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Implementation of Self-regulated Learning Strategies in Nepal

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ABSTRACT

This article is a result of implementing self-regulated learning strategies in Nepal considering its basic features like mediation, ZPD, agency, autonomy, principled pragmatism, metacognitive strategies and modern technologies. Necessary data were collected from a real classroom setting maintaining a portfolio of students who studied at Mahendra Ratna Multiple Campus, Ilam. This article attempts to share the classroom experience of putting the SRL strategies into practice among the bachelor's fourth-year students who studied the research methodology course which is both theoretical and practical in nature. More specifically, the practical activities require self-regulated learning strategies to prepare a research report based on the basic components of research given in the course. The students should work hard from the very beginning of the session to the end to shape and reshape the research topic and prepare the final research report. This study shows that twenty-one students who were involved more sincerely while doing those activities effectively implementing the features of SRL achieved satisfactory results.

Implementation of Self-regulated Learning Strategies in Nepal

Implementing self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies for effective learning has become both a need and demand for the learners of the twenty-first century for many reasons. First of all, SRL came into existence as an effort to address the inadequacies of traditional methods and approaches. The teacher-centered methods like the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and Audio-lingual Method (ALM) in the 1950s/1960s; and the student-centered methods and approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) in 1970s/1980s could not address the specific needs and interests of individual learners who have different social, cultural, linguistic, educational and economic backgrounds (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Secondly, the inadequacy of traditional methods and approaches gradually led to scholars emphasizing language learning strategies employed by successful learners that focus on specific contexts and self-directed learning processes (Wenden & Rubin, 1987; Oxford, 1990; Cohen & Macaro, 2007). The changing trend continued and the post-method pedagogy came into existence focusing on three pedagogic parameters; i.e., particularity, practicality and possibility (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). The first pedagogic parameter 'particularity' focuses on the specific needs and interests of the specific group of learners and teachers who are from specific socio-cultural backgrounds. The second parameter 'practicality' attempts to connect theory and practice through ongoing reflection and action. The third parameter 'possibility' emphasizes contemplating the socio-political condition, power relations and the individual identity of both teachers and learners who are from different socio-political backgrounds. More interestingly, Kumaravadivelu (2003) also pointed out the need for macro and micro learning strategies that were more similar to the language learning strategies put forward by other scholars (Wenden & Rubin, 1987; Oxford, 1990; Cohen & Macaro, 2007) who focused on language learning strategies employed by successful students as mentioned above.

Thirdly, Oxford (2011) developed the Strategic Self-Regulation (S2R) model emphasizing learner autonomy on the philosophical ground of sociocultural theory that laid the foundation stone for SRL. These days, the SRL has been gaining much popularity in the field of language teaching and learning that tries to put the concepts of mediation, ZPD, agency, autonomy, principled pragmatism, and metacognitive strategies into practice. Here, mediation refers to the assistance that assists learning by connecting them with cultural tools, books, and technology (Oxford, 2017). The ZPD is the difference between the individual's current level of development and the potential level that can be reached with the assistance of a more capable person (Oxford, 2017). The agency is the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices (Oxford, 2017).

Similarly, the autonomy is ability and willingness to take responsibility (Oxford, 2017). Principled pragmatism shapes and reshapes learning through self-observation, self-analysis, and self-reflection (Kumaravadivelu, 2003); and metacognitive strategies emphasize setting goals, planning, organizing, self-monitoring, self-evaluating, etc. (Oxford, 1990). Moreover, the growing trend of using sophisticated technologies based on personal choices, needs, and interests also justifies both the need and demand for self-regulated learning in the world in general and in Nepal in particular. The growing use of different search engines like Google, Chat GPT, Deep Seek, YouTube, etc. justifies this claim. Nepal cannot be the exception to this ground reality because the students engage in self-regulated learning processes based on their personal choices, needs and interests applying the basic features of the SRL process. As a result, I also made an effort to engage my students in learning activities implementing the SRL. Therefore, this article aims to share the same experience of implementing the SRL in the context of Nepal.

Method

As mentioned earlier, this article is a result of my classroom experience of implementing SRL to engage them by putting the basic features of SRL into practice. Therefore, the participants for this study were bachelor's level fourth-year students who studied the research methodology course at Mahendra Ratna Multiple Campus, Ilam. The course aims to familiarize the basic components of research engaging them in different project works given in units two to six. They have little or no knowledge about research at the beginning of the session; however, they have to submit a research report at the end of the session as one of the basic requirements of the course which is a very challenging task for them. I tried to engage them in research activities from the very beginning of the session to the end following the basic features of SRL as a way of facing those challenging tasks as far as possible. I observed their activities and provided the necessary feedback to bring about the desired change in conducting small-scale research. I purposefully selected twenty-one students who followed the feedback and were involved in the self-regulated learning process more satisfactorily; as a result, they were able to prepare a research report following its basic components at the end of the session; and they were also able to obtain the first division marks in the final examination. I developed a portfolio of students and attempted to justify the implementation of SRL in the context of Nepal after the analysis and interpretation of the data collected during a whole session. Finally, I have categorized them into different themes that are related to the features of SRL; and I have tried to prove the possibility of implementing the SRL in Nepal.

Result

As mentioned in the method, although I made an effort to implement SRL while teaching the bachelor's fourth-year research methodology course in English education, I purposefully selected only twenty-one students who attended the class more regularly and

engaged in other activities like doing homework related to project works, presentation, and class works; and they also obtained the first division marks in the final examination. The following table presents the actual record of those activities and their marks obtained in the final examination in this particular subject.

Table 1.

Portfolio of Students Who Engaged in the SRL Learning Process during a Whole Session

SN	RN	Attendance (136)	Homework (132)	Presentation (4)	Classwork (4)	Marks (100)
1.	42.	123	124	3	4	66
2.	47.	64	31	1	1	65
3.	48.	115	34	4	2	71
4.	65.	106	91	1	3	65
5.	67.	79	50	2	2	60
6	86.	100	31	3	1	63
7..	87.	118	43	3	4	65
8.	88.	67	45	3	2	68
9.	111.	70	47	1	2	64
10.	127.	70	86	3	1	63
11.	128.	128	116	3	4	69
12.	134.	90	89	1	2	67
13.	137.	79	81	3	1	75
14.	141.	96	78	1	4	63
15.	149.	108	94	2	4	73
16.	153.	105	37	2	4	70
17.	165.	95	89	3	3	68
18.	186.	97	87	1	4	63
19.	194.	125	109	3	4	65
20.	237.	68	41	2	2	62
21.	395.	94	60	3	1	72

Table 1 presents the record of twenty-one successful students who made satisfactory progress following the SRL strategies while being involved in the different project works given in the research methodology course in English education in the bachelor's fourth year. The first column shows the attendance record of students who attended classes from sixty-four to a hundred and twenty-eight days out of one hundred and thirty-six classes run during the whole session in 2023/024. Nine students (Roll no. 42, 48, 65, 86, 87, 128, 149, 153 & 149) attended the class for more than a hundred days. The homework record in the second column indicates that they did their homework from thirty-one to one hundred and twenty-four days out of one hundred and thirty-two days. Very interestingly, two students (Roll no. 42 & 127) did their homework more frequently than they attended the class; and three students (Roll no. 42, 128 & 194) did their homework more than a hundred days. Similarly, they presented their project works and were involved in classwork one to four times during the session. As a result of this sincere involvement in these activities implementing the SRL features largely, they were able to obtain the first division marks in the final examination; however, their marks ranged from sixty to seventy-five.

The table also demonstrates consistency in their attendance, frequency of homework, presentation, classwork, and marks obtained by them. They were able to obtain the first division marks in this subject because almost all of them engaged in those activities as regularly and seriously as possible during the whole session. The students who were absent from the classroom sent their homework to their friends and proved the claim that they were involved in doing project work very seriously. Similarly, I also realized the fact through observation that the students who presented their project works more than two times brought about a more satisfactory change; and they were also able to maintain a good quality of their research report. They could not do so if they were not ready to be engaged in those activities following the essence of SRL strategies that are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Discussion

The main objective of this article is to share classroom experiences of implementing SRL strategies into practice in Nepal as its title indicates. As mentioned in the introduction, the basic features of SRL are the concepts of mediation, ZPD, agency, autonomy, principled pragmatism, and metacognitive strategies. Therefore, this section presents the real practice of those features of SRL in a real classroom setting connecting the features found in the available literature.

Mediation

The bachelor's level fourth-year students in English education had little or no knowledge about research when I started teaching the course at the very beginning of the session. I attempted to conceptualize the research with the assistance of contents given in the course, books, and videos downloaded from YouTube considering the significance of mediation. Indeed, this effort was successful because they enjoyed using those materials and did the project work focusing on the basic components of research. They did all project work following the feedback that was provided in the classroom to assist them. They also used different search engines like Google mainly to review the literature related to their research issue. Thus, they were able to carry out small-scale research through mediation following the research components and submit the final report.

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

The current level of students in research was too little or no at the beginning of the session; however, the course aimed at preparing a research report at the end of the session as the potential level. I frequently encouraged them to put the theoretical knowledge of research into practice given in each unit following my feedback and using different materials that can easily be found in different search engines. They did the same and carried out small-scale research selecting a research topic of their choice and interest. Moreover, they felt hesitant to

present their project works at the beginning, but they gradually enjoyed presenting their findings. Although some of them had little or no idea about PowerPoint presentations at the beginning, they presented very effectively using PowerPoint at the middle and end of the session. This difference between the current level and potential level justifies the significance of the concept of ZPD which is the difference between the individual's current level of development and the potential level that can be reached with the assistance of a more capable person.

Agency

The students were found very confused in selecting a research topic before they began their research projects; however, they selected the research topic on their personal choice and were able to put the components of research into practice more independently while conducting the research. The students who attended the class more regularly and engaged in doing each project work connecting the theoretical knowledge more meaningfully were able to prepare a better research report and submit it immediately after the course finished. This successful effort of students proved the importance of the agency which is the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices.

Autonomy

When the students were involved in different project works, they faced several problems and made many mistakes; however, they realized their weaknesses and became ready to take responsibility following the essence of autonomy. This realization began with selecting the research problems and continued to formulating the research questions, writing objectives, reviewing related literature, deciding on sampling procedure, choosing appropriate research methods, collecting the data, analyzing the data, interpreting the data, and preparing the final research report following its basic components.

Principled Pragmatism

Principled pragmatism is the process of shaping and reshaping any idea through self-observation, self-analysis, and self-reflection as (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) has claimed. The students also shaped and reshaped their research issues several times to finalize their research problems. Then they modified the research questions and objectives to maintain consistency considering the reshaped research issues. This process also continued until they submitted the final research report. Although they shaped and reshaped their project works at the beginning phase following the feedback provided by me, they gradually began to modify their project works through self-observation, self-analysis and self-reflection in the later phase which is the essence of principled pragmatism.

Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies emphasize setting goals, planning, organizing, self-monitoring, self-evaluating, etc. (Oxford, 1990). Research cannot be completed without putting these strategies into practice. The students also completed their project work implementing these metacognitive strategies and applying them in their practical lives. First of all, they decided to research to fulfil the objectives of the course. Secondly, they planned to carry out research that was interesting to them. Thirdly, they conducted the research following the eight components of research given in their course; i.e., research problem, research questions, research objectives, literature review, sampling procedure, data collection methods, analysis and interpretation of data, and writing research report. Similarly, they also prepared the final research report organizing the ideas considering the basic components of the research report like abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, conclusion, references, and appendices. They were able to prepare the final research report making so many changes based on self-monitoring and self-evaluating which are known as metacognitive strategies.

Use of Sophisticated Technologies

The participants used modern technologies to a great extent to complete their project works. They also used such sophisticated technologies from the beginning to the end of the session based on their personal choice to address their needs and interests related to their research topics. Although they used some search engines like Google, YouTube, ChatGPT, etc. to select the research topic, all of them used such search engines to review the related literature. Thus, they completed their project works using the sophisticated technologies largely that promoted their self-regulated learning strategies making them more independent learners and practitioners.

Conclusion

This article is a result of implementing SRL strategies in a real classroom setting in the context of Nepal. The students were able to conduct small-scale research following the basic components of research and prepare a research report fulfilling the basic requirements of it. They accomplished this challenging task by putting the features of SRL into practice and the sophisticated technologies based on their personal choices, needs, and interests. The use of different search engines like Google, chatGPT, DeepSeek, YouTube, etc. assisted them to achieve this success to a great extent. Thus, this practice provides an insightful idea that if the students engage in self-regulated learning processes based on their personal choices, needs and interests by applying the basic features of the SRL strategies, they can bring about a satisfactory change in their practical lives.

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