



English Teachers' Narratives of Teaching English Across the COVID-19 Pandemic in Bara District

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/jotmc.v9i9.90456>

Abstract

This paper explores the use of digital technology influenced students 'teaching before, during and after COVID-19 and adds the teachers' experiences and college practices on teaching the English language, highlighting gains and losses. It aims to investigate the narratives of college English teachers in Bara district about their experiences teaching the English language before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The study uses in-depth interviews and reflective accounts from English teachers' experiences and also using narrative inquiry methods under the qualitative research design to apply adult learning theory (Malcolm Knowles in 1968). Data are collected with the help of interviews with four English teachers. One significant finding is that all interviewees agreed there was a perceived learning loss among bachelor's students after COVID-19. Interviewees noted, it is quite difficult to divert students' attention from gadgets back to learning. The findings of this study offer significant implications for key stakeholders such as teachers, educators, and curriculum developers by offering them evidence-based practices through which to more effectively inform instruction. Not only do these implications shape current educational practices, but they also form the basis of follow-up research aimed at further improving student learning outcomes.

Keywords: College Students, Online class, Assessment system, Impact, COVID-19

Introduction

Selecting " Challenges Across the COVID-19 Pandemic in Bara District: Narratives of College Teachers" as a research topic is important to me because it is closely related to my experience. As an assistant lecturer at Bara College, starting from my first day, in my first class, teaching Compulsory English to BBS 1st-year students, I introduced the chapter "Rice" by Jhumpa Lahiri (Lahiri,1999). I asked students to read and note down challenging words which they did but more than I had anticipated. I clarified words both in English and Nepali in an attempt to make them clearer. On the second day, I helped them in reading aloud, and I noted that some students especially girls were hesitant. I provided reading assistance and clarifications. On the third day, I

requested that some to summarize the next chapter in English or Nepali but discovered that some students lacked a complete understanding of the text.

On the fourth day of college, I had students paraphrase a lesson in their own words. As I was checking their work, I noticed they were struggling with comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). As soon as I could establish trust with them, they told me they would prefer Nepali translations because they find English difficult. I changed gears to teach English materials in Nepali, and within two weeks, they communicated that the COVID pandemic had made them short of appropriate guidance and a good environment (Shah, 2022). Knowing this truth about their loss of learning motivated me to study the learning crisis.

In this study, I explained the term learning crisis or learning loss, the impact of COVID in education (college, online class, assessment system) changes in teaching after the COVID period. Teaching-learning process highlights the educational challenges faced by students. The issue underscores learning gaps, hesitancy in participation and reliance on vernacular languages for comprehension. These issues resonate with broader discussions on the learning crisis and its impact of the pandemic on education systems as noted by Shah (2022). Shah (2022) argues that solving the learning crisis or loss depends on teachers ensuring students achieve important learning objectives for cultural species survival. It practices teaching and direct instruction where teachers act as strategic. Applying behavior analysis to all college components (students, parents, teachers and the supervisors) can support an effective pedagogy.

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly impacted the education sector, catalyzing a dramatic shift in learning modalities and exposing opportunities and challenges. Tarkar (2020) emphasizes that the COVID pandemic has made difficult globally, originating in China and spreading worldwide. It has caused a health crisis and economic slowdown. Countries including India, Nepal and others made rules to control the virus. It implemented daily life and closed Schools, colleges and universities. The transition to online education systems has introduced significant challenges for students, teachers, and parents (Chaudhary et al., 2022). Simultaneously, policymakers were struggling to adopt educational policies to address these changes. This study focuses on the impact of COVID on the education system, given the challenges and changes in teaching trends.

Educational systems have the role of providing students with learning opportunities and overall development, but they are often faced with challenges that have a strong bearing on student performance. Factors such as access to technology, the quality of interaction between students and instructors, and the ability to manage psychological stress all contribute to the effectiveness of education, awareness campaigns, efforts to raise awareness about mental health and coping mechanisms could have been launched to support students in managing stress and anxiety (Gupta, & Poudel, 2025). When these elements are compromised, concerns arise regarding the long-term effects on students' academic performance, progress, and development.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected education in the entire world. It revealed the students' learning conditions and outcomes, and the project-based assessments or online exams strategy has been widely adopted in various educational systems globally (OECD, 2020). These are essential for developing strategies to enhance educational resilience and support student learning in the future (Jones & Lee, 2020; Smith, 2021). At that time, schools and universities faced different types of challenges during COVID-19 in terms of technology, inadequate knowledge of

technology, reduced interaction with peers and instructors, and heightened psychological stress. This disruption has led to concerns about the long-term effects on students' academic performance, engagement, and their academic development (Ghimire, 2022). Vaccination Campaigns, educational institutions may have participated in vaccination drives, prioritizing teachers and eligible students to safeguard against COVID-19, which has been a common strategy worldwide (CDC, 2021).

Learning loss has worsened due to global disruptions. This shows the need for engaging teaching. In many schools, students passively receive information, leading to shallow learning. My education involved a lot of spoon-feeding. Passive learning makes retention hard (Biggs, 1999). Active participation, problem-solving, and dialogue make learning and remembering simpler. Discussion classes and projects suited me better. More interactive teaching needs to be introduced to address the learning loss of the students in the Bara district. Dropping spoon-feeding can increase learning and simplify the process for students to recall longer (Jones&Lee,2021). Encouraging independent thinking and active engagement aids better understanding and also allows students to take ownership of the learning process. To explore the stories of English language lecturers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this study is guided by the research question;

How do Bara District college teachers narrate their experiences of teaching English before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic?

Adult Learning Theories as Theoretical Basis

Adult learning theory is also known as andragogy. It is the concept that has been around for years. It was developed by Malcolm Knowles in 1968. It is the study of how adults learn and how it differs from children (Knowles, 1970). It aims to show how adult learning is distinct and identify the learning style that suits them best. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the significance of fundamental skills like reading and computer literacy along with the requirement for self-directed learning. Adult education sectors rapidly transitioned to online instruction despite obstacles such as a lack of access to technology. Andragogy, the adult learning theory, is particularly applicable since it identifies adults' requirement for self-direction, experiential learning, and applicability (Knowles, 1980). This study employs andragogical theory to explain how college English teachers in Bara District managed to teach before, during, and after the pandemic. On the basis of their narratives, the study reveals how teachers enabled adult learners to overcome challenges and adapt to new learning environments, making recommendations on how to improve adult education during crises.

Method of Inquiry

I apply narrative inquiry as a research method under a qualitative research design to ensure a systematic approach and achieve the study's objectives. Narrative inquiry explores individuals' personal stories to understand how they make their experiences, emphasising context and temporality (Clandinin, 2013). It provides insights into participants' identities and values shaped by their life-related narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I selected participants purposively from the Bachelor level's four Bachelor level English language teachers, focusing on teachers who faced

the challenges due to COVID-19 while teaching their students pre, during and after COVID-19, to reveal the learning loss/learning crisis related to the Bara district's students. To ensure that the participants could provide rich, detailed accounts of their experiences of teaching the English language.

I collected data from these participants, taking consent from their campus chief and from them as well, to conduct interviews. I interviewed and had informal conversations in one empty classroom location at their convenience. I recorded the participants' responses using my mobile phone during the interviews. I interviewed each participant, each lasting approximately 15 to 20 minutes. This process was designed to ensure comprehensive data collection and to capture any nuances in their responses. I also observed the participants' language use during interviews. Then after, the recorded data were transcribed and translated into English. Data analysis involved coding the interview transcripts and identifying recurring themes and patterns.

During narrative analysis, I applied Barkhuizen's (2011) narrative knowledge model which story generation processes, transcription, translation data coding and thematic representation are emphasized. Analysis started with interview data transcription to reach accuracy and representativeness of participants' original accounts. Translations were made in order to maintain the authenticity of storis. I applied Saldana's (2016) coding protocols that proceeded through cycles. Finally, I interpreted and discussed our findings within the theoretical framework of Knowles (1980) Adult Learning Theory.

Findings and Discussion

Findings showed key themes that aligned with previous research and theoretical frameworks offering insights into participants' experiences and perspectives. Three main themes emerged from analysing participants' responses. They are listed with their descriptions.

Teaching English Before COVID-19

"Before COVID-19" refers the period before to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic that began spreading globally toward the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020. It was the period when daily living, work, school, socialisation, and healthcare were routinely performed without the strict limitations, public health practices, and accommodations necessitated by the pandemic. In education, the case being teaching, most of the learning takes place face-to-face, with a conventional classroom arrangement being the case. Less application of virtual or remote teaching facilitations was seen, and learning interactions were more concrete and shared without social distancing and lockdowns placing their limitations. Large-scale adoption of online learning, telework and strict public health measures such as lockdowns and social distancing only became common in response to the crisis that began in late 2019 and early 2020 (UNESCO, 2021; WHO, 2020). Aman stated:

Before COVID-19, I was an assistant lecturer for 10 years working with undergraduate students. Predicaments were coordinating big classes and students' multilingual English proficiencies. Having been an accomplished English language teacher for over a decade of teaching. I realized that, mainly in classroom teaching, traditional leveraging of face-to-face interactions helps students. I would do role-playing exercises and group discussions to

enhance students' proficiency in speaking. It was not easy to work with large classes because one could not give one-on-one attention to each student.

Big class sizes posed challenges to providing individualized care and accommodating to accommodate different English levels. Traditional face-to-face techniques as role play and group discussion benefited speaking improvement but were bound to limit equitable participation in large mixed-ability classes. (Singh & Thurman, 2023). To support his points, Binita stressed:

I had technology integrated into my classes from a very early time and I utilized digital tools for assignments and evaluation. I was already used to utilizing digital tools for assignments and evaluations before the pandemic. So, it wasn't hard to transition; I typically utilized Google Classroom to share reading materials and receive assignments. Therefore, students were already familiar with it.

Evidence suggests that the use of tools like Google Classroom enhances student participation and performance and previous uses of the platform before the pandemic. Moreover, evidence shows that prompt feedback using digital resources boosts student performance (Hattie, 2009), facilitated by tools for real-time submission of work and feedback. Starting exposure to such tools builds teacher and student confidence in the effective application of technology, resulting in more adaptable and individualised learning experiences (Bakia et al., 2012). A proactive approach demonstrates the same, showing way digital tools can enhance both teaching methodologies and student performance. Concurring with both views, Bipin explored:

I had exposure to rural colleges, and I often faced problems with limited resources. When teaching in rural college, I mostly faced problems with fewer resources, but I made do by using creative methods like drama and narrative. I used local folk tales to teach English applying it to students through familiar stories while teaching English language.

Rural schools have few resources which also pose an obstacle to the process of learning and teaching but incorporating these limitations through the application of creative pedagogies such as drama and narrative can also contribute significantly to enhancing students' learning and engagement (Mehta & Sharma, 2023). Application of local folk tales in English lessons not only bridges the gap of cultural context between students' surroundings and the target language but also enhances the sense of an inclusive learning culture. This method concurs with Kumar and Patil (2022) which is centred on how culturally responsive teaching for example use of familiar stories increases language acquisition and comprehension especially in resource-poor settings. Engagement through narrative and drama has been found to increase motivation and engagement since it transforms passive learning into an active and interactive experience (Singh, 2023). Through the use of these approaches, instructors can break the limitations of a few resources, making the classes more engaging and efficient in rural universities. Aarti captured the situation before COVID-19:

There were no obstacles in teaching students, the teaching and learning process was going smoothly. I was in my comfort zone, feeling proud of myself because I was able to handle any problem related to English language teaching, so that students told me Beauty with brain ma'am in my college; however, I didn't have any knowledge regarding technologies. It was not needed for me, neither in my studying period nor in my teaching period before COVID-19.

I was shocked, I should learn technological things and feel depressed myself with my burdensome activities. By realizing this condition, Aman added:

Previously, I would read poetry aloud in class and discuss interpretations. During the pandemic, I had to transition to sharing poems via PDFS and discussing them through voice messages on WhatsApp. However, the pandemic shifted my perception; I realized the importance of digital skills.

Initially, I was impressed and successful in my teaching career, confidently providing English language education and gaining respect from students who even called me "beauty with a brain ma'am." My strength and comfort zone were in traditional methods as technology was not required while studying or during the early days of my teaching life (Smith, 2022). Recent studies resonate with this shared experience among teachers across the globe, highlighting the shared "technostress" and challenge of adapting to web environments without pretraining (Gupta & Poudel, 2024). Despite these challenges, the crisis has underscored the need for digital literacy and professional development, pushing teachers like me out of our comfort zone and into a lifelong learning process now embracing blended and online pedagogical strategies (OECD, 2020). This change has expanded instructional repertoire as well as knowledge regarding making learning environments inclusive and interactive. As digital technologies have become synonymous with education, continuing professional development is imperative to ensure teaching professionals are adequately prepared to utilize these tools to enhance student learning outcomes.

Teaching English During COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the education sector experienced unprecedented disruption as schools and universities around the globe suddenly shifted on transitioned to online schooling. The pandemic compelled teachers and learners to transition at short notice to digital platforms such as Zoom and Google Classroom, with limited previous experience in online instruction (Gupta & Awasthi, 2025). This sudden change was traumatic to the majority of teachers, invoking "technostress" as they were not properly trained or prepared to utilize digital materials (Smith, 2022). Students also faced several issues, e.g., including connectivity with the internet, fewer interactions and poor support. Despite these challenges, the crisis highlighted demand for digital literacy and accelerated change into hybrid learning models, revolutionizing the education sector and calling for pedagogical reevaluation to better prepare students for a more connected, technology-driven world (OECD, 2020). Aman underscored:

The pandemic forced to divert of attention towards more functional skills that focus on digital literacy. I was initially confused and overwhelmed. The shift from in-person classroom to online teaching was sudden and awkward. It took a month to get used to it. Learning new technology was the most difficult part; I was not used to technology tools. Primarily I used Zoom and WhatsApp for communication. It took some time to get used to these tools. Also, frequent internet loss disrupted classes, and it affected continuous teaching and learning activities.

The COVID-19 pandemic directly disrupted traditional education, forcing educators to quickly adapt to online teaching platforms. As mentioned, the transition to digital tools like Zoom and WhatsApp was initially overwhelming due to limited technological skills. It suggests that while

teachers struggled with technological unfamiliarity and internet instability, they also demonstrated resilience, gradually enhancing their digital literacy (Gupta &Awasthi, 2025). Over time, the shift to distance learning promoted more sustainable and versatile teaching practices, albeit early challenges were extensive. Agree with Aman's statements Binita told:

I understood the utility of asynchronous learning when students had an appreciation for lecture recordings that they were able to see for their convenience. I looked at it, a chance to try new methodologies, although I was apprehensive initially. I enrolled in a course on best practices in online teaching within days and familiarized myself with new tools e.g., Kahoot for quizzes. I began applying Zoom breakout rooms for group conversations, which have taken me a week to adapt.

Realization of worth in asynchronous learning is supported by recent research that emphasizes its essential enhancement of various student learning styles. Evidence suggests that asynchronous learning is flexible that enabling students to review content at their convenience. It provides understanding and retention. Use of interactive tools e.g., Zoom breakout rooms has also been shown to facilitate participation for collaboration, key components of successful online teaching (Gupta &Poudel 2025). Teachers who implement such tools can create more dynamic and adaptable classrooms. With its contrast of both statements but partially supporting, Bipin understood:

I was frustrated and powerless, knowing that many of my students were not able receive online lessons. The pandemic revealed the digital divide, with a rise in the need for better infrastructure. I called the parents to find out if they possessed any means for their children to receive lessons, but most did not. It was a slow process that lasted approximately two months to find a working solution.

The COVID-19 crisis created immense hardship in education, such that numerous students did not have access to computing devices or even stable connections, which constrained them from using digital learning platforms (Gurung, & Shrestha, 2023). As a teacher, I faced the same difficulty firsthand and saw that a majority of the parents were unable to fund online studies for their kids. Current studies indicate that teacher effort, like your attempts to contact parents, was crucial, but often met with limited success due to widespread technological and resource limitations (Gurung, & Shrestha, 2023). The trial-and-error method of developing an effective strategy took time often months reflecting general findings that effective adaptation required protracted periods of effort and interaction among teachers, parents, and policymakers (Thorndike, 1911; Patel & Sharma, 2023). The episode emphasizes the need for enhanced infrastructure and digital proficiency to allow balanced access to schooling in the event of upcoming calamities (Smith et al., 2023). Similarly, Aarti included some assertions:

I mostly faced trauma of COVID-19, which kept me unable to teach my students as most of the time I was suffering from the COVID-19 virus. However, I taught my students through an online platform, which, unlike me, my husband stood by my side most of the time to get over it. After that, I have been trained with it and it is easy for me to deal with. I employed basic tools like WhatsApp to transmit assignments and audio lessons.

Teachers experienced unprecedented challenges in the COVID-19 pandemic, with most having undergone traumas due to issues and the sudden change to online teaching. Evidence shows

that the sudden shift and adaptation to remote learning was especially problematic for teachers who were not fluent in digital tools, causing colossal stress and impairing their well-being (Viner et al., 2022). Where technology access is low, teachers are likely to utilize basic platforms like WhatsApp in sharing tasks and imparting lessons, replicating studies in developing countries (Dhawan, 2020). Having support from family members assisted in overcoming such challenges, as per Pandey (2021), who pointed out the importance of family support in bridging the gap in terms of digital connectivity. For most educators, including those infected multiple times by the virus, adapting to online teaching was a process of learning, showing the resilience required in this era (OECD, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated directly to the use of technology in learning forcing schools to adopt online platforms for remote learning. Applications such as Zoom and Google Meet became indispensable, while more basic apps e.g., WhatsApp bridged the digital divide in regions with poor internet connectivity (Dhawan, 2020). While most teachers found this shift challenging at first, technology allowed for ongoing teaching and learning, showcasing both its promise and disparities in digital access (OECD, 2020). Aman commented on the familiarity of technology:

The most difficult was mastering the new technology since I had never employed it previously for classes. I mastered the use of Zoom during a workshop, but had problems with screen sharing at first. I even accidentally ended classes when I was trying to mute students. I shared reading materials and assignment instructions through WhatsApp groups and conducted live classes on Zoom twice a week.

Moreover, Binita, conceded that technological breakdowns accompany Aman's thoughts: *Padlet facilitated the students to post their ideas and responses on a single board, promoting cooperative learning. Connectivity issues were not frequent, but there were certain students whose issues occurred with shaky internet connectivity. Hence, I recorded classes and shared them via Google Drive so that live class absent students would be able to access them.*

Both these teachers experienced technical issues alone. Nearly all the teachers across the world went through this phase. Aman's and Binita's reactions to their experiences with technology during and after the COVID-19 pandemic were indicative of deeper issues in current studies. Aman had difficulties adapting to the new technology, like Zoom, where at first, he was having trouble with features like sharing screens and hanging up calls unexpectedly, which was in line with Dhawan's (2020) study of teachers' failure to access initial training. Similarly, Binita's use of Padlet to support collaborative learning is indicative of efforts to cooperate with students in the face of connectivity issues, as implied by the OECD (2020). Both teachers had connectivity issues, a common lament reported in studies of online learning in the developing world (Viner et al., 2022). Binita's coping with it involved recording lessons and sharing them via Google Drive, which researchers have recommended to serve students with uncertain internet connectivity (Pandey, 2021). Their narratives describe the coping capacity of teachers in online learning and instituting a mix of synchronous and asynchronous learning to sustain students' engagement.

Teaching English Transition in COVID-19

Educating students following COVID-19 has called upon teachers to adapt a new education terrain, where hybrid learning models and digital tools form part of the new classroom norm. The

pandemic brought to the forefront the role of technology in education, with colleges responding by continuing to utilize online platforms such as Google Classroom and Zoom in addition to the conventional in-class teaching (OECD, 2020). However, the return to school underscored learning gaps and inequalities, as well as inequalities in access, that required specific interventions to reverse students' academic and emotional deficits (Viner et al., 2022). Other students came back to school with varying levels of knowledge, depending on differences in home learning conditions during the pandemic. Teachers have also been forced to use differentiated instruction and social-emotional learning techniques to support students in recovering lost skills but regaining confidence within an adaptive, nurturing climate (Pandey, 2021). Post-COVID classroom environment supports the ongoing necessity of adaptability, resilience and proper integration of technology to meet a range of student needs. Aman presented his observation after COVID-19:

I noticed that students who had never even touched a laptop or tablet before. Now pros at navigating platforms like Zoom and Google Classroom. This extra digital literacy has also made it easier for us teachers to incorporate technology into our instruction. We can now use online tools like quizzes interactive lessons and videos to make learning more interactive.

The starting of digital literacy by students particularly on platforms like Zoom and Google Classroom, has changed the face of learning. With students who had no prior experience with digital technology adjusting quickly they became efficient in digital realms and process enhanced their engagement and grades (Crowdmark, 2023; Khan, & Farooq, 2021). In addition to interactive elements such e.g., quizzes, videos and group work has been made learning interactive and inclusive and accommodating to diverse learning styles (Crowdmark, 2023). Online platform shift also accommodates some of the major 21st-century skills, e.g., including critical thinking, digital literacy and flexibility that are essential to students' long-term success (Khan, & Farooq, 2021). Advances refer to the beneficial impacts of technology on contemporary classrooms improving in terms of the learning process and the general performance of students. Binita: "I agree with Aman."

Students' familiarity with technology has influenced how we learn. I have noticed that students are comfortable now with the interactive tools of Padlet and Kahoot that I use to enhance interactions in classes. They are accustomed to discussing and collaborating on the internet, which has transformed the class environment more interactive one than ever before. It is less challenging for us to integrate technology into everyday classes due to their eagerness to participate in virtual activities.

The use of technology by students has essentially enhanced classroom interactivity. Current research validates this trend noting that technological usage among students facilitates greater engagement and collaboration (Crowdmark, 2023). Interactive platforms not only encourage students to offer ideas but also enable peer collaboration to maximise the learning experience (Khan, & Farooq, 2021). Moreover, using e.g., platform advances the growing emphasis on digital literacy, as it is required to prepare students for life in the academic and professional environment (Crowdmark, 2023; Khan, & Farooq, 2021). As students embrace digital learning spaces, they are more actively engaged with content, enhancing their learning and classroom climate. Bipin extended:

If I talk about myself, then the hybrid shift in the learning model has been one of the most obvious changes. With students being more familiar with gadgets now, I've been able to integrate on-campus instruction and online learning more smoothly. This versatility is excellent because it enables me to provide students with the ability to access lessons from home, which suits individuals who struggle to come in because of challenges. Technology has become an essential part of our learning process.

The hybrid learning model has been an upcoming trend in education, combining face-to-face and online learning modes that cater to the diverse needs of students. The increasing ease of students of technology has enabled instructors to adopt online tools supporting flexibility and accessibility, as observed in literature (Garrison & Kanuka, 2022). The model supports students who are unable to physically attend classes, offering them the choice to attend virtually (Bonk, 2021). Additionally, hybrid learning supports individualised learning, where technology allows students to learn at their own pace and enhance their engagement, eventually leading to enhanced academic performance (Freeman et al., 2022). Nonetheless, Aarti took the above statements as satirical and presented her opinions in a centrist manner:

Now, students are familiar with gadgets, knowledgeable about using them. While they are misusing this technology due to misuse they are deviating from their duties and obligations. I have noticed, students can't live without it, become dumb and decrease their learning abilities day by day. Most of the time, my efforts to divert their attention from the gadgets but it's not simple for other teachers and me as well to divert and make their focus on their studies.

The increased use of digital devices among students has created opportunities, in addition to challenges, in learning. As much as technology can enhance learning through simple access to information, it has also become a principal source of distraction. Based on research, excessive use of devices, particularly for social media and entertainment, negatively affects the academic performance of students by reducing the time they dedicate to studying (Lepp et al., 2015). In addition, multitasking by devices may disrupt cognitive function, making it harder for students to focus and remember (Rosen et al., 2013). This trend of overuse, along with the inability to control technology that has resulted in decreased critical thinking along problem-solving skills among students (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). Educators' challenge is not only using technology to teach efficiently but also helping students to ignore distractions and maintain focus on studies.

Conclusion

COVID-19 has greatly impacted student teaching, changing the education field. Before COVID-19, face-to-face teaching provided interaction between students and teachers giving a more structured and dynamic atmosphere to the learning experience. But during the pandemic, this shift to online and remote learning was abrupt, forcing both teachers and learners to adapt rapidly to new technologies. During this change, some significant issues, e.g., digital divide and unequal access to technology surfaced as barriers to students' successful learning. Teachers learned digital pedagogical skills by the seat of their pants during the pandemic, often with minimal training, so it was a very steep learning curve. Although most schools are now back to normal face-to-face teaching, COVID-19 has had ongoing effects on educational practice. The extensive use of digital technologies has bred hybrid models of learning, where the online and offline features are mixed in

order to become more flexible and accessible. The shift, though, has posed difficulties for students, primarily in managing screen time and maintaining focus. The pandemic has irreparably affected the students' attention span through over-technology use. Therefore, in the future, educators will have to continue embracing technology advancements alongside teaching assistance to students to be successful academically as well as emotionally in both virtual classrooms as well as physical classrooms.

Acknowledgement

I wish to acknowledge the University Grants Commission (UGC) Nepal, for the research grant that enabled me to undertake the study. Similarly, Dr. Tikaram Poudel deserves my heartfelt gratitude since his guidance, feedback, and assistance in the completion of the research were invaluable.

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