



An Action Research in Trends of EFL Novices' New Writing Through Reading Habits and Interventions Techniques

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to analyze the findings from experiments (spanning 12 weeks) about eighth-graders' experiences in English classes from two different Kathmandu valley boarding schools. The survey of this study was to determine primarily through information gathered from students' class surveys, workshops, observations, written samples, photographs, and tests (pre-test and post-test). This paper aims to explore to what extent reading enhances writing in English in the teenage group, especially among eighth graders. We wanted to develop our learners' writing skills as most of the students considered it the most challenging skill. That is why most educational institutes have started to give more priority to improving students' writing. We used classroom action research and employed Krashen's (2003) *Comprehension Hypothesis* and Felder and Brent's (2003) active learning principle theories for our research study. I also found that when students get exposed to different reading materials, they are likely to produce good writings. My research question was based on: How does reading enhance the writing skill of the students?

Keywords: EFL (English as Foreign Language) learners, creative writing, reading habit, action research, intervention techniques

Introduction

This research was designed under the action research paradigm to improve the creative writing of seventh and eighth graders through reading habits. But, later, with the ideas of the Principal of School, I chose eighth-grade students with few participants and shared tasks with the group. Cohen et al. (2007) define action research as a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such an intervention. The expected result was not possible through only observing the students' performance. I realized action research paradigm's power of ideas while doing this research, which brought a change in my teaching and my learners, especially in their learning style. When I was ready to start my research managing the time, I shared my

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views informally with tea-time talk with my colleagues and principal. Later, I submitted one handwritten letter as a reminder (**Appendix 1**). This experience strengthens my commitment to conducting my search.

In my research, I took one boarding school in Kathmandu Valley. I was a part-time teacher, engaged for two hours each day in different areas of two different buildings (campuses); I observed sixteen different classes altogether in a month, where 27-33 students were enrolled in each class. One class met on Wednesdays, combining two periods into a 90-minute session. The other class met on Thursdays and Fridays. One of the schools is located in a rural area, and the other is in the hub of Kathmandu. In both schools, my students come from different socio-economic situations, likewise, some have strong creativity skills, and some score lower. I did not just observe; as a researcher I was a worker and also a participant in the tasks shared with students. As a teacher of English, the first challenge that I faced was how to develop the four language skills: Listening, speaking, reading, and writing. But whenever I assigned them to write something, most of our eighth-grade students in Building “A” and Building “B” found difficulty writing in English. They tried to write when we enforced them to, but they only managed to write a few sentences. If they wrote more, we did not find the writing coherent and cohesive. That was a general problem for most of the students.

This study involves AR with one of the eighth-grade classes that had students whose writing was comparably better than students from the same class. Therefore, we started wondering what the reason behind their good writing could be. In the process, we had series of questions in our minds: Is there any method to encourage our learners to write? We found out that those two learners had a reading habit at their homes. We wondered if that was the reason behind their good writing. So, the purpose of this research study aimed to answer the question “how can we improve our learners’ creative writing through forming a reading habit?” Do students prefer their hegemonies in the English Language classroom, or do they love to be negligent? As Fair Clough (Fair Clough, 1989, as cited in Zupnik, 1991) shares, “There are power relationships that are never neutral, in which discourses play a fundamental role in the preservation of hegemonies but also in change and emancipation. By hegemonies, I refer to those discourses that are repeated to the point of seeming “natural” and that organize social groups in power relationships that are extremely resistant to change.” We thought action research would be the best methodology as we wanted to empower our learners as they did not have the culture of reading in the context of Nepal. Their parents were happy to buy different toys and let their children watch different cartoon shows in their leisure time, rather than buying books. Not only that, but they also preferred to watch different tele-serials, rather than sitting and reading with their children at home.

Practicalities in my research

Reading engagement is reliant on general objectives, as students do have a basic knowledge of the learning process that they gleaned from school. Though I needed to take various steps while conducting my research, I found that students preferred to learn from visuals, rather than print-texts. So, while conducting this research, I met many parents complaining about their children’s habit of watching television while they read. Similarly, they preferred to go to the QFX cinema with their children, rather than visit the bookstore. When we observed western culture, the students were presumably engaged in reading something. We believed that it must help them with their writing, whether directly or indirectly. One of our relatives from the USA shared that she always reads

aloud the bedtime stories for her toddler, which is absent from our culture. Teachers and parents are role models for children. They carry the culture in the location and manner that they are brought up. The key purpose of this study was to explore and investigate to what extent reading habit enhances creative writing in eighth grade, and my primary aim was to respond to the same question.

Writing is singularly the most important sign of communication on our planet (Finnegon, 1933 as cited in Karki, 2014). Writing deals with graphs, signs, and symbols, which permeates our feelings, thoughts, and ideas in a written form. In the same regard, Ur (2012) states, "Writing is fundamentally different from the other skills, not only because it is visual as contrasted with oral/ aural, or productive as contrasted with receptive, but also because of how it is produced and the way it communicates" (p.150). Writing is considered a difficult component of language as it demands creative and critical thinking. Thus, writing well is not a piece of cake for everyone.

Creative thinking is possible when learners of EFL classes get more exposure to it. When learners are assigned more reading, it may expose them to grammar and vocabulary enrichment in a new context, which eventually helps learners improve their creative writing (Lazar, 1993 as cited in K.C, 2014). According to Harmer (2006), "Writing is a process in which different codes and symbols and patterns are used as formal forms to prepare a good piece of work on any headings" (p.1). Creative writing is one of the styles of writing. Many people say that creative writing is, like all art, subjective, and therefore we find it very difficult to define. Yet, the definition of creative writing is rather loose, but we can consider this kind of writing as original and self-expressive. As we are aware, writing is a creative process of reaching out one's thoughts and discovering them, as well as expressing his/ her ideas in a creative way: mentioning examples, facts and experiences while writing on any topic. So, it is a process of bringing ideas into text.

Am I right to choose action research in EFL classroom?

Reading is receptive and an active skill of language. It is one of the ways of grasping information. Reading is an active process (Siberstain, 1994 as cited in Karki, 2014). While reading, students have to work intensively, interacting with the text to formulate and create meaningful understanding. In the same regard, Doff (1995) states, "It is a process of making sense of written language" (p104). While reading we do not merely sit as passive receivers of the text; we also draw on our own knowledge of the world and of language and can guess what the text will say about it. We used narrative and qualitative techniques to conduct the research.

Lessons learned from observation

Krashen (1984) believes that extensive reading is a key to student gains in reading ability, vocabulary, spelling, and writing. *The Comprehension Hypothesis* explains that we can develop literacy and gain language proficiency if we understand messages. To keep it simple, we understand what we hear and what we read, when we receive "comprehensible input" (Krashen, 2003). This hypothesis claims that reading is the better input because it stimulates language acquisition. So reading is very much responsible for reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling and advanced grammatical competence (Krashen, 1994).

When reading is repeatedly carried out, it is known as a reading habit. Though it is difficult to measure which step of reading is called a reading habit, it is possible in terms

of the amount of materials being read, the frequency of reading as well as the average time spent on reading (Wagner, 2002), and if this habit can be cultivated (Wijesuriya, 1995). Reading, which is a long-term habit starting very young, is the prominent gateway to knowledge. It can be assumed as a practice that assists individuals in gaining creativity and developing their critical thinking capacities. In this sense, a reading habit is an important tool for the development of personalities and mental capacities of individuals, and my observations regarding EFL Classroom with children are just a simple part of the learning process.

Research, children, and classroom setting

We experienced a time limitation during the class session, but it did not prevent us from completing our research. In general, we did not face any major obstacles. It was occasionally better to have a partner to take control and suggest the next steps to take. But that was alright for me. One of the English teachers in that school, Mr. Thapa (pseudonym), became a helping hand for me. We had a hectic time during our research because preparing for class while going through journals everyday was not an easy job. The time limitation imposed by the school created an urgency to complete our research. Despite all these hurdles, we enjoyed carrying out our research with our learners who were very cooperative, joyful and did not let me feel discouraged. Mr. Thapa and I never decided to change the students' bench and desks in the classroom, but we sometimes changed the rotation of students. Students were also free to choose any library books they liked. We enjoyed our action research as it was just a short study, but we tried our best to follow all the necessary procedures. This action research has taught me that any student, if they get ample reading opportunities, is capable of creative writing. The one condition is that teachers must be careful and follow up with the students constantly. We also got the chance to learn that reading must be nurtured from a child's formative years to ensure a better performance in language, as the eighth graders found it difficult to establish reading habits in the beginning.

Waiting for the right moments and following the intervention techniques

We categorized this research as action-based research, given that we wanted to involve ourselves and explore the learning to apply some changes to our teaching style. During the research, we consistently devised different intervention techniques and revised when they were futile. These interventions included different reading strategies, book-based activities, several writing activities, and the use of writing process to refine the writing of the students. Though the method was partially qualitative, the methods of pre-post observations provided triangulation. To conduct the process, I sometimes needed to check the student diary and check in with the principal and class teacher formally and informally. By allowing the AR- Research Work, I earned the respect and trust of both the students and staff. Furthermore, the students were encouraged to set their reading habits by working regularly on a five-minute read-aloud activity. The students were also provided with the opportunity to finish a book within a week and to get pleasure and information from the experience. The books were chosen by the students. These books included the works of Dr. Suess, the *Harry Potter* series, some books by King Smith, Anne Frank's diary, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Around The World in Eighty Days*, *Frozen Pizza*, and *Seventh Grade* by Gary Soto, among others.

This study was carried out in a group of 11 eighth-grade EFL students from one of the schools in Kathmandu District; their ages ranged from eleven to fourteen. Among

them, four were girls and seven were boys. These students (using pseudonyms) were Harry, Nimbus, Alexio, Patrico, Nicolas, Jenji, Ismulika, Jinchau, Tangree, Beucha, and Nashua. Harry and Nimbus were high achieving students, Alexio, Patrico, Nicolas, Jenji, Ismulika, Jinchau were middle academic range students, and Tangree, Beucha, and Nashua, students who struggled, seemed to fall into the bottom line of education. These pupils mostly came from middle class families and spoke Nepali, Tibetan, and Newari languages and so on at home. All students had studied English for a number of years since kindergarten (Nursery). They were able to listen to and understand simplified English, but they had problems with writing. For the purposes of this research, I had tasked Mr. Thapa to collect data on students' achievements. The findings were truly in support of the decision to select few students. I selected my research participants and school as a research site based on purposive sampling that involved searching for cases or individuals who met a certain criterion (Cohen et al. 2000). This helped me understand the problem and research questions that considered the setting (research place), the events (situation, actions to be observed), the actors (research participants) and the process (happenings within the settings) of the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994, as cited in Creswell, 2011).

We wanted to bring change to our students' creative writing, so we conducted pre-tests and post-tests in the classrooms to observe their improvement. We asked them to write essays on: "First day in Grade Eight" (in the pre-test) and "The goal we achieved in our life" (in the post-test), including formal and informal letters (both essays were personal narratives). I cannot add all the papers in one file, so for an example, I added eight different sample papers of students that represent both formal and informal letters (**Appendix A**).

The process of data collections

After identifying the problem, my second step was the collection of data. I spent the first three weeks gathering data from the classroom (written samples, classroom observations, and surveys) just to know and refine our action plans. During those weeks, students read three texts: two biographies and an autobiography, and additional hard copies of books. The unavailable hardcopies were searched on the internet, printed, and shared as photocopies (**Appendix B**). At first, they did not enjoy reading, but slowly they started to spend some time with it. Due to which, their comprehension also improved. The teachers, principal, and I were happy with their improvement.

Observation A:

- a. Eighth graders were observed 12 times in 12 weeks, over a three-month period directly and indirectly. They were totally engaged, did formal and informal conversation, and seemed familiar with work habits, and it was quiet support for research question,
- b. I, with the support of the class teacher, conducted focus group tasks in the classroom. All the students were unaware of our observance and unconcerned about the data used.

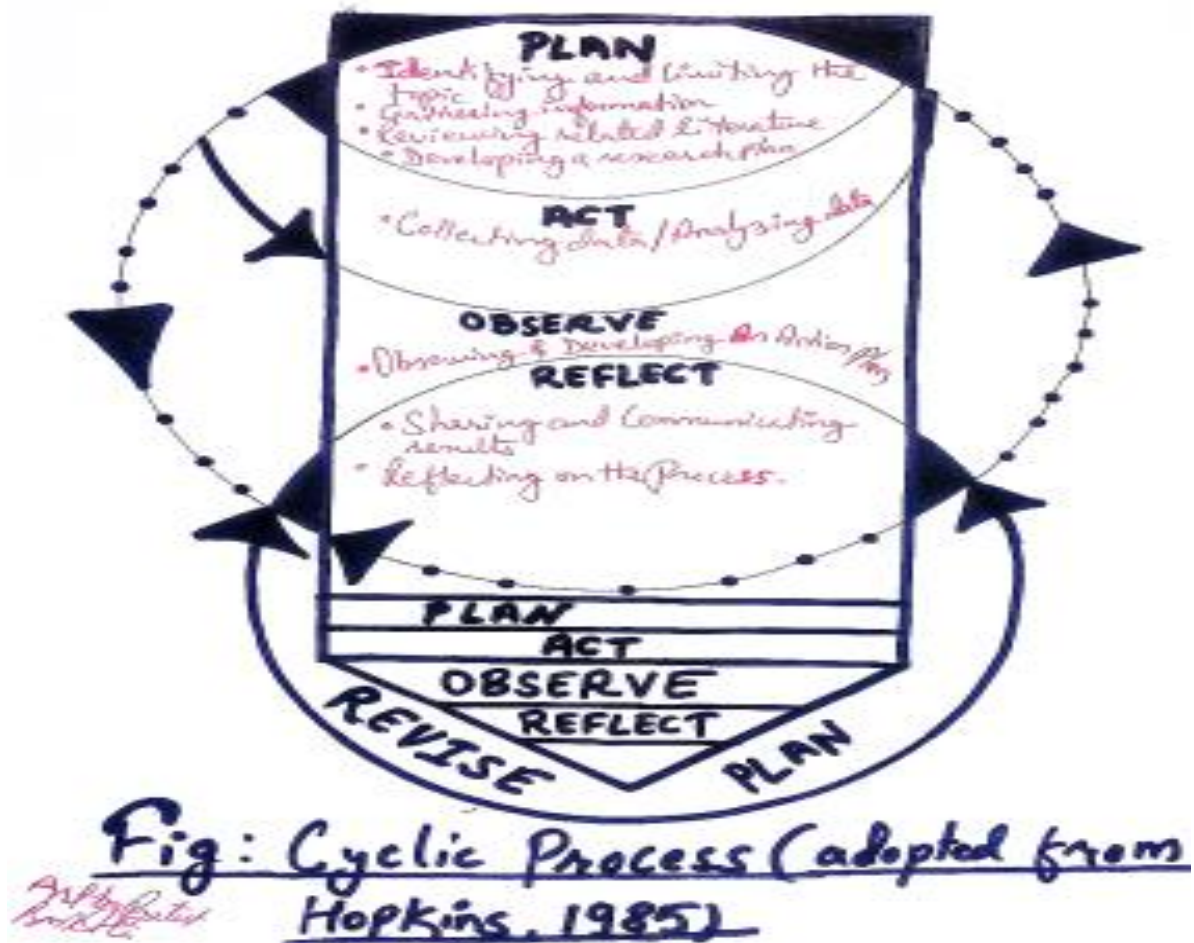


Figure 1: Cyclic Process: Adopted from Hopkins (1985).

In Figure 1 above, the two different circles illustrate four different terms: “Plan, Act, Observe, and Reflect”. In the first cycle, there are four different terms, “PABR”, but in the second cycle, it is in circular process/es denoting the same “PABR.” This figure also pictures “Spiral Movements”: differentiating, identifying, and limiting the topic, gathering information, reviewing related literature, developing a research plan, collecting data, observing and developing an action plan, sharing and communicating results, and finally, reflecting on the process. So, in simple terms, according to Kemmis et al. (1990), The Action Research shared the nature cycles: plan, act, observe, and reflect. Young et al. (2010) added, “The iterative action research cycle starts with faculty (and possibly students) deciding on the focus of the inquiry and creating a plan to observe and record their classroom activities”. Moreover, “The classroom activities are then implemented (**Action**) and pertinent observations are recorded (**Observe**) which are then individually and collaboratively critically reflected upon (**Reflect**) leading to revising classroom activities based on what has been learned (**Revised Plan**) (Winter and Mun-Griddings, 2001).

Different Tasks

1. After collecting data for four weeks, we post-tested the students. When we analyzed their writing, we found that the writing was not as improved as we thought. The data was not clear and comprehensive. As soon as we knew our students' status, we realized that only intensive reading is not enough for our students to improve their creative writing. So, we revised our plans of action that allowed us to study the change. We used different strategies to give them input to improve our students' creative writing. The main action took place in this part, so we continuously documented their work as well as mine.
2. We blended both intensive and extensive readings and carried on the research study till the 11th week. During those weeks, our learners experienced different reading materials from the course book, along with different reading strategies. At the same time, the 11 participants and the other students read extra books from the library weekly. I need to share different books with the class because I don't want to disturb my colleagues' classes. Some books are listed simultaneously, as, *Annabella Crabtree: Hunted*, by Nick Creech, Volume I of the *Annabella* (trilogy), *Around the World in Eighty Days* by Jules Verne, *A way with Dragons* by Nick Creech, *Beauty and the Beast* by Jeanne Marie Leprince de Beaumont, *Brehe's Grammar Anatomy* by Steven Brehe(Ph.D.), *Bronia and the Bowls of Soup – A Holocaust Survivor's Story* by Aaron Zerah, *Emotional Intelligence for teens (ages 13-18)*, Fable *The Elephant And The Bookseller*, *The Lion, The Tiger, and The Traveller*, *The Peacock*, *The Turkey*, *And The Goose* by John Gay, *Bob and the Cyber-Llama* by Joseph Caldara, *The World I Live In* by Helen Keller, *The Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe, *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* by Oscar Wilde, *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens), *Moby Dick; or, The Whale*, by Herman Melville, and so on...
3. The 12th week was the final week of the intervention of our research study. This week remained as important as other weeks. As farmers become busy in November while harvesting rice in Nepal, we were also excited to evaluate and analyze the findings of our research. Beginning Quarter was running in our school, so it was a good chance for me to give posttests of our eighth graders. We set the writing section of the question paper in such a way that we could evaluate the improvement of our students' writing. The question was to write about a goal that you have achieved in your life by following the writing process, but support from the eighth-grade teacher Mr. Thapa asked students to write formal and informal essay/s to test their improvement in their writing (EFL students writing implied). So, we decided to change our ideas (**Appendix A**). I know reading those books will inspire so many ideas. Whatever they read in the classroom, library and at home, they learned a lot. We evaluated their answers as soon as we got their answer sheets of examination.
4. We sat with our English Language Teachers in the Teacher Room and analyzed their progress in writing before our action plans and after them. We could see obvious improvement in their students' writing. Hence, "teachers should carefully consider students' abilities, needs, and goals," (Harris, p.155).
5. Then, we discussed the outcome with our eighth graders as well. They were ecstatic to hear it. They also promised me that they would continue reading in days to come. We thanked them for being a part of our research and helping me throughout our study. After the completion of research, our eighth graders looked confident, empowered and happy. Their improvement made me glad.

When we finished analyzing the data, we felt relieved that all of our hard work paid off. Our school principal and teachers were also content with our research findings and students' improvement.

Discussion with the flow of thoughts and ideas

Reading helps the students understand the different structural patterns, vocabulary, and the use of grammar. Many studies show that a reading habit plays a very important role in shaping the writing of the students. Steiner (1995), chief inspector for English at the Israel ministry of education, says that,

If the students are given the opportunities to read for pleasure, such reading enhances world knowledge, accounts for one-third of vocabulary growth, promotes reading as a lifelong activity, builds vocabulary, builds structural awareness, improves comprehension skills, promotes motivation, encourages pupils to read fluently and use all the strategies, encourage pupils to progress through different levels of text and monitor their own progress, and provide them with an enjoyable reading experience.

That is why we also included an extensive reading activity. Day and Bamford (2004), Bell (2001) have described the benefits of extensive reading, such as gains in vocabulary, writing, spelling, and a positive attitude toward reading. McNiff and Whitehead (2006) say,

Action research is a form of enquiry that enables practitioners everywhere to investigate and evaluate their work. They asked, "What am I doing? What do I need to improve? How do I improve it?" Their accounts of practice show how they are trying to improve their own learning and influence the learning of others (p. 7).

A constant look to maintain a researcher's alertness is necessary in action research. While working in research, the researcher kept updating with the help of learners and their performances. Those three questions fulfill the aim of the research. Therefore, researchers always had a prepared research plan. Doing action research means to plan, act, observe and reflect more carefully, more systematically, and more rigorously, than one usually does in everyday life. Action research is not only simply a problem-solving method, but it also is a process involving problem identification. It is motivated by a quest to improve and understand the world by changing it and learning how to improve it from the effects of the changes made.

Taylor (2002) claims that action research is based on some earlier ideas in the 1940's and 1950's, developed by Kurt Lewin and his colleagues as a collection of problem-solving cycles for improving organizations. This term "action" captured the notion of a disciplined inquiry in the context of focusing efforts to improve the quality of an organization and its performance. So, we spent the first week identifying the problem and the needs of our learners, so we conducted a test for it. Similarly, we planned day-wise activities to address the problem. We also selected some books from library appropriate to our scholars. We selected the works of Dr. Suess, the *Harry Potter* series, some books by King Smith, Anne Frank's diary, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Around The World in Eighty Days*, *Frozen Pizza*, and etcetera.

In other words, it is a process through which the researcher analyses the collected data and tries to make a meaning out of it. We conducted action research in which I was directly involved. The aim of this research was to improve the creative writing of the eighth

grade through forming a reading habit. We planned our research for 12 weeks. As mentioned earlier, the tools to collect data for research included classroom observation, interviews, reflective journals and articles from different writers to get ideas about methods of conducting AR, and the learners' written samples. After collecting data with the help of the above-mentioned tools, we analyzed them carefully. We tried to find a certain problem based on their progress, their performance, and their attitude and feelings during given tasks. We separated some books for learners in the library, and in the classroom, before handing them over so they could select a book weekly and read for pleasure and information. Then, we developed some writing activities and let them follow the process of writing to shape their own by looking at the pattern of the collected data. Lastly, we made a conclusion whether the action research was helpful or not!

The learners were involved in various activities in groups and sometimes individually or with peers. "Students need to take charge of their own learning. They need to participate in active learning and they need to be exposed to learning in different ways" (Diaz-Lefebvre, 2004, p.55). We started the research with the hope that our strategies would have a positive impact on the development of the learners. In this study, we intended to use the sampling not only to evaluate their pre-existing knowledge, but also the progress, weakness and their level through their participation and reflective journals at various stages of the research.

Interviewing the learners and their parents enabled me to understand their perceptions towards our research strategies. We asked the parents a few simple questions to gauge their development of the reading habit. Similarly, we also kept the record of the reflective journals said and written by the learners. We compared the teaching and learning process during the research. We used different tools and went through different procedures. Those data collection tools helped me generate data from our learners' actions. As our research was based on the actions of the participants and the researcher (me/us), we used tests as a data collection tool for our research. We conducted tests on our learners to gauge their writing skill before assigning reading materials. Similarly, we kept on conducting tests to correspond with the changes in our learners during and after reading. The improvement was clearly documented in those tests.

Building on Rose and Grosvenor's (2013) claim that "interviews have the potential to yield valuable insights into people's life experience, attitude, opinions and aspiration" (p. 112), we conducted informal interviews in class (how do you feel, what was your main problems while you read, and what appears in your mind while you read the texts, and so on...) with the learners to know how they were feeling about their improvement in writing, what would be helpful for their further study, and their opinions towards reading books... Funny thing about this research was that I distributed chocolates and gifts, and my students shared happiness with me.

Observation B:

We chose a brilliant, a mediocre, and a poor learner to verify our research question. The next tool that we used in our research process was going with "observation b" during the intervention. Rose and Grosvenor (2013) say, "Observation is a very direct method which provides researchers with close contact with the subject, behaviors or events being studied, thereby enabling a real-life picture to be achieved" (p. 30). One of the tools of data collection is classroom observation of the learners. We collected the data by observing the learners' performances; I observed the learners' active participation and

their work during the activities. In the beginning phase, most of the learners had a negative attitude towards reading. Firstly, we motivated and encouraged them by stating its importance to their writing. We started with their own writing, analyzing parts that helped grab their attention towards their interest. They used to make excuses as we used to assign them some readings. Many of them would come to class without reading but gradually, their interest increased, and they seemed to actively participate from their side.

Creswell (2011) articulates, "During the research, the investigator may collect qualitative documents. These may be public documents (e.g., newspaper, minutes of meeting, official report) or private documents (e.g., personal journals and diaries, letters, e-mails)" (p.181). The reflective journal fell under the "private document" category, which became one of the sources of the evidence. After each activity, we collected their reflections and prepared our own reflection. Even the success and failure of the strategies were visible with the help of the reflective journal. This tool helped me very much. Through their journaling, we noticed their improvement in writing and thinking power as well. While talking about the learners' comments on the activity, all students mentioned that they must have a reading habit for good writing. The students themselves mentioned that they noticed the improvement in their writing after reading autobiographies, biographies, and stories. They mentioned that they used to find it difficult to even write a paragraph in the past, but now they do not have such difficulties.

Reflective journals also helped us understand their likes and dislikes and their growth in writing skills with their personal feeling towards me and our research study. They mentioned that they learnt the importance of reading books. They said they will continue this reading habit throughout their lives and promised me to motivate others to read as much as they can.

According to the aim of the action, we had to find problems with their writing and then implement strategies that empower them. To find the problem, the learners' written sample became an effective tool to verify our problem statement. Their first written drafts showed disorganized ideas and inappropriate word choice. Then we carried on with our plan to establish a reading habit. Similarly, we collected their written samples after every reading activity, which helped me to move forward with our further plan effectively. The samples were evaluated by me and the learners themselves. Those written samples were kept as a record of their improvement.

According to our research problem and question, our concern was to improve their creative writing through developing a reading habit. So, we analyzed the data by comparing their pre-tests and post-tests. Similarly, we instructed them to write a story during their post-test. Mentioning all 11 samples is not possible, so we selected two students' samples to represent the overall problem.

During the analysis of the pre-test and post-test of "Observation A and B," we found that the pre-test had less information about writing. The first writing was lacking in supporting details, but the post-test writing had sufficient detail to support the main idea. The pre-test did not have cohesion and coherency in writing. Similarly, the post-test writing was complete and had a beautiful flow of thoughts and had the ability to hook the readers' attention. While analyzing the writings of "OB," the pre-test writing was minimalistic and lacking supporting details. The sentence structures were also incorrect. The post-test writing was more expansive than pretest writing. As writing has complete and meaningful thoughts, it helps to paint pictures in the readers' imaginations. To keep it simple, post- test writing is expressive. Similarly, the students have selected appropriate vocabulary in the post-test.

The success or failure of any research is measured by the improvement of the

learners. Therefore, the progress of the learners plays a vital role in our action research that was purely based on the learners. For the sake of our research, we analyzed their work in the beginning of our research and found a lack of coherence and cohesion in our learners' writing. They did not have a good sense of using appropriate vocabulary. If they were to write anything, they could not produce more than a paragraph. Whenever they used to write, they simply told the events. When we went through their work, we did not find them standing on the shoes of characters while writing the events.

When we completed our 12 weeks with our students and our action plan to achieve the goal of our study, we did the post-testing. When we went through the final work, we compared it to the results of the pre-test. The results were encouraging. They initially lacked expressive feelings when they narrated some events. Now, they understand the way of writing and expressing their feelings. Similarly, they have also learnt to use sufficient detail to support their writing's main idea. Now, we can see the flow of thoughts and ideas in a spontaneous way. That was what we wanted. We are happy with our study; it has been fruitful. Though eighth grade is not the right time to set a reading habit, our learners did their best and developed one anyway.

Results of the 12 weeks- long action research

By the end of this research study, we realized that conducting action research with learners is a challenging task. We had to understand their (students) psychology and worked accordingly. They used to feel lazy while reading, so we had to encourage and motivate them, which were difficult tasks. Fisher and Phelps (2006) shared that, "it seeks to document the context, change processes, resultant learning and theorizing of faculty in developing their pedagogies." Maybe that was the reason action research sounded difficult in the beginning for me, but when the research slowly took its speed, I enjoyed it with the learners. John Elliott (1991) defines, "Action research is the process through which teachers collaborate in evaluating their practice jointly; raise awareness of their personal theory; articulate a shared conception of values; try out new strategies to render the values expressed in their practice more consistent with educational values they espouse; record their work in a form which is readily available to and understandable by other teachers; and thus develop a shared theory of teaching by research practice."

Our perception of the action research also changed after it. On top of that, it proved that middle school learners can also set reading habits. Dick (2004, 2006) provides a comprehensive overview of "the themes and trends in the action research literature and identifies prominent action research books, journals, and applications". The only thing is, they must practice and continue reading for pleasure and information. Reading must not be seen as a burden. The teachers are the role model of the students, so the teachers also must develop a reading habit.

The 12 week-long action research turned into a successful project. We really got a chance to enhance our teaching style and strategies that became helpful for me as well. The learners' interest and their perceptions towards the research became satisfactory toward the completion of the research. Though the time limitation loomed, the change and improvement took place in a systematic way:

1. They learnt reading as a key to proficient language,

2. They learnt to work collaboratively by exchanging their views, ideas and

creativity,
3. They learnt how to write a well-rounded event with enough detail to make readers understand what the author is saying,
4. They learnt to select the appropriate vocabulary,
5. They learnt about sentence structures and the use of grammar,
6. They also learnt that saying is different than writing,
7. They learnt how they can make their story visible to the readers through using different adverbs and adjectives,
8. They learnt to use dialogue in the story that helps readers understand the characters and beautify the story,
9. The students gained the confidence to share their feelings and to present their work in front of the mass of people,
10. They built-mutual respect while working in pairs and created good coordination with me (researcher) and their teachers, especially with (pseudonym) Mr. Thapa as a class teacher.

We know that second language learners of English find it difficult to write in English. However, we also know that nothing is impossible. Teaching and writing become easier when we know how to do them. In this case, we, teachers of writing, are called upon to consider and strategize pedagogically in ways that help us support our students to improve their writing. Findings clearly show that there has been a difference in our students' creative writing following the impact of the Action Research. O'Connor (2017) expressed, when students know how they will be assessed, and especially when they have been involved in assessment decisions, the likelihoods of student success increase greatly. The applied intervention activities, which I used, proved to be an effective and fruitful tool for bringing out noteworthy improvement in the writing of the students, as well as developing their reading habits.

Conclusion

This research study also demonstrated that if the learners are provided with the opportunity to get exposed to any skills and continuous practice, then they can refine themselves and can be life-long readers, writers and learners. Tovani (2000) states, "In order to construct meaning, readers also need to employ reading strategies". This

research finding is significant to unfolding the problem with writing classes, which is one of the major issues of EFL classes in Nepal. Parents and teachers are also expected to benefit from this study. Since they are known as the major factors actively involved in the academic process of the learners, they will also have to rethink their children's status of learning. In our context, we learn English as a foreign language. Due to which, the English language is difficult for us. To learn it, our students must get enough exposure to it. The exposure can be of any form, it can be songs, storybooks, TV shows, children's movies, et cetera.

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Learning outcomes

Teachers or youths who have interest in doing AR can:

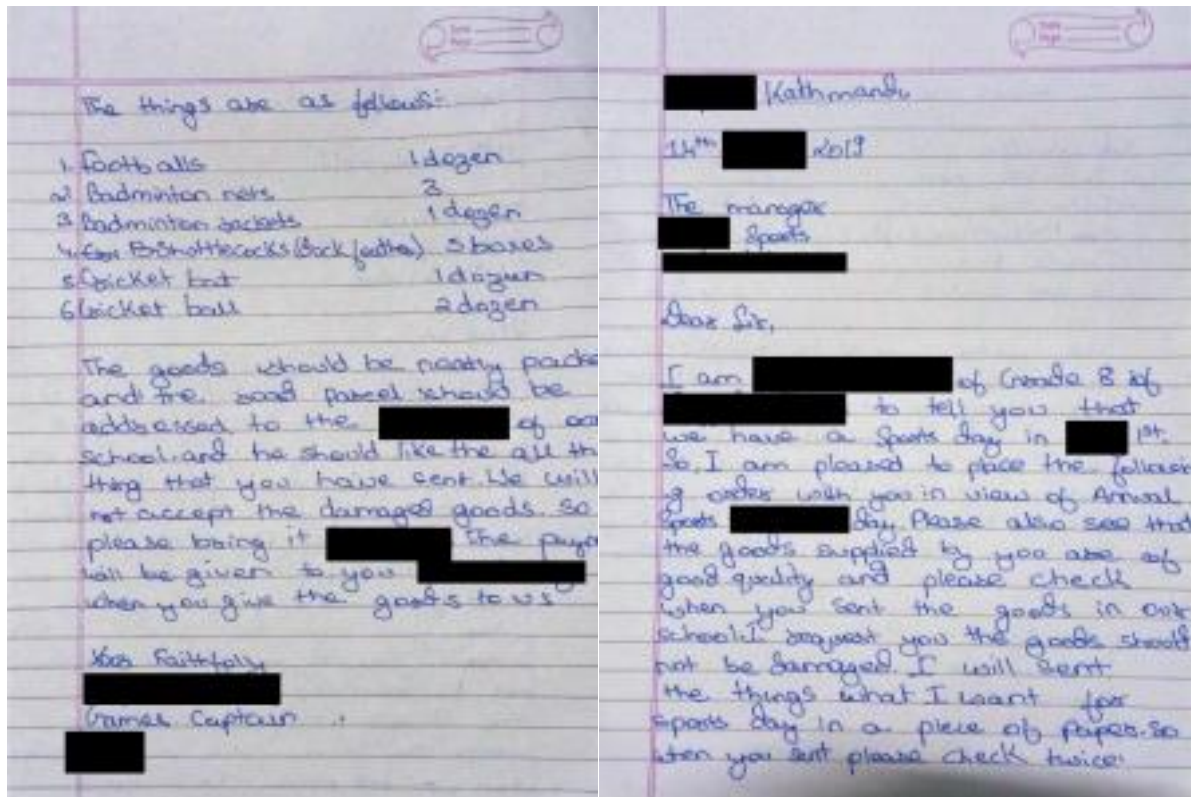
1. Understand AR in EFL courses,
2. Get lots of ideas for the methods and challenges of the 12 weeks especially in an academic sector,
3. Express the views and challenges needed to be taken with children, 4. Recognize the children's abilities to understand the reading skills that improve their writing skills,
5. Find the writing exploration of students by examining the students and teacher's

role in the classroom, as well as the researcher's own role,

6. Use and revisit intervention techniques to find the result,

7. With students' interactions in AR, teachers are always the role models.

Appendix A: Sample Papers



[Redacted]
 [Redacted], Hattimandur
 Dear [Redacted],
 I am fine here I hope you are fine
 over there as well. Today I am going to talk
 about Dashain. Dashain is the most celebrated
 festival. It is mainly celebrated by
 Hindus. In this festival we put tika and
 we get gifts. We wear new clothes and it
 is celebrated for 15 days.
 Your friends
 [Redacted]

Formal letter
 20 [Redacted] 3
 The Principal,
 [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 Sub: leave for marriage party
 Respected Madam,
 With due request and humble
 request, I [Redacted] of grade
 8 would like to ask for a day
 leave [Redacted] to attend a marriage
 party of my son [Redacted]. Therefore
 I hope [Redacted] you will try to
 understand of my presence there. Thus
 I will look forward for a positive
 response. Thanking you!
 Yours Sincerely
 [Redacted]
 Grade 8

(Informal letter)
 [Redacted]
 Dear [Redacted],
 Hi! I [Redacted] have missed u a lot over past
 few months. I could not talk or contact
 you as I was busy. I saw your last
 letter. I just could not believe that you
 started watching [Redacted] movies.
 I remember those days [Redacted] you [Redacted] just
 said you hated [Redacted] movie. I just don't
 understand how you started watching movie.
 There is new movie released. [Redacted] Student [Redacted]
 the [Redacted] Let's [Redacted] manage time and
 watch. It will be super fun! We can
 also watch many other movies.
 Okay now my hand is paining. [Redacted] let's
 write many more letters. Okay bye
 Take care
 Your friend
 [Redacted]

20 [Redacted]
 [Redacted]
 Dearest friend,
 I am fine here and I hope you
 are fine over there as well. Today I
 am going to talk about [Redacted]
 is the most celebrated festival. It is
 mainly celebrated by [Redacted]. In this
 festival we put [Redacted] tika and
 we wear new clothes and it is cele-
 brated for 15 days. So, I would like to
 invite you at my house to [Redacted]
 celebrate.
 Your friend
 [Redacted]

Appendix B: Samples of the Sharing Contents

That broke up the meeting. The boys were annoyed. Vacation had come.

NOTE:—The pretended "compositions" quoted in this chapter are taken without alteration from a volume entitled "Prose and Poetry, by a Western Lady"—but they are exactly and precisely after the schoolgirl pattern, and hence are much happier than any mere imitations could be.

