



Activities used in Teaching Short Stories at Bachelor Level

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Abstract: This study explores the effectiveness of using activities for teaching short stories to the students studying at bachelor level under Education Faculty at Tribhuvan University Nepal used by teachers employing qualitative research design. One hundred and twenty students of bachelor level were involved in this study. Out of which forty-five girls and the rest were boys. The research participants were observed using a set of questionnaires to collect relevant information to fulfill its purpose. The finding showed that teachers use deductive teaching activities while teaching short stories. However, students believe that stories should be taught with the help of effective, engaging activities. All of the students were interested in teaching literature with the use of student-centered methods of teaching, although they were taught through the use of the deductive method of teaching at bachelor level.

Keywords: *Teaching short stories, engaging activities, deductive methods, effectiveness, literature*

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INTRODUCTION

The term 'Literature' is defined as a piece of writing which is cherished as work of art especially, novels, plays, poems, stories dramas and essays. Literary texts have multiple layers of meaning, and can be effectively taken for discussion, sharing feelings or opinions. Literature is an innovative and creative use of language. Literature is the area of study which involves the exploration of creative use of language. It is the representation of various authentic use of the language. Literature has been used to put across human feelings, emotions and thoughts. It enables the learners to find original meaning in the world and to express it in their own ways. However, literature expects more advanced skill than ordinary reading and writing from learners and teachers. It is a part of the target culture and holds value as part of the learners' general education. It involves emotions as well as intellect and adds to motivation and may contribute to personal sharpness. Literature is supposed to be an authentic material which creates interests, stimulates and provokes the imagination for the readers.

Literature has been defined variously by various scholars. Literature speaks to the heart as much as to the mind provides materials with some emotional color that can make fully contact with the learner's own life and can thus counterbalance the more fragmented effects as many collections of tests used in the classroom (Collie & Slater, 1987; Sumingwa, 2018).

Now we can say that Literature educates every one. By examining values in literary texts, teacher encourages learners to develop values for the students. Moreover, it is the reflections of society and expression of human thoughts, feelings emotions and imaginations announced beautifully through language.

Literature consists of various genres, viz. poetry, drama, essay, and novel. These literary genres are taken as the basic foundation of teaching literature. Literature has been taught as a subject in many countries at bachelor or tertiary

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level. Moreover, recent teaching literature has not much emphasized in the field of EFL, ESL classroom. It started in 1980s in England. This area has attracted more interest among EFL teachers.

In the present major English curriculum of B.Ed under TU has, literary genres like novels, stories, poems, essays, dramas are expected to be taught effectively. No doubt, there are various strategies used by the teachers for effective teaching literature. Therefore, the attempt of this study was helpful to find out the activities used in teaching stories at Bachelor Level.

Teaching literature can be effective only through the appropriate use of proper activities in the classroom. The use of these activities in teaching literature makes the literary texts understandable. With the help of activities and resources, the students are able to explain the literary devices and to express the feelings, emotions, in an artistic way. Students' involvement with appropriate activities in teaching learning process enhances interest in learning.

In the context of Nepal, there are some institutional and community colleges where the ways of teaching literature are different. Moreover, the students who study in community college feel much difficulties in learning literary techniques. Now the problem is: what activities have been used can be used and how they can be used for effective teaching of literature.

As we know that school is a place where different students from various cultural, educational and religious background come. So, the students may have different educational and psychological differences. The proper use of classroom activities in at bachelor level is a must.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed at the following objectives:

- i To find out the effectiveness of teaching short stories used by English teachers at Bachelor Level.
- ii To suggest some pedagogical implications.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered after this research study.

- i What is the effectiveness of teaching activities employed by English teachers while teaching short stories at Bachelor level?
- ii What are the challenges faced by the teachers and implications do they suggest in teaching literature at Bachelor level?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching Literature to modern language students constitutes an enormous challenge these days. There must be questions that what sort of literature is appropriate to use with language students. The criteria of learners totally depend on the cultural background, interests, need and aspiration of the students. Here, teaching literature makes the students choose books, therefore, which are relevant to the current issues. Teaching literature is an inseparable tool for effective teaching and learning of language. It is a key to language teaching. Teaching literature means teaching language through literature. Literature cannot be taught in isolation. Different aspects of language can be taught through literature. Literature exposes a variety of inputs to the language learners. Without the presence of literature language teaching can be incomplete. There are two ways of relations between language and literature. A literary language is a variety of language. The literary figure expresses thoughts, feelings, emotions, imaginations, etc. through different genres of literature.

Literature plays a vital role in the language classroom by providing motivating materials and various communicative activities. It can be regarded as a rich source of authentic materials. It exposes a variety of linguistic input to the learners. Literature enhances different skills, abilities in language. "Literature is a more significant part of language teaching program and using in such a way to further the learners master in four basic areas of language like: listening, speaking, reading and writing" (Collie & Slater, 1987). Thus, literature helps the language learner to come across with different varieties of language, culture, and lifestyles of people. Therefore, a language learner must learn the target language literature. A learner can get the feelings, emotions, thoughts, and customs, etc. of the target group from literature. Thus, language can be incomplete without learning literature.

Use of Literature in Language Classroom

Literature is an authentic material. It has broad scope. Literature is one of the most important tools for teaching and learning a language. It is an input to language teaching. [Collie and Slater \(1987\)](#) give following reasons behind using literature in the language classroom.

Valuable authentic materials

Literature gives authentic texts to offer a plentiful and extremely varied body of written material which is important in the sense that it says something about fundamental human issues, and is enduring rather than brief. Students grow additional familiarity with many different linguistic uses, forms and conventions of the written mode with irony, exposition, argument, narrations and so on. It incorporates a great deal of cultural information.

Language enrichment

Literature helps learners to learn many functions of the written language and it increases learner's receptive vocabulary. It facilitates the transfer to a more active form of knowledge. Literature provides a rich context in which individual lexical or syntactical items are made more memorable. The extensive reading is required in taking a novel or long play to develop the student's ability to make inferences from linguistic clues and to deduce meaning from context.

Personal involvement

Literature fosters personal involvement in readers, engaging imaginatively in literature enables learners to shift the focus of their attention beyond the more mechanical aspects of the foreign language system. When a novel, play or short story is explored over a period of time, the result is that the reader begins to inhabit the text. Reader is well motivated.

GENRES OF LITERATURE: SHORT STORY

A short story is a short form of prose that explains a story. It is a type of fiction which involves a single character struggling within self or in the external world. However, it may also consist of two to three characters. A short story is distinct from other forms of literature in terms of its length, magnitude and language. That is, it is written in simple language. However, they may consist of diverse style. They may be centered on several types of the themes. If it is longer than fifty or more pages (50-100), it is called a novella. Plot, character, setting, style and theme are the major components of short story. While teaching story the following approach/techniques can be applied:

- i Non-textual approach: Here, teacher can explain about the author, theme of the story, ordinary and common characters and usual social event, setting, plausible event.
- ii Textual approach: In this approach, the teacher clarifies about the plot, inciting force, rising action, climax, falling action, denouement and theme of the story.

There are many research studies carried out in the field of literature under the department of English Education. Many researches are related to the techniques of teaching different genres of literature. So, is the case with the activities used in teaching different genres of literature, but no research work has been carried out on challenges of teaching novel at higher Secondary Level. Some of the researches are reviewed as follows:

[Jha \(1999\)](#) has carried out research on "Teaching of English through Literature." His objectives were to find out ways of teaching English through literature, and to suggest some pedagogical implications for enhancing teaching learning process. The primary sources of this study was the lectures involved in teaching English literature in Dhanusa district. The major tools of study were questionnaires and interview. He concluded with remarks that the literature is an indispensable part of language.

Similarly, [Lamasl \(2006\)](#) has carried out research entitled "A Study on the Strategies in Teaching Story at Secondary level". The objectives of his study were to explore the strategies used in teaching story at secondary level. He used survey type of methodology in his research. The researcher presented the findings that 60% of secondary English teachers of Kathmandu district were not found to be using the activities needed for teaching story properly, poor in pre-reading activities and post reading activities. Furthermore, he found that teaching story at secondary level was relevant to develop reading skill, grammar, creativity, more lesson, and cultural awareness to learn the literature.

Likewise, [Lohani \(2008\)](#) has carried out a research under the title "strategies of teaching Drama at Higher Secondary Level." Her objectives were to find out strategies used in teaching drama at secondary level while teaching drama. She

used survey research. She found that 10% teachers motivated their students excellently whereas 70% did so in a good and 20% of them were found in an average condition in motivating the students.

Moreover, Pokhrel (2008) has also carried out research on “Strategies used in teaching fiction.” The major objective of his study was to find out the strategies adopted in teaching fiction at master’s level and to list some pedagogical implications for enhancing teaching learning process at fiction. He used experimental research design in his research. He found that every teacher needed to brainstorm before going through the text translations should be minimized as it decreases both fluency and proficiency. And lecture should be used as a technique but not as a method.

Furthermore, Bhattarai (2013) has carried out a research on “Strategies used in teaching novel.” The main objective of his research was to find out the strategies employed by EFL teachers at Bachelor level in teaching novel. His research was survey research. He used both primary and secondary sources for data collection. The primary sources of his study were English language teachers from Kathmandu and Lalitpur districts from different bachelor level colleges. Non random sampling procedure was used for selecting the population. He used questionnaire and interview as a tool for data collection. The main finding of his study was that snowball summary was best strategy to teach novel. Similarly, he found out that dramatization of the parts novel was the best strategy for attracting learner’s attention for most of the teachers

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design of this study was the survey research design. Survey research design is the most popular design in research in social science including in the field of education. Survey research is quite an old technique and was largely developed in the 18th century. Survey research is a kind of research which studies large and small population by selecting and studying sample chosen from the population. Survey is usually done in the natural setting. Data in survey research are collected through questionnaires, interviews, test scores, etc. Surveys are most commonly used descriptive method in educational research and may vary in scope from large scale governmental investigation to small scale studies carried out by a single researcher. The main purpose of survey research is to obtain a snapshot of Condition, attitudes and events at a single point in time (Cohen & Manion, 1985; Mei-Ling, 2018; Nunan, 1992).

From the above mentioned definition, we can say that survey research is carried out to light important educational issues. Surveys are used mostly in large scale researches where a huge population requires being included in the research. Generalization of the finding is focused in this research. In this research design, researchers construct the hypothesis before collecting the data. Therefore, it is also known as hypothetic- deductive approach. It is not a recursive study because all research tasks do not go simultaneously but it is a step-wise study. Since my study was related to educational issues and had got factual information, the use of survey design was reasonable for it. The tools were questionnaire for teachers and class observation scheme. The descriptive approach has been adopted this research.

Population and Sampling Procedure

The population of this study was the students studying at Bachelor Level of Education campuses of Kathmandu valley. Ten colleges of Katmandu valley were selected purposively. Then, 120 students were selected using simple random procedure. However, the students were proportionally chosen for the sample study from different camp. The following procedures were followed to collect data:

- At first, the selected colleges of Katmandu valley were visited and explained the purpose of the visit.
- Then, I had met English teachers and established friendly rapport with him/her.
- After establishing rapport, I consulted with students of Bachelor Level to inform them about the purpose and process of the research.
- Then, I distributed questionnaire to the students and requested them to complete.
- Finally, I collected the questionnaire and thanked the students/ teachers for their help and co-operation.

Data Collection Tools and Presentation

The questionnaire had included the various activities that the teacher used while teaching the literary genres at pre, while and post teaching phrases. I used simple statistical tools such percentage, tables, and pie charts to interpret and analyze the data. The interpretations of the data were tabulated in three categories like agree, undecided and disagree.

ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING STORIES

A short story is a short form of prose that explains a story. It is a type of fiction which involves a single character struggling within self or in the external world. However, it may also consist of two to three characters. A short story is distinct from other forms of literature in terms of its length, magnitude and language. That is, it is written in simple language. However, they may consist of diverse style. They may be centered on several types of the themes. If it is longer than fifty or more pages (50-100), it is called a novella. Plot, character, setting, style and theme are the major components of short story. Stories are an ideal way of introducing to literature in the foreign classroom too. Teacher's practical length is reduced, and offer greater variety than longer texts. There are three ways of teaching story i.e. Pre-teaching, whileteaching and Post-teaching activities.

Pre-Teaching Activities of Teaching Stories

Pre-teaching activities of teaching story include reading and writing author's life or cultural background, using if library is available, predicting about the genre of story teaching discussing on similar contrast, predicting with the use of pictures and teaching with Vocabulary. The use of used activities can be shown in the following way. According

Table 1 *Pre-Teaching Activities of Teaching Story*

S.No	Attributes	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
1	Reading and writing author's life or historical /cultural background	70	10	20
2	Using if library is available	55	20	25
3	Predicting about the genre of story teaching	60	15	25
4	Discussing on similar incident /contrast	65	15	20
5	Predicting with the use of pictures.	45	20	35
6	Teaching with vocabulary	50	15	35

to the information mentioned above shows that the students of B.Ed Third year agreed to use Reading and writing author's life or historical cultural background (70%), predicting about the genre of story teaching (60%) and discussing on similar incident. This indicates that teachers use these techniques most of all the time while teaching pre-reading activities of teaching story.

While-Teaching Activities of Teaching Story

While teaching activities teaching story consist of helping students to understand to plot, helping to or dastard the characters and focusing on grammatical problem. This position can be mentioned in the following table. The

Table 2 *While-Teaching Activities of Teaching Story*

S.No	Attributes	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
1	Helping students to understand the plot.	60	15	25
2	Helping to understand the characters	45	25	30
3	Focusing on grammatical problems	55	15	30

information mentioned in the above table shows that the students of B.Ed third year agreed the teachers use the technique of helping students to understand the plot (60%). This shows that teachers use this technique all the time while teaching story in the classroom.

Post-Teaching Activities of Teaching Story

Post teaching activities of teaching story consist of interpreting of the theme, understanding narrative point of view, writing activities and talking about the writer, works and styles. This can be shown in the following table.

Table 3 *Post-Teaching Activities of Teaching Story*

S.No	Attributes	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
1	Interpreting of the theme	70	10	20
2	Understanding narrative point of view	60	15	25
3	Writing activities	50	10	40
4	Discussing about the writer, works and styles.	55	15	30

According to the above mentioned data shows that the students of B.Ed. third year agreed the teachers use the techniques of interpreting the them (70%) and understanding narrative point of view (60%) . This reveals that teachers use these activities almost all the time while carrying out the post teaching story.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on analysis and interpretation of data, the findings have been drawn as follows:

- One two thirds students (70%) expressed that understanding the narrative point of view was the effective activity while teaching story.
- Eighty percent students supported that outlining the social, geographical. Political or historical background of the writer was the highest used activity of teaching story.
- More than the quarters (80%) students stated that giving lines to the play was found most effective activity while teaching story.
- According to the study 80% students, contrasting in characters was the most supportive activity while teaching essay. Group work, pair work, reading, writing and other activities were commonly used by students as applied for effective teaching literature in the classes.
- Students used mime, gestures and body language to convey meaning for making the literary texts understandable.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Language teaching always emphasizes on purposeful and meaningful activities .It focuses on the use of reliable, authentic and extra materials used beside textbook activities .It is concerned with the understanding of the literary texts, and the diversity of activities. The findings exhibited that there are various kinds of activities that are useful for the implementation of teaching literature activities. All the literary activities were useful for developing creative, critical and imaginative competency of the learners. Learners were found to pay interest activities, and those activities are always appropriate for developing linguistic competence on learners.

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APPENDIX

Name of the Student: (Optional)
Name of the college:
Qualification:(Optional)
Teaching Class: Date

You are kindly requested to circle (O) the options given in the box below; the indicated number in the box remarks the following:

- | |
|----------------------|
| 1- Strongly Disagree |
| 2- Disagree |
| 3- Undecided |
| 4- Agree |
| 5- Strongly Agree |

Techniques for Teaching Stories

1) Students read and write author’s life or historical /cultural background.	1	2	3	4	5
2) Students use if library is available.	1	2	3	4	5
3) Students predict about the genre of story teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
4) Students discuss on similar incident /contrast.	1	2	3	4	5
5) Students predict using pictures,	1	2	3	4	5
6) Students do group discussion about the title	1	2	3	4	5
7) Students predict after the first paragraphs.	1	2	3	4	5
8) Students discuss on the theme.	1	2	3	4	5
9) Students read and write author’s life or historical /cultural background.	1	2	3	4	5
10) Students use if library is available.	1	2	3	4	5
11) Students predict about the genre of story teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
12) Students discuss on similar incident /contrast.	1	2	3	4	5
13) Students predict using pictures,	1	2	3	4	5
14) Students do group discussion about the title	1	2	3	4	5
15) Students predict after the first paragraphs.	1	2	3	4	5
16) Students discuss on the theme.	1	2	3	4	5
17) Students predict for the interaction.	1	2	3	4	5
18) They discuss for the interaction.	1	2	3	4	5
19) Students evaluate of the characters.	1	2	3	4	5
20) Students explore imaginative extension.	1	2	3	4	5
21) Students refer back to the text several times.	1	2	3	4	5
22) Students focus on graphology.	1	2	3	4	5
23) Students focus on phonology.	1	2	3	4	5
24) Students focus on vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
25) Students focus on syntax.	1	2	3	4	5
26) Students contrast in characters: beginning, ending paragraph.	1	2	3	4	5
27) Students have question of cohesion.	1	2	3	4	5
28) Students can think the same vocabulary in L1.	1	2	3	4	5
