

Solukhumbu Multiple Campus Research Journal

[Yearly Peer Reviewed Journal]

ISSN: 2362-1400

Year 7, Volume 7, Issue 1, Dec. 2025

Solukhumbu Multiple Campus Research Development and Management Committee

A Reflective Study on the Challenges of Supervising Undergraduate Research Projects in English Education**Krishna Prasad Katel****Lecturer****Solukhumbu Multiple Campus**

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Abstract

The reflective study examines the current issues in the supervision of undergraduate research project in English education in a community campus in Nepal. The study applies qualitative auto ethnographic and narrative inquiry methodologies to six years of supervisory experience with fourth-year Bachelor students to examine challenges of critical concern to research directions. The results indicate a general lack of academic preparedness among students, as they have minimal knowledge of how to conduct research, fail to engage with a topic deeply, and cannot use terms such as sampling and data collection. A culture of plagiarism and heavy reliance on internet sources is an indication of institutional failure to focus on academic integrity education. There is also inappropriate student attendance and submissions at the last moment, which further interferes with the continuity of supervision. There are also notable flaws in the methodological skills of students, as they cannot create research questions, select the appropriate tools, and comprehend the ethical issues; thus, the supervisor has the extra burden of instructing these principles. Supervisors are under emotional and professional pressure and tend to be frustrated and burned out, but the institutions are not aware of it. These are worsened by institutional loopholes, including lack of orientation programs, no clear supervision policies, and a poor research culture. The research proposes systemic solutions such as integrating research skills in the curriculum, institutional training of supervisors, and a campus-wide focus on research ethics and research participation as possible solutions to enhance the performance of students and the performance of the supervisors in under-resourced academic institutions.

Keywords: Supervision, Plagiarism, Reform, Reflective, Challenges

Introduction

Undergraduate research supervision is nowadays becoming a vital part of academic institutions all over the world because it is one of the key factors that help students to develop academically and intellectually. It offers students a chance to develop critical thinking, sharpen academic writing, and other skills of an independent inquiry that are crucial to academic success as well as lifelong learning (Brew & Mantai, 2017). Effective research supervision is particularly crucial in fields such as English education, where students are supposed to have the ability to synthesize theoretical and practical knowledge. Students should be taught not only what to learn but also how to conduct academic research, its methodological rigor, the literature review, data collection, and analysis. But in the developing world like Nepal, supervision of undergraduate research has its own different challenges, which are influenced by institutional, pedagogical, and student-related factors. Some campuses, particularly those in rural or semi-urban spaces, do not have the research infrastructure required, such as access to academic databases, research instruments, and supervisors with the associated training. This brings about a disjointed research atmosphere in which both the students and faculty are usually left alone to go through the research process without any proper guidance.

Additionally, there is a general feeling among students that undergraduate research is just a formal requirement towards graduation as opposed to a knowledge-gaining academic field study. Puri (2023) notes that students often come to research with a compliance-oriented attitude, and this attitude is associated with several issues, including the lack of clarity in research questions or their ill-constructed form, the overuse of secondary sources, and the propensity to repeat issues that have already been addressed without any critical focus. Such a mindset is a contributor to shallow work and it is a deterrent to the overall quality of undergraduate research. According to Elken and Wollscheid (2020), the students usually fail in designing valid research instruments, choosing the right methodology to gather data, and analyzing the findings. Their insecurities with regard to traversing the academic literature and applying analytical frameworks also make it hard to write rigorous academic work. It is common that these gaps are not properly discussed in the curriculum and students are not ready to be engaged in independent research work.

On the part of the supervisors, mentoring undergraduate research can prove to be thought-provoking and emotionally demanding. Supervisors are supposed to give directions, critical responses, and scholarly direction, but they often face the challenges of irregular

attendance by students, consultations at the last moment, and unwillingness to accept constructive criticism (Grant, 2003; Wisker and Robinson, 2016). These actions not only interfere with the research schedule, but also reduce the possibility of an effective academic conversation and reflexivity. Supervisors are therefore compelled to manage their duties of mentoring as well as their normal teaching duties without being appreciated or rewarded by the institution. Moreover, these difficulties are compounded by the lack of systematized training and institutionalized support of undergraduate research supervision. Rowley and Slack (2021) note that there is a necessity to conduct professional development programs, which will provide faculty with skills and strategies to assist students in the research process and support them. The training opportunities in Nepal are very limited, particularly in the community campuses that have less finances and resources. Consequently, supervisors tend to make use of their experiences and trial-and-error techniques, which might not necessarily result in such consistency and quality of results.

According to Puri (2024), a lack of research infrastructure and training of professionals in the Nepalese higher education is a major hindrance on the path of the creation of an effective research culture. Faculty members do not get access to the current research materials frequently, and they are never suggested to participate in the publication of scholarly articles or training in supervision. This brings such a professional atmosphere that research is put on the back burner, and supervision is a duty that is undermined and under-resourced. Although the current literature has been quite in-depth in explaining the struggles that students go through in the research process, a general gap in the literature is still present, which discusses the lived experiences of research supervisors. It is desirable to have more reflective and practice research studies that illuminate the emotional, intellectual, and logistical challenges of overseeing undergraduate research, especially in the Nepalese setting. The proposed study is going to fill that gap through the presentation of a critical self-reflection of the challenges encountered in the process of supervising undergraduate research projects in English education, and especially at community campuses. In this light, the study aims to add to the current discussions on enhancing the current research supervision and career development of creating a more supportive academic culture between the students and faculty.

Being employed in the role of a research guide for the last six years, I have faced the same obstacles consistently and in many instances annoying, especially when supervising the fourth-year undergraduate students of the English language. Most of such students have little

knowledge of what academic research involves; mostly they take it as a writing task and not an intellectual pursuit. Consequently, they often adopt the behaviors that include copying and pasting of online content without considering some of the key aspects of the activity, such as fieldwork and personal interaction with respondents. Selecting the right research topics and finding their own interests is also one of the usual challenges that results in vague, incoherent, or irrelevant research proposals. Moreover, the general ignorance of the research methodology, such as tool design, data collection and analysis, leads to poorly laid down drafts with poor referencing and little analytical value. The inconsistent nature of work, the lack of regular communication among students, and the unwillingness to participate in feedback sessions make the supervision process still more complex, as in most cases it ends with the last-minute submissions and requests for help. These are very serious challenges that jeopardize the quality of student research and the possibility of supervisor to offer any meaningful academic support. Nevertheless, even with these concerns, it is observable that there is a gap in reflective works exploring such supervisory problems as perceived by the guide. Thus, the current research is intended to analyze the most significant issues in supervision of fourth-year undergraduate research projects related to English education, as well as critically reflecting on my personal experience as a research guide so that to formulate the strategies that can improve the efficiency of undergraduate research supervision.

Literature Review

Undergraduate research supervision is also regarded as an important pedagogical practice in higher education across the world, especially in such fields as English education. International sources of literature describe the multifaceted roles that the supervisors are supposed to play. According to Brew and Mantai (2017), supervisors are both mentors and evaluators who provide emotional support and academic evaluation. The functional to relational typology of supervisory approach by Lee (2008) explains why supervisors need to use certain adaptive strategies depending on the needs of the students. Nevertheless, even in spite of its significance, the issue of undergraduate supervision is still unaddressed as a secondary duty instead of an inherent part of the academic work. According to Rowley and Slack (2021), mentoring inconsistency occurs because supervisors are not provided with formal support and training. The issues encountered in managing undergraduate research are multilateral and common both on the global and regional levels. Many studies emphasize the fact that students have little knowledge about the research process. A large number of learners interchange research with information collection and not critical inquiry. In the study, Todd, Smith, and Bannister (2006) discovered that such a

misconception results in superficial, mechanically hacked reports. On the same note, Walkington and Jenkins (2022) noted that students tend to misjudge the intellectual properties of research, such as treating them with a compliance orientation of mind. Such foundational problems as plagiarism, ineffective research design, and lack of analytical abilities persist. Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) and then Elken and Wollscheid (2020) focus on the fact that students often cannot develop research questions, use a proper tool, and apply data analysis skills, which must be developed long before the students enter the final year.

Supervision is also very emotional and work is stressful. It not only deals with academic advice but with affective work, which is under-researched in educational institutions. The emotional aspects of the supervisory role were brought into the limelight as early as Grant (2003) pointed out the psychological weight that supervisors experience when students fail to deliver or check out of the process. Cotterall (2013) extends this by finding the emotional load of dealing with inconsistent student performance. According to Wisker and Robinson (2016), these types of emotional exhaustion may result in decreased motivation and burnout among faculty, especially in cases where supervision is performed without institutional recognition and pay.

As far as Nepal is concerned, the literature gives a picture of the lack of research infrastructure and disjointed academic practice, not least in the community campuses. Neupane (2020) claims that research projects are usually seen as a formality of graduation, and it is not given much importance in being novel or critical. These issues are compounded by institutional deficits, which include the lack of orientation programs, poor supervisory structures and the absence of measures of accountability. Poor exposure to academic writing and inquiry during previous semesters is a factor that is leading to the plight of students when they ultimately face the research requirement, which is in their final year, and this is the same case as what is reflected in personal reflections and experiences of the author. In order to solve these issues, the literature suggests systematic reforms and innovations in pedagogy. As suggested by Taylor and Beasley (2005), supervision can be incorporated into the organized academic schedules, and supervisor training should be included in the faculty development curricula. The authors suggest institutional research cultures that should be established by using mentorship programs, workshops, and feedback loops (Rowley and Slack, 2021). Neupane (2020) requests that undergraduate research supervision should be regulated and standardized on a national level because, without it, individual attempts are ineffective and, therefore, fragmented. The collective effect of these points of view is that the issue of the essentiality of coherent institutional strategies and reflective

supervisory practices is particularly significant in contexts where the difference between policy and practice is still significant, such as the case of Nepal.

Methods and Procedures

The research methodology used in this study entailed a qualitative and reflective research approach that is based on the auto-ethnography and narrative traditions. I was able to analyze my lived experiences critically as a researcher and as a participant because I was a supervisor of undergraduate research projects in the English education field at one of the community campuses in Nepal. The study is founded on 6 years' experience in supervision, most of the experience being held on fourth-year students at the Bachelor level. Several self-generated sources of data, such as reflective journals kept during the cycles of supervision, informal field notes of consultation with a student, email messages, feedback interactions, and anecdotal documentation of significant incidents, were used to draw data. These data were a good source to analyze frequent patterns and issues of the research supervision process. Data was analyzed using the thematic analysis approach. This was the familiarization of the stuff, coding, identifying themes, and synthesizing the findings in greater pedagogical and institutional backgrounds. The credibility of the research was achieved by means of triangulation of data sources, informal member checking, peer debriefing with colleagues, and long-term interaction over various academic years. Ethical issues were also taken into account and the institutional consent was obtained and the confidentiality of the students was ensured by using pseudonyms and exclusion of identifiable information. The study prioritizes honest and critical self-reflection to uncover the complexities of research supervision in under-resourced academic environments.

Result and Discussion

This chapter involves a critical analysis and interpretation of the reflective data obtained via my six years' experience as a research guide in terms of the journals, field notes, emails, and anecdotal accounts. The data was coded and categorized into 6 broad themes using thematic analysis, which represents the common challenges, insights, and institutional realities of supervising undergraduate English research projects. The analysis is not merely descriptive, but it is also critical and shows the underlying structural and pedagogical concerns that shape the research supervision process.

Academic Unpreparedness of Students

One of the most common and persistent problems of the supervision of undergraduate research in the field of English education is the intrinsic academic under preparedness of students. This problem is reflected in the fact that they have little knowledge of what academic research is all about. The main fallacy that many students commit when going into the research stage is that it is similar to an ordinary classroom essay or a general informative report. An example is the case when students suggest too general and un-researchable topics like the Importance of English, Global Warming, or The Impact of Social Media, without having any statement of particular research questions, target population, or research methodology. These subjects indicate that there is no critical engagement and framing of research, as they do not reduce the scope, create a gap in the current literature, or support their scholarly importance.

This lack of preparedness is especially noticeable when students are developing research questions. In one of these instances, one of the students trying to study Teaching Vocabulary in Secondary Schools merely asked the following question: Is vocabulary important? Which is too obvious and analytically shallow? Likewise, one more student who expressed his/her interest in grammar teaching wrote: How to teach grammar? without specifying the context, methods, and learners. These instances demonstrate that a large number of students have not been trained to develop particular, quantifiable, and researchable questions, but they have not been introduced to theoretical backbones that may inform their inquiry. Their work tends to be less deep than necessary to distinguish between a general interest and a research problem.

In addition, students tend to be confused about basic research terms. In another instance, a student who was doing research on the topic of Students' Attitudes toward English Reading Materials was confused about what was meant by the population, and proposed to survey only three of her friends. Other people could not differentiate data collection tools (e.g., questionnaires, interviews, observation checklists) and data sources (e.g., students, teachers, textbooks). Such confusion is a symptom of inadequate research literacy, which should have been fostered by previous experience in course work on research.

Discussions and written drafts are not always acquainted with the academic writing conventions. Literature reviews are often composed in the form of an article summary, and they include no synthesis, criticism, or thematic structure. As an illustration, students may summarize three unrelated articles in one paragraph and not even bother to connect the results and research

gaps. The lack of citation skills, the inability to paraphrase, and the inconsistent referencing also contribute to the problem. These deficiencies bring out the minimal or little training students get in academic discourse, although it is central to research.

The conceptual cause of this unpreparedness is more structural in nature. Research is often presented as a one-semester course in the final year of the undergraduate program in many institutions, especially in community campuses, which is too late in the undergraduate path. Students are not taught how to critically read, write academic papers, and reason methodologically, which makes the task of writing a research paper academically sound and, in a short period of time, daunting. The curriculum does not offer any scaffolding, including gradual introduction to mini-research projects or writing to analyze tasks, which would gradually develop the skills needed to conduct an independent inquiry.

Copy-Paste Culture and Plagiarism

The most concerning and recurring problem in the field of undergraduate research supervision is plagiarism and the acceptance of copy-pasting habits. Such an academic dishonesty culture is not only indicative of the inability of the students to be skillful in their research, but also of a larger institutional failure to inculcate the ethical value of academic honesty. In some of their supervision practices, students have presented complete parts, especially literature reviews and theoretical frameworks that were directly copied from the internet. A case in point was when a student copied an entire chapter in a post on a blog on Second Language Acquisition, including irrelevant hyperlinks, fonts of varying sizes, and formatting errors, which literally signifies that the information was not read and comprehended. The other trend here was the presentation of borrowed material by students of open-access sample theses or commercial academic assistance websites in most cases without any alteration or reference. In another case, a student has provided a theoretical framework on constructivism in language teaching, which was virtually copied and pasted (verbatim) in a Wikipedia article, with references that were not comprehended or applicable to the research situation. Upon querying the student on the sources, the student could not describe the authors or concepts referred to, which showed that the student had absolutely no idea of how the content was related to the student. This underscores the shallow reading of literature that typifies most such instances of plagiarism.

These examples indicate there is a greater misconception of what academic work is. They usually take the thesis as a formal necessity to pass instead of an opportunity to make a valuable

contribution to the academic discourse. This expedient mode of operation promotes short cuts and discourages intellectual integrity. The issue is especially urgent when it comes to English education, where students are supposed to be critically involved in the process of dealing with both areas of pedagogical theories and language teaching practices that require subtle interpretation and contextual applicability.

Supervisory-wise, plagiarism takes up an unreasonable share of time and energy. Rather than working on refining of research questions or on enhancing analysis, a substantial amount of the feedback process is a remedial activity of describing how to paraphrase, synthesize sources, and make citations. Supervisors are usually required to give elementary training on how to refer to systems like APA or MLA, even though they are the basic academic skills that were supposed to have been learnt earlier in the academic life of the students. An example is one of the students who inquired: Can't I simply write the name of the author and not the date? And here, the question is not only the sign of confusion, but it is also evidence of insufficient training in academic standards.

Institutional inaction is the sustenance of this culture of plagiarism. The majority of community campuses do not have formal orientation on research ethics and students are rarely instructed on how to critically approach sources and how to conduct literature review with the help of scholarly databases. Also, there is a lack of plagiarism-detecting software or policy enforcement. This has led to the fact that students are not being held responsible, and there is a vague boundary between right paraphrasing and unethical copying. Academic integrity can be viewed as the initial and only barrier by supervisors, which is not only unjust but also ineffective unless it is supported by the entire institution. Moreover, the lack of digital literacy training makes the problem more severe. A lot of students do not know how to find peer-reviewed journals, how to differentiate between credible and non-credible sources, and which referencing software to use, e.g., Zotero or Mendeley. They have to use blogs, open forums, and unreliable websites as a default strategy, just because they do not have the means to do the opposite.

Irregular Contact and Disengagement

The intermittent and demoralizing issue in the undergraduate research supervision process is the intermittent contact and disengagement of students. Such a problem severely restricts the establishment of purposeful academic mentoring and reduces the pedagogical worth of the research process. Some students vanish and reappear at long intervals, sometimes months

before submission due dates, with poorly prepared and conceptually flawed drafts. One reflective journal entry was made by a student who had not made any contact with the teacher in four months, with a half-written thesis on the Use of English Songs in Language Teaching, who was pleading for an immediate response to meet exam requirements. These instances are indicative of a utilitarian perception of research, in which the project is not seen as a work of scholarship but as a hurdle that has to be overcome by bureaucracy. This lack of engagement is often an indication of a wider misunderstanding of research as a rushed process and not a long-term mental activity that needs iteration, feedback, and gradual development. Indicatively, requests to get final approval were often made by students who had not been provided with comments on their proposals or first chapters, signifying that they thought that getting their supervisor's approval was a formality and not a part of an interactive academic process. One of them is where a student turned in a complete thesis draft without ever having spoken about the methodology, referencing, I thought I could do it on my own and present it to you at the end, which is not only disrespectful of supervision but also demonstrates a deep lack of understanding of the point of academic mentoring.

Such disengagement is caused by a complex set of factors. Social and economic demands, including working part-time or family commitments, tend to override the academic requirements, especially in a community campus where students are mostly of working or rural backgrounds. Moreover, there were complaints that other students were demotivated because their assigned topics were not of their interest; in most cases, the given topics were selected because of the lack of time or because of the convenience instead of their academic interest. In one case, a student confessed that he picked the topic in a hurry because he did not want to fall behind in time, and did not demonstrate much interest in learning more about it, which points to the lack of connection between topic choice and intellectual commitment.

The problem is also worsened by institutional practices. The majority of community campuses do not have any formal mechanisms that would implement regular interaction between students and supervisors. Progress tracking mechanisms, including logbooks, scheduled consultation, or milestone assessment, are rarely present. In the absence of these, the students are not subject to any academic punishment in case they vanish at some critical times in the research development. Such a lack of structure breeds a reactive supervisory culture, in which supervisors must give hurried feedback in a pressurized situation instead of leading students through the more

conceptual and methodological aspects of the research process. This leads to impairment of the pedagogical integrity of supervision.

Moreover, the absence of digital platforms or research management systems (e.g., Moodle, Google Classroom, or institutional portals) implies that the communication process is formalized and not consistent. In one instance, a student uploaded a complete thesis draft through chat in a social media and requested feedback as fast as possible, which was not only very professional, but also bypassed the official academic steps. These practices are boundary crossing, ; they put time strains and eventually undermine academic responsibility on both ends. Importantly, it is also psychologically significant to the supervisors in terms of disengagement. The emotional work of dealing with unmotivated or last-minute students is a burden to manage. Supervisors are prone to frustrations and helplessness, particularly when their time and skills are underestimated. Most of the entries involved supervisors stating, among other things, that they feel like they care more about their work than they do, and this highlights the emotional weight of having to work in a lopsided academic relationship.

Lack of Methodological Understanding

The lack of knowledge of the students on research methodology, which is arguably the foundation of any academic inquiry, is a topic that has proved to be persistent and alarming throughout the supervision process. This gap not only undermines the quality of academic writing of undergraduate theses but also exposes the gaps in the design of curricula and the readiness of an institution. The approach of many students to methodology is that it is an obligatory part to be completed and not the plan that will guide the whole research process. Their questions and actions demonstrated the basic misconceptions of the basic methodological rules. As an example, one student wrote, “Sir, may I ask five questions and ask my friends? This is an example of a shallow and transactional method of data collection, as it shows a lack of knowledge regarding the sampling methods, ethics, validity, and reliability.

Students tended to recommend tools and techniques without explaining or even knowing whether they were appropriate or not. In one conspicuous instance, a student who was researching on the topic of Teachers' Attitudes towards the Use of L1 in English Classrooms incorporated a questionnaire with ambiguous questions that had leading questions and no demographic variables, which did not take into consideration the contextual aspects of the research. When asked about the reason why the tool was copied, the student responded, I found a sample online and copied it,

which not only shows no critical thinking but also shows the unregulated use of template-driven research, without modification and validation. This dependence on decontextualized, generic tools is a contributor to superficial data and invalid results.

These problems were not a case isolated situation but were rife in the cohort. A lot of students were unable to differentiate between quantitative and qualitative paradigms. As an example, students who were planning to research the classroom interaction tended to use questionnaires without knowing that observation instruments or discourse analysis would be more suitable. Other people abused mixed methods without knowing how to combine qualitative and quantitative data in a meaningful way. In one of the theses, a student stated that he or she used mixed methods, but he or she only carried out a short survey and included an interview with one of the students as an aside, and did not perform any triangulation or analytical synthesis. These inaccurate understandings imply that students tend to adhere to methodological names without understanding their epistemological and procedural consequences.

To a great extent, these issues are caused by the curricular oversights of research training. Most Nepalese undergraduate courses in English do not introduce research until the last year, and may not have courses in research design, data analysis, or academic writing in the previous semesters. Students are not well prepared to make independent inquiries because the scaffold instruction, like literature review assignments, simulated research proposals or practical training in interview techniques, is not provided. As a result, regular supervision gatherings degenerated into remedial workshops. The supervisors were forced to answer the question of what the difference between open-ended and closed questions is, why pilot testing is necessary, or what the role of coding is in a qualitative research subject that is much more appropriate in a formal methodology course.

Supervisors are the ones who must shoulder the responsibility of filling in the gaps in knowledge, and at the same time, check and approve drafts, as this lack of proper methodological literacy spreads into their schools. This is a two-sided situation of an instructor and an evaluator that generates tensions. The supervisors are usually torn between the academic standards and the low competencies of their students. The frustration of having to work in several pedagogical roles without institutional support was summed up by one supervisor who commented that I have to explain to them what a variable is, before I can even discuss hypothesis testing.

The cultural and structural gaps in the academic institutions, especially in the community campuses, are a major impediment in the proper implementation of undergraduate research. Although the weaknesses at the student level are often given much attention, such as in terms of poor academic preparation or plagiarism, they are sometimes symptoms of institutional failure on a deeper level. The lack of a well-defined and structured research culture is one of the most significant gaps that have been witnessed. The deficiencies are highly conspicuous at the community campus at which I work. They give out undergraduate students' research projects without any orientation on what academic research is all about. There were no briefing and training activities at the campus level conducted in various academic years to make students aware of fundamental elements of research like selection of topics, writing of proposals, research ethics, and time management. In my field notes, I have always captured students going up to supervisors without having the slightest idea of the structure of research.

Faculties are also not motivated to deal with the process in depth due to the absence of institutional recognition and encouragement of supervision. Supervisory roles are not included in the calculation of faculty workload and professional development plans and are viewed as adjunct to teaching roles. Research mentorship is an additional burden without time allowances. This creates a situation of rushed oversight or perfunctory feedback, and the whole process becomes a bureaucratic necessity instead of an academic activity. Cases in institutions that have high research cultures are a stark contrast. An example is that in many universities in the Global North, research training is incorporated into the undergraduate curriculum as sequenced courses on academic writing, methodology, and data analysis. They also have access to online libraries, research management tools, and regular seminars on issues including research ethics to proposal writing. Such institutions build a culture of research as not something that is done once, but something that is practiced as an intellectual activity. Research in the Nepalese community campus, however, is still a checkbox at the culmination of the degree enterprise, and is not in any way part of the pedagogical and institutional fabric.

Structural reforms are thus necessary to fill this gap. Research needs to be institutionalized by institutions by integrating the research curriculum, providing training, and assigning administrative responsibility. This may involve setting up Research Methodology courses during previous semesters, initiating mentorship programs, holding orientation workshops on an annual basis, and creating of research support centers. There should also be

standardization and implementation of policies regarding student-supervisor ratio, tracking of progress, and review processes of ethical issues.

Institutional Gaps and Lack of Research Culture

The research weaknesses in the aspects of structure and culture in the academic institutions, especially in the community campuses, is a major deterrence to the successful implementation of undergraduate research. Although much focus is usually made on student-level weaknesses, such as lack of academic preparation or plagiarism, they are frequently the manifestations of institutional failures. Among the most severe gaps that have been identified are the lacks of an established research culture, which is well-defined and supported. The deficits are very evident at the community campus where I am working. Undergraduate learners are regularly given research projects without being oriented on what it takes to be an academic researcher. There was no campus-level briefing or training to orient the students on key aspects of the research, like topic selection, proposal writing, research ethics, and time management, in several academic years. In my field notes, I always have students who come to supervisors without having the slightest idea about the fundamental structures of research.

Supervision is also not deeply involved by the faculty because there is no institutional recognition and incentive to do so. Supervisory roles are typically viewed as a peripheral part of teaching roles and are not included in the workload estimates or professional growth initiatives of the faculty. Research mentorship is an additional burden without time allowances. This creates poor quality supervision or careless feedback and makes the whole process a bureaucratic obligation instead of an academic pursuit. An example of the institutions with a rich culture of research presents the opposite. As an example, research training is incorporated into most undergraduate courses in universities of the Global North, such as sequenced courses in academic writing, methodology, and data analysis. They also access digital libraries, research management services and regular workshops on various subjects, including research ethics and proposal development. These institutions instill the culture of research not being a single occasion but an ongoing intellectual exercise. In Nepalese community campuses, though, research is nonetheless being seen as a check box at the culmination of the degree journey, and not part of the pedagogical and institutional fabric.

In order to narrow this gap, structural reforms are required. The research should be institutionalized in institutions by incorporating it in the curriculum, providing intensive training,

and maintaining administrative accountability. This may involve the initiation of Research Methodology courses within previous semesters, the initiation of mentorship programs, the initiation of orientation workshops every academic year and the formation of research support centers. Also, student-supervisor ratio policies, progress tracking policies, and policies on ethical review procedures must be uniformed and implemented.

Synthesis and Critical Reflection

The thematic examination of undergraduate research supervision in the Nepalese community campuses depicts an extremely locked system of problems that are both personal as well as structural. These obstacles of academic inadequacy and a plagiarism culture, disengagement, confusion of methods, emotional burnout in supervisors and an insurmountable institutional support create a networked web that frustrates the education and integrity of undergraduate research.

Although the tendency to blame the vices on student behavior might be very easy, it will be simplistic and ultimately unproductive. The regularity of the problems found with several groups of cohorts of students, whereby they present plagiarized work, vanish months later, poses elementary questions concerning sampling, or considers methodology a speed bump to an important juncture in their academic development. Yet, these tendencies of the students are the signs of a more serious illness the lack of a strong research ecosystem in the community campuses. The design and sequence of the curriculum fail as the students do not get any experience in academic writing or critical reading since they are introduced to research training only during the last semester. A curriculum that sees research as a one-time event but not a process preconditions confusion and surface interaction among students. Also, the emotional and professional labour supervisors are forced to bear, introduces another under-debated aspect of higher education in Nepal, the work of faculty that is both invisible and undervalued. Supervisors will also be required to control the intellectual and emotional instability of research, as well as logistical and ethical errors of unprepared students. They usually do so without institutional training, without compensating workloads, and without having institutional support systems like peer mentoring groups or research offices. This generates a model of supervision that is not very much designed but based on good will. According to journal reflections, the role of supervisors is often to serve as a replacement instructor, mental health counselor, and administrative guide, and these are roles that go way beyond their official job description.

Conversely, global research-based institutions provide educational examples. In one example, as a first-year student, I had to undertake scaffold academic writing, critical theory, and research methods modules at the University of Melbourne or the SOAS University of London, which also introduced me to research activities at an early stage. These are backed by writing centers, ethics boards, digital repositories and frequent workshops which all aimed at normalizing and demystifying the research process. These are not useful in that they can be wholesale transplanted into the Nepalese environment, but they demonstrate what can be done when research becomes an administrative burden, instead of a pedagogical priority. Consequently, to tackle the issues that have been identified in this reflective analysis, one will need to implement specific measures to fix the situation on the student level, as well as conduct a complete institutional re-evaluation of undergraduate research. To begin with, the teaching of research should be incorporated across the undergraduate programme with well-defined milestones in each of the year to develop the core competencies. Second, institutionalization of mandatory supervisor training is necessary to make sure that faculty members are armed with the pedagogical and emotional instruments required to be successful supervisors. Third, uniform policies on timelines of supervision, feedback cycles, and evaluation standards should be formulated and implemented, with accountability being held on both sides of the supervisor-supervisee relationship. Finally, the institutions need to promote a campus-wide culture of research by events such as student research conferences, undergraduate publication offices, and faculty and student interest opportunities.

Conclusion

This reflective paper has revealed that the process of overseeing undergraduate research in English is full of various challenges, both at the level of the particular students and at the level of the whole institution. The guidance of research is not an individual task, but a systemic one that entails collaboration, training, and systematic academic support. As a personal experience of having worked as a research guide in the last six years, I have found that there is a dire need to revamp the introduction, teaching, and supervision of research in the undergraduate levels. This study highlights the depth and complexity of the issues that define the nature of undergraduate research supervision in the Nepalese community campuses that indicating that lack of readiness among students in the form of academic under-preparedness, plagiarism, disengagement, and lack of methodological savvy are directly intertwined with institutional deficiencies on a larger scale. The lack of a structured curriculum to support the development of research skills, the lack of

formal training of supervisors, and poor institutional support, puts students and supervisors in a situation where they cannot perform their academic functions well. In addition, the heavy emotional and professional work required of the supervisors is not well-appreciated and is not aided either, which further undermines the quality of supervision. The solutions to these problems involve institutional changes that include research training across the undergraduate experience, have explicit supervisory policies, and a strong research culture that places importance on academic honesty and skepticism. It is within the framework of these systemic and pedagogical changes that the issue of undergraduate research supervision can be lifted out of its present constraints on procedures and become truly a rich and empowering scholarly undertaking.

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<https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220912547> (Original work published 2022)
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