimensions of transformation the temporal, relational emotional and ethical that survey research along cannot capture.

Looking ahead, the integration of GenAI into higher education is unlikely to show. The question is not whether universities, teachers and student will engage with GenAI, but how thoughtfully, equitably and reflectively they will do so. For the IT faculties of Nepal and beyond the path forward lies neither in uncritical embrace not in defensive prohibition, but in the patient, collective work of reimagine pedagogy, assignment and identity for an era of human AI collaboration. Narrative inquiry, with its commitment to listening carefully to the stories that shape professional practices, offer one important resource for this work. As participant 9 put in the final interview of the study.

> *"We are still writing this story; these students are writing it with us. The machines are writing with it with us. Our job is to make sure the story we write together is wroth telling."*

It is in such collective storytelling that the future of higher education in the age of GenAI will be shaped.

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No additional data are available related to this study.

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