

From Screens to Skills: An English Teacher's Autoethnographic Journey through Webinars

Sujeet Karki

Lecturer, Vishwa Adarsha College, Itahari, Sunsari, Nepal
Email: sujeet.karki@vac.edu.np; karkisujeet6244@gmail.com
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-6708-8552>

Yuliana Vasquez-Gonzalez

EL Professor, Universidad de Panama, Centro Regional Universitario de Cocle,
and Alejandro Tapia Bilingual School, Panama
Email: yuliana.vasquez@up.ac.pa; yuliana.vasquez@meduca.edu.pa
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4087-3765>

Abstract

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Email:
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The technological and scientific progress, including the COVID-19 pandemic, has expedited the transition to online teacher professional development. Webinars have emerged as a common platform for language educators to acquire and enhance their professional skills for growth. This autoethnographic study reveals the experiences of an English language teacher participating in national and international webinars during and after the pandemic. It examines the value and benefits of attending webinars as a means of professional development for educators. The primary source of data collection is the researchers' own life experiences in attending the webinars, which have lasted from 30 minutes to two-hour-long sessions via virtual modes. The possible areas of discussion in the webinar include teachers' professional practices, classroom management, teacher motivation, pedagogical tips, and ICT-related skills. It explores the anecdotes, reflections, memories, screenshots, and experiences of participation in various national and international webinars through the lens of Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory. The findings show that webinars play a significant role in online teacher professional development by expanding knowledge and competencies, fostering networking, becoming effective teaching tools, and applying newly acquired competencies to classroom practice. The study also shows some challenges encountered in attending webinars. The first author, employing the first-person pronoun "I," composed this paper on the basis of his online teacher professional development experiences. The second author wrote, reviewed, edited the article, and gave suggestions to the first author accordingly based on similar practical conditions and experiences. As an autoethnography approach, we decided to tell this story through "I" to properly illustrate the details that have been foregrounded with the first author's experiences.

Keywords: English language teaching, online teacher professional development, webinar, experiential learning theory, autoethnography

Introduction

The rapid evolution in science and technology has transformed the world into a digitalized form where many people are connected via the internet. The digital age and technological advancements have drastically changed communication and learning (Zhang, 2022). Technology greatly influenced education (Rao, 2018; The, 2023). Similarly, the numerous advancements in digital technologies and virtual communication have impacted the teaching and learning of English in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context (Hakim, 2021; Ritonga, 2020). This has led to the effectiveness of the educator's pedagogy (Cuban, 2009).

The change has been particularly salient in the English language teaching area, where the teachers are situated at the intersection of tradition and transformation in the context of an increasingly changing pedagogical landscape. The COVID-19 pandemic compelled language educators to switch from physical to online settings, forcing them to learn about ICT skills and adapt to the new environment to adopt pedagogical approaches on online platforms, which has led to online teaching and learning. The transition from face-to-face classrooms to virtual interaction has created difficulties for global educators and learners during the COVID-19 pandemic (Kumar et al., 2020). Due to the drastic shift in the field of education, I encountered the struggles and triumphs of embracing technology, for instance, a lack of proper skills in ICT, a high rate of student absenteeism, a lack of interest among learners, technological difficulties, and frequent power cuts during online classes. The traditional classroom has become a virtual platform where many changes have taken place, with a significant rise. In other words, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and globalization on teaching and learning has depicted the necessity of teacher professional development in technology (Mbulle et al., 2023).

Traditional English Language Teaching (ELT) has been changed due to the emergence of several technological devices, which have given several options for educators to make his or her teaching fruitful and enjoyable and engage the learners in a significant manner (Shyamlee & Phil, 2012). Information Communication Technology (ICT) plays a vital role in enhancing the learning environment of educators (Cosgun & Savas, 2024). Traditional teacher professional development is being replaced gradually due to the growth of online teacher professional development. Online teacher professional development has drastically emerged to provide affordable, quality, and

easily available training for educators before and during the COVID-19 pandemic (Bragg et al., 2021). Online professional development is the type of learning that encompasses any web-based learning activities or processes intending to improve job performance in areas like subject knowledge, skills, or pedagogical abilities (Deniz & Bagceci, 2023) and it utilizes virtual communication tools to help learners to pursue their education, without the necessity of face-to-face interactions with their educators (Rogers, 2001). It is acknowledged as one crucial aspect of offering professional development (Elliott, 2017). Online professional development is an important means of teacher education, which can enhance the teaching skills of English language teachers (Qayyum & Munin, 2023). The research of Kabilan et al. (2011) depicted that online professional development has provided a great opportunity for English language educators to share and interact with their ideas, knowledge, and teaching experiences. The significant role of online professional development has uplifted ICT knowledge and skills and fostered proficiency in using the technology for English language educators (Qayyum & Munin, 2023). I realized these circumstances when I had engaged in several online teacher development activities and programs, which are conducted via the online mode.

With the significant rise of online teacher professional development, several online professional activities took place for educators and learners. Recently, webinars have emerged while people move from physical to online platforms (Mabuan, 2022) and transformed into a common tool for connecting educators and learners for curriculum and instructional purposes (Polanco-Bueno, 2012; White, 2019). During the pandemic, professional development webinars are common in higher education (Al-Naaabi, 2023). Online networking, conferences, and webinars have become a new avenue for educational professional development (Elliott, 2009). Webinars have gained a lot of attention and interest (Gegenfurtner & Ebrner, 2019) in the educational sphere and helped us “to reach anyone, anywhere, at any time” (Mabuan, 2022, p. 171). Webinars are a common means of professional exchange that takes place in professional practices from every aspect of life (Inal et al., 2023). In addition, webinars possess a degree of flexibility and accessibility, allowing the participants to connect from anywhere through internet access at a convenient time (Aslan & Solmaz, 2023). In other words, it is a type of virtual conference that connects various participants for specific events over the Internet (Rahaman & Hakim, 2013). Webinars are generally free, and educators should not spend anything on travel and accommodation expenses (Dayagbil

et al., 2024). Teachers can access and schedule the webinar after they have completed their registration (Rahaman & Hakim, 2013). Generally, the invitation link is sent to their registered email to participate in the virtual sessions (Rahaman & Hakim, 2013). Furthermore, webinars possess different sorts of characteristics like sharing screens, live chatting, sharing media files and documents, audio-video conferencing, and polling, and enable the presenter to share and discuss the topics in real-time (Beal, 2020; McLaughlin et al., 2010). The educators can even receive a certificate of participation after engaging in the webinars (Tarusan et al., 2022). For me, participating in webinars was not just a professional obligation, but a cultural induction into the international network of educators.

Various research on quality professional webinars for educators is lacking (Toquero & Talidong, 2020). It is vital to research how educators have benefited from online teacher professional development, including attending the webinars during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher hopes to contribute to the area of online teacher professional development by exploring the benefits of attending the webinars on the online platform. This research study provides an overview of online professional development activities and the rich experience of an EFL educator accessing the webinars through virtual means. This research study seeks to delve into the journey of an English language teacher as I participate and engage in national and international webinars to foster my professional journey. The following research question guided this study:

- How do I shape and benefit from the national and international webinars to foster my professional growth?

This paper begins with the first introduction section. It presents the background or context of the study. It is followed by a discussion of literature highlighting the notions of webinars for online teacher professional development. It mentioned the relevance, purpose, and research questions that guided the research study. After that, the theoretical framework concerning Kolb's experiential learning theory has been provided, which paves this auto-ethnographic study to highlight the author's experiences and anecdotes of attending webinars during and after the pandemic onward. Then, it stated the major insights and findings by referencing the ideas and opinions of several scholars. Finally, the paper ends with brief concluding remarks, including future related research work recommendations.

Experiential Learning Theory as the Theoretical Framework

David Allen Kolb initiated the concept of Experiential learning theory in 1984. According to Kolb (1984), experiential learning is a ‘holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, cognition and behavior’ (p. 21). The learning process places a strong concern on transforming experience into knowledge according to Kolb's model (Boud et al., 1985). For Kolb (1984), “Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (p. 41). This theory concerns the significant role of experience (Karki et al., 2024) in the learning process. English Language Teaching (ELT) integrates experience, perception, thoughts, and behavior into a comprehensive, flexible learning process (McCarthy, 2010). Devi and Thendral (2023) noted, “Experiential Learning theory is concerned with learning through experience and a learning process in which knowledge is acquired by the combination of perceiving and interpreting an experience” (p.73). There are four stages of learning according to the experiential learning theory. These are in a cyclic process moving from concrete learning, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Let me give an example related to the same topic of the webinar:

At the concrete experience level, I have actively participated and engaged with the contents (like facilitating online platforms, motivating the learners, providing useful resources for the language teacher, preparing effective lesson plans, collaborating on international projects, and new digital tools in ELT), presented in a webinar by the resource speaker during the pandemic and post-COVID. In the reflective observation stage, I first reflected on those specific incidents and on what I learned by relating them to my personal experiences after the webinar. Then, I started developing my ideas and insights based on the specific event (webinar) and tried to conceptualize the knowledge. Finally, I have evaluated and practically applied the acquired knowledge and skills in my real classroom by implementing new approaches, sharing ideas with colleagues, and using innovative strategies in English language teaching, looking forward to another opportunity.

I have utilized this framework in this research study to annotate my recollected personal lived experiences and narratives. I also included some of the challenges I had during my journey, attending national and international webinars during and after the

pandemic. I have recollected and reflected on the invaluable experiences of my professional journey as a teacher through memories, self-observation, and with the help of social media platforms. I have developed this overview of my journey as a webinar participant to offer further insights and awareness to other teachers know the significance of enrolling in webinars and other professional-related online activities. This paper further examines how professional webinars can foster the professional growth of an English language teacher.

Methodology of the Study

I have employed an autoethnographic study to explore my experiences participating in national and international webinars, which uplift my professional journey. Autoethnography is a form of narrative research that conveys and reflects personal stories to make meaning and interpret our life experiences (Cooper & Lilyea, 2023). Autoethnography is a research methodology that engages the person in cultural study and interpretation (Chang, 2008). Autoethnography is a qualitative research technique that combines autobiography with ethnography. It also enables writers and others to reflect critically and creatively on their personal and professional experiences (Pace, 2012), for educators to reveal their reflections and classroom practices. Similarly, an auto-ethnographic study is a qualitative research design that enables the researcher, as an EFL teacher, to explore the unique learning experience for personal growth within a broader cultural framework (The, 2023). “Autoethnography involves the writer or researcher in crafting creative narratives shaped out of a writer's personal experiences within a culture and addressed to varied (mostly academic) audiences” (Poulos, 2021, p. 3). Autoethnography involves researchers analyzing themselves in light of a certain event or subject within the framework of a particular scientific field (Ellis & Bochner, 1996).

The data source is the researchers' experience or personal life, which remains the primary data (Cooper & Lilyea, 2023), as autoethnography uses subjective experiences and recollections (Tarisayi, 2023). The common data collection methods or strategies in autoethnography include self-reflective data (Cooper & Lilyea, 2023), self-observation, memory work (Henning, 2012; Keles, 2022), reflexive journaling, artefact analysis, and external data methods, which serve to contextualize our lived experiences

(Adams et al., 2015). Personal memory data can help us draw the important aspects of our life experiences (Bochner & Ellis, 2016). I have used significant memory work to reflect on my past professional learning and experiences in attending webinars on online platforms (Tarisayi, 2023). “Reflexivity in autoethnography emphasizes the researcher’s or participants’ authentic introspections based on memory recollection of experiences” (Olabia, 2023, p. 34). Mining one’s past experiences helps to recall and reconstruct the important life experiences and events from which we can make sense and reconstruct them again in the present time to evoke meaning (Tarisayi, 2023). Autoethnography helps researchers narrate their own stories and experiences in their unique voices (Keles, 2022). I have supported the significant memory work, personal narratives, and self-reflection through the available screenshots on social media platforms, which remain evidence/proof to support this research study. I have noted some of the significant incidents or online events which has brought drastic changes in my professional life and mentioned them accordingly.

As I used the thematic analysis for the data, I followed Gibbs's (2008) framework for the data analysis process. For this, at first, I looked and remembered the memories and experiences of the incidents of attending professional webinars during the COVID-19 pandemic and post-COVID. Then, I prepared a synopsis to identify the initial, mid, and end of that particular incident by taking note of some mini-stories of my past professional journey while attending the webinars. Then, I searched the thematic ideas and concepts and highlighted the language that evoked my experiences and feelings. I have coded the thematic ideas from those mini-stories that I have formed and then developed a wider thematic structure to interpret my experiences and reflect on them, along with mentioning the screenshots as evidence.

My Positionality in the Study

Having been involved in this autoethnographic study as a participant-researcher, I, as an English language teacher, had a considerable role in the positionality of my perceptions of and understandings regarding my engagement in the national and international webinars. My professional aspirations, like my hopes and desire for participation, guided me in the relevance of the webinars that I attended during and after the pandemic, since they adopted a digital learning and teaching approach. The foremost

thing is the motivation that I developed to join various professional organizations and grow my academic skills. My active membership within various professional organizations like NELTA, IELTA, ITA, STFT, and other academic degree institutions also came into action, where I was given exposure to opportunities for my professional growth that may not apply to teachers lacking such affiliations. This positionality had enriched my account and its richness to its authenticity, drawing on the experiences of attending the webinars. Reflexivity and cross-referencing to scholarly literature were made as an attempt to support my narratives and experiences during this autoethnographic study.

Major Findings and Discussion

A webinar is a virtual, live online event where participants are connected via the internet, and thus includes audio-visual communication between the speaker (lecturer) and the participants (Rao, 2019). Several national and international forums and organizations, NELTA, STFT, IELTA, British Council, RELO Office, Macmillan, Cambridge, and Oxford, have organized webinars during the COVID-19 pandemic and post-COVID. Educators' professional development helps to improve the quality of the teaching and learning process, which makes it systematic (Mitchell, 2013). Webinars have a crucial positive impact on learning performance (Nagy et al., 2016). Attending the webinar is one of the significant aspects of the teacher's journey to pave his or her professional life. It is like an adventure for me to move ahead to flourish in my professional career, though there were some struggles and challenges too during the voyage. Educators need to engage in and access continuous learning (Tarusan et al., 2022) for professional development, which further requires upgrading their knowledge, skills, and competencies (Handel, 2020).

Participating in the Webinars: A Way to Grow Myself!

Webinars are "digital tools to deliver training and education through synchronous audiovisual communication among remotely located training instructors and participants (Gegenfurtner et al., 2020, p. 5). Webinars play a determining role in equipping participants with the knowledge, skills, and practical applications of the ideas acquired in our classroom during the teaching and learning

process. The research of Sakulprasertsri et al. (2022) reported that webinars are beneficial for fostering pedagogical, technological, and research knowledge. I was glad to attend several professional webinars to broaden my horizons of knowledge and their practical applications in the teaching and learning process. The research of Aslan and Solmaz (2023) highlighted the positive impact of webinars on the professional growth of educators and supporting them in their formal education system. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I spent most of my time connecting on the internet and got the opportunity to participate in various national and international webinars. Webinars drastically changed professional development practices and activities and transformed physical and online classrooms. (Shin et al., 2022).

The Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA), one of the non-governmental ELT organizations, has launched several webinars connecting its branches from all over the country to develop English language teachers' professional skills and pedagogical knowledge during the pandemic. The organization invited several guest speakers from various locations to share their expertise and experiences in enhancing the teaching and learning process for students. I felt proud to attend those webinars. As the webinars lie at the national and international levels, the modalities were slightly different compared to attending the physical sessions or seminars.

I was comfortable getting access to the Internet and digital gadgets to spend my time attending webinars. I joined the teachers' Facebook group. It offered access to updates and information about upcoming sessions and webinars for the teachers. It was my beginning point to see people on the screen utilizing their leisure time for professional development, even in those difficult times. The research of Shin et al. (2022) demonstrated that webinars could be an effective means to acquire professional development for educators, especially concerning student engagement, providing feedback, and enabling various activities for the virtual sessions. Webinars are a great support to broaden our minds and understanding of the content. I felt this when I attended the webinars from the various branches of NELTA, Society of Technology Friendly Teachers' Nepal (STFT), British Council, Nepal, Regional English Language Office (RELO), and the various branches of the International English Language Teachers' Association (IELTA).

Figure 1

Webinar Announcement



(Screenshots taken by the researcher)

I was fortunate to meet many colleagues who joined via internet access on common online platforms to attend several webinars. This helps me create networking opportunities and get support from them to motivate me to engage in the teaching journey. In other words, the educators can engage in learning on their own time, and the webinars create networking among the educators, which creates a sense of belonging in an online community (Dayagbil et al., 2024). The research study carried out by Aslan and Solmaz (2023) reported that webinars have provided broader access to networking among colleagues and enabled them to share their ideas and experiences. However, I faced several sorts of challenges while attending the webinars via the online platform, like difficulties in technical connectivity, problems with technological devices, lack of proper concentration in between due to the disturbance, tedious job by staying in the same place in front of the screen, eye problems, and many more. The webinar motivated and inspired me to listen to the experts' knowledge, experiences, and research. It allowed me to add a milestone to my journey. Some of the key findings and insights

during my teacher professional journey in attending the national and international webinars can be divided into the following thematic notions:

Empowering and Expanding my Knowledge, Skills, and Horizons

The COVID-19 pandemic has allowed me to adapt to online teaching and learning. It enhanced my digital literacy and made me see the ICT opportunities as blessings. I actively engaged in and participated in NELTA webinars, especially during the pandemic via online Zoom and Google Meet platforms, organized by the district branches. Several topics were discussed in the webinars: classroom management, pedagogical tips, and professional practices of teachers, ICT skills, English language influence, and project-based learning. This let me listen to the classroom experiences of educators who teach English as a foreign language in Nepal. Listening to the voices of educators helped me expand my horizon of knowledge and find the common and unique experiences practiced in the Nepalese classroom. As stated by Toquero and Talindong (2020), Webinars can provide “theoretical knowledge and practical skills of the teachers” (p. 200), which helps to enhance the quality of online teaching. Webinars have a huge possibility “in the digital ecology of knowledge transference” (Gupta & Sengupta, 2021, p. 1112). The webinar topics covered online teaching and learning, various subject matters related to the pedagogical area, leadership skills, and survival in the 21st-century era, and action research for educators via online platforms. Similarly, these webinars have given me great knowledge and skills in multiple areas and content. Webinars can aid educators in learning unique things (Tarusan et al., 2022), gaining new knowledge to foster the existing information (Hidayati et al., 2021), and help them to develop new practices and instructional strategies according to the learners’ needs (Songul et al., 2018; Toquero & Talidong, 2020).

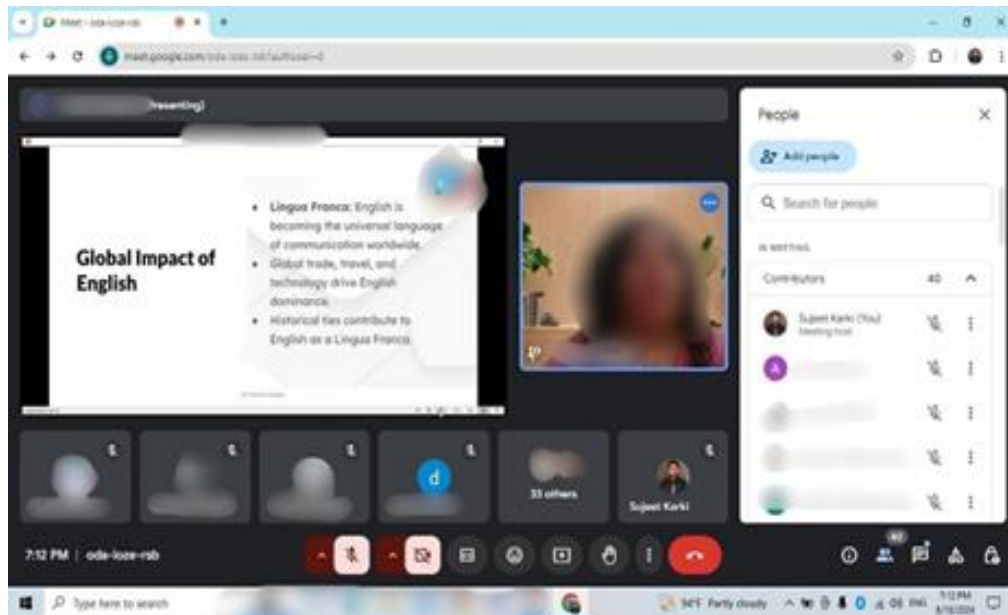
Educators must continuously engage in learning to acquire and update with the latest knowledge and unique skills, which helps to uplift their productivity (Mbulle et al., 2023). They continuously engaged in their professional growth and identity development. They can also apply them in the practical field, i.e., in their real classroom situation. Webinars assist educators in grasping new ideas, receiving professional advice, and understanding new subjects and areas that benefit the research (Rao, 2018).

The knowledge and skills I gained in the national webinars, such as proper netiquette, online classroom management, leadership, class organization, digital literacy, learning styles, techniques, and methods, among others, were helpful as I tried to apply those gained skills and knowledge in the virtual classroom while facilitating the learners during the COVID-19 pandemic era. I tried to motivate and inspire the learners to bring fruitful learning and meaningful participation. I think applying the knowledge I got from the webinars in the practical field is worthwhile. The webinars help uplift the technological capabilities that develop the educators' proficiency to facilitate the teaching and learning process (Ancho & Arrieta, 2021). I gained ICT knowledge and its real application through the support of the STFT organization. STFT organization helped the teachers to turn from traditional to techno-friendly teachers. I had taken a life membership of STFT and served as a technical member involved in the STFT Sunsari branch. It further helped me to collaborate with the ICT-friendly teachers from the country. I was fortunate to participate in such a prestigious organization and even served as one of the active members by participating in the STFT webinars. The contents delivered during the webinar sessions helped me engage my learners in the online classroom by applying digital resources and tools. Webinars offer opportunities for educators to advance their professional abilities by staying up-to-date with the latest ideas and information through webinars, enabling them to be more dynamic and effective in their teaching roles (Rao, 2018). The learning experiences, free learning resources, and environment can be gained through online webinars and conferences (Masters et al., 2010).

Before the pandemic, I simply learned about basic ICT knowledge. Time after, I attended the national webinars; I broadened my level of ICT applications and tried to incorporate them in my virtual classroom during and after the pandemic. I fully utilized my leisure time by connecting with educators to further my professional career. Moreover, I interacted with some of my foreign colleagues through social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Messenger groups. I got timely notifications from my colleagues related to information about national and international webinars. Most of the contents in the webinars were related to the field of English language teaching and learning, as I had chosen the specific sorts of national and international webinars that are of interest.

Figure 2

Sharing the Knowledge and Expertise by the Resource Speaker in the Webinar



(Screenshots taken by the researcher)

Applying New Skills in Practice

Webinars have been common and popular for teacher professional development. (Al-Naabi, 2023). Webinars can be taken as an effective tool in teacher professional development. The webinars are powerful tools that enhance significant pedagogical skills and knowledge of educators (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). The study conducted by Khanna and Thakarar (2021) reported that the webinars have positively influenced educators, leading to new knowledge and skills and allowing better lecture presentation and planning. The webinars offer numerous benefits for educators and learners, like professional growth, development in teacher identity, sharing and learning from each other, and developing their expertise level, as well as sharing and bringing the impacts to their classroom practices. As stated by Phillips (2008), "Professional development is critical for improving, maintaining teacher quality and the effect flows on into the classroom" (p. 1). Educators can attend several sessions, pursue new knowledge and skills on current technological trends and advancements in the field of education, integrating artificial intelligence in ELT, classroom practices, stories of several language teachers applying their new methodological approaches in pedagogies, teaching techniques, and handling the learners properly in the current situations.

Webinars can be taken as an important component of professional development and have given the pedagogical skills and content knowledge to the involved audience.

(Wolsey, 2015). The research of Koutch (2021) reported that webinars are a beneficial tool for teaching the English language and professional development. Webinars can facilitate the participants in problem-based learning, reflecting in groups, and sharing objective discussions (Hakkinen & Jarvela, 2006). Regardless of physical and geographical barriers, webinars allow EFL teachers to gain expertise from veterans and international colleagues. The webinars give us a huge exposure to knowledge and skills to incorporate the various digital tools and resources inside our classroom and facilitate the learners to engage in online discussion forums and virtual projects. The research carried out by Rao (2019) depicts that webinars have provided great benefits to English language teachers as the teacher implements the new techniques and ways they have learned during the webinars. By applying new teaching strategies and techniques, educators can improve their pedagogical practices and highlight the impacts of new practices in the technology-friendly classroom.

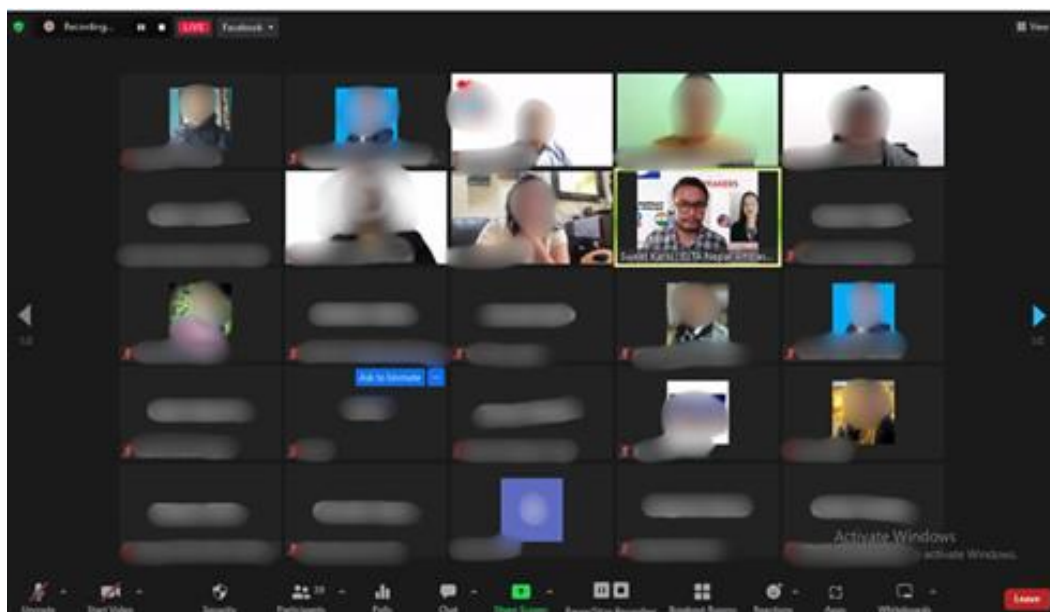
Connecting Minds- Global Networking with Educators from Home and Abroad

Various online courses and activities like ICT skills and tools for language teachers, MOOCs for teacher professional development, and ELT classroom settings, which aid educators in creating a network and collaborating with their colleagues. It can form a greater sense of correctness among language educators (Silvhiany, 2022). Both the national and international webinars play a pivotal role in fostering a sense of professionalism among educators. Webinars provide a huge opportunity to turn the physical class into a virtual platform and assist the participants in interacting with people worldwide (Gupta & Sengupta, 2021). Engaging in national and international webinars provides me with the opportunity to hear the opinions and views of experts on various topics. Teachers can meet many experiences and experts along with the interesting topics covered in the webinars (Rahaman & Hakim, 2013). I connected with English teachers and colleagues from the international arenas. I gradually established a rapport with them. It led me to become part of international organizations, such as ITA and IELTA. Moreover, I supported my colleagues by being a member of the Global Online Classroom and Global Quarantine Conversation Club, which helps learners improve their English language skills. Attending the international webinars helps me to make international colleagues, which further supports my teacher's professional development. Networking among the teachers supports me in sharing and reflecting on my classroom practices and experiences, from which I can get supportive ideas to improve my teaching practices. I even got the chance to learn about their classroom situations and several pedagogical techniques that they incorporated into the field of English language teaching (ELT).

The national and international webinars supported me in obtaining my position, name, and fame in the country as an ELT practitioner. I got the chance to build a strong bond with them and collaborate to carry out national and international projects. I can work closely with them on various ELT-related issues and topics. I received invitations to webinars from both national and international educators. to be one of the resource speakers to share my teaching and classroom practices during times of emergency. I was lucky, as it was my first time presenting in an international webinar in front of global colleagues. This was all possible through ICT and internet access, which enabled me to turn this world into a global village. The global networking through the help of various webinars helps me to create a linkage to be a part of the global teacher community. Listening to the voices and experiences of the teacher community has broadened my mind and brought a huge transformation in my teaching and learning process. In addition, the teacher networking has fostered my professional growth and nurtured some of the 21st-century skills like digital literacy, creativity, communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. I have even participated as the host of IELTA Nepal international webinars, where I called several international colleagues to be the key and resource speakers in that online forum. They easily accepted my invitation from IELTA Nepal and came up with the knowledge and experiences to share with Nepalese English teachers and international colleagues via online platforms.

Figure 3

Participating in the IELTA Nepal Webinar



(Screenshots taken by the researcher)

Classroom Chronicles- Sharing and Reflecting Insights

Webinars help us to gain unique experiences and knowledge applicable to real classroom contexts. Online webinars have given access to enrich with the new teaching techniques and engage teachers the interactive discussions (Shin et al., 2022). Only obtaining knowledge is not worth it; we should share and reflect on our ideas, opinions, and insights with our colleagues. After attending webinars, it is always necessary to reflect and think about the insights and knowledge that we get from the respective webinars. Sharing opinions and reflecting on our classroom practices, like how to inspire the learners in the classroom, classroom management tips, practices, and developing a collaboration culture at school, can help us identify problems and find possible solutions. The research of Al-Naabi (2023) found that webinars enabled educators to foster their critical reflection and form new practices. The new practices include exchanging ideas and thoughts among one another (like from the experienced to the novice), expanding the horizon of knowledge, and developing innovative ideas in school. It is worthwhile to write notes during the webinar session, as I did when I attended national and international webinars.

It is always beneficial for language teachers as they can learn from those notes, reflect, and support other colleagues in their teaching journey. Most national and international webinars were truly revelations, leading our professional journey to success, such as developing a sense of community practice, rapport establishment, engagement, and teacher networking, and expanding our horizon of knowledge and belief systems. Communities of Practice (CoP) are generally used in higher education groups and allow educators to exchange and discuss their knowledge, ideas, and skills with their colleagues (Ahmed & Tabb, 2021). CoP possesses several benefits like facilitating communication, building connections among members, promoting learning, offering a common environment, encouraging collaboration, creating new knowledge, and assisting individuals with the organization (Cambridge et al., 2005). The culture of sharing and career advancement would be there if educators formed a team and supported each other in times of need. The level of their expertise and understanding will even grow by supporting their team. Reflecting on the gained insights helps us further enrich our experiences and adds a step to value our ideas and understanding to achieve the determining goals for our professional journey.

Conquering Hurdles during the Professional Journey

Although webinars create a great opportunity to provide rich exposure, I encountered some challenges, like technical difficulties, connectivity, and device issues, while attending national and international webinars. Attending webinars has raised some issues and challenges for educators (Aslan & Solmaz, 2023). Technical glitches are general concerns I have to consider when involved in online platforms. In Nepal, there is a huge concern about the digital divide, as it creates discrimination among disadvantaged groups in accessing education. Some of the limitations of online professional development activities include unreliable internet access and a lack of support, which finally leads to demotivating educators (Chin et al., 2022). Online teacher professional development can be challenging for educators in remote areas in Nepal, as they face several obstacles like technical problems, lack of proper internet access, frequent disconnections, and lack of appropriate devices to operate online sessions. The length and the time of the webinar, using a Chat box for sharing files, and the time zone differences should be considered properly while organizing the webinars (Gichora et al., 2010). I experienced frequent power cut-offs during my participation in professional webinars. Sometimes, miscommunication in the timing/time zone of the international webinars creates significant problems in attending the online sessions.

The participants need to understand and check the correct time zone before attending any international webinar. The opinions, ideas, and interests of the audience/participants should be taken into consideration before organizing any type of webinar (Inal et al., 2023). Moreover, webinars can be conducted successfully if internet access and infrastructure are properly improved in remote areas. The government should also be supportive and provide educators with suitable guidelines for conducting online classes and webinars, which can develop their professionalism. There is a dire need to maintain a balance between integrating technologies in the classroom and attending training, conferences, and more. Educators should be further motivated and inspired to participate in webinars for self-growth and professional development.

Conclusion and Future Research

I have narrated and investigated the voyage of my professional journey as an English language teacher towards the adventure and benefits of being involved in national and international webinars, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on lived experiences, memory work, anecdotes, and reflection, the major findings and

discussion show how webinars have flourished my professional growth being an English language teacher in the Nepalese context. It is very essential for novice teachers to join the various national and international webinars in order to be updated with different pedagogical skills and knowledge. This will help to share their opinions and experiences. At the same time, webinar helps to acquire a lot of skills, which makes them skilled and experienced, which can lead their professional journey. Webinars are taken as an effective means of online teacher professional development for English language teachers around the globe. These create several opportunities for me, like enhancing knowledge and skills building, networking with national and international colleagues, a community of practice (CoP), reflecting the classroom insights and practices, applying the gained knowledge in real classroom practice, and flourishing professionally as an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher. The main benefits of CoP are sharing ideas and information with colleagues of various interests and fostering wider viewpoints (Cherrstrom et al., 2018). The study has also further highlighted several possible challenges that come in my journey while attending the webinars online, like connectivity problems, lack of proper devices, and getting the information accurately regarding the virtual session. This research study also informed other educators about the possible growth resulting from participating in the various webinars through the support of ICT.

Talking about the limitations, this autoethnographic study only highlights the anecdotes and experiences of a single teacher exploring his professional journey toward attending the webinars. Therefore, future research can address and incorporate the voices and stories of several teachers who have explored their professional growth due to engagement in virtual platforms like national and international webinars in the present day. There is a great possibility of carrying out mixed-method research to determine how webinars can play a crucial role in the professional life of a teacher.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest concerning the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

Corresponding Author

Sujeet Karki

Email: sujeet.karki@vac.edu.np; karkisujeet6244@gmail.com

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