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Proximity of Teaching with Learning: A Case Study of an Accredited Institution

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Abstract

This study explores the proximity between teaching and learning processes at an accredited higher education institution in Madhesh Province, Nepal. Focusing on JS Murarka Multiple Campus, Lahan, Siraha, an accredited community campus affiliated with TU, the researcher investigates how the alignment (or lack thereof) between teaching strategies and students' learning practices influences educational outcomes. Employing a case study approach, data were gathered through multiple sources: classroom observations using CCTV, interviews with 10 faculties, interviews with 20 first-year students from BBS and BEd, and an analysis of students' academic records, covering both internal and final assessments. The findings reveal that despite the availability of adequate facilities to support teaching and learning, most faculty members continue to rely on traditional, teacher-centered methods. These approaches tend to prioritize covering course content rather than responding to students' preferred ways of learning. As a result, teaching and learning often move in different directions, leading to a noticeable gap or low proximity between the two. This misalignment has contributed to poor academic outcomes for students. The study underscores the need for teaching practices that are responsive to students' learning processes, and recommends faculties need to align their teaching strategies with how students best engage with course materials.

Keywords: teaching and learning, proximity, accredited institution, case study

Introduction

Society is in a state of flux and many complex challenges we face will undoubtedly depend on education at every level. Higher education, in particular, has a crucial role to play in contributing to solutions and driving progress of the nation at present and future as well. In Nepal, three types of higher institution are in the practice; constituent, community

and private, and most of students are found with the second type, i.e., community institutions. On the other hand, the University Grants Commission (hence after UGC) has been involved in facilitating them for their quality enhancement and awarding the selected institutions with QAA certificate that indicates their good performances dynamically. Accredited institutions are supposed to have better graduate rates as they are good enough by their faculty members and others as well. They are addressing the UGC indicators and creating effective impacts on the societies. However, progress and prosperity of even an accredited institution is directly linked to its education process; the degree of accessibility and integrity of teaching and research with learning perspectives that pave the pace of success to an individual/learner. Now the education dynamics involve learning, researching and teaching. It has been seen that the institutions that put their core efforts on understanding the learning strategies from the learners' perspectives are found having good results on paper and performances in markets. As the primary role of higher education institutions is to equip graduates with the skills they need, and considering how rapidly the job market is evolving, it makes sense that higher education must increasingly focus on lifelong learning. This shift will call for more flexible and accessible educational options, along with opportunities for individuals to build and stack credentials or qualifications as needed throughout their careers. To foster effective learning, it's essential to create an engaging and dynamic environment. Yadav (2024) states that by engaging in continuous professional growth, educators model the importance of learning to their students. One way to achieve this is by building learning communities that encourage strong interaction between students and academic staff. These communities play a vital role in supporting learning approaches that help students progressively develop key skills such as teamwork, project planning and execution, leadership, and entrepreneurship.

As Hooker put it, back in 1997, "the nineteenth-century model of teaching at higher level still holds sway and teaching as not changed much since. Yet the context in which higher education takes place has changed-and changed dramatically" (Hooker 1997). As a matter of fact, over the past years, learning and teaching have emerged as a topic of interest and as a priority, both at institutional and policy levels.

Regarding the University teaching-learning practices, it has been observed that management factor is very important as it is a means of setting the stage on which good learning may occur. We also need to follow the Western systems where the teachers focus on what the students do and how that relates to teaching with their learning. The proximity of teaching and learning involves how closely teaching methods resonate with and support students' learning processes (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983). Expert teaching includes mastery over a variety of teaching techniques, but unless learning takes place, they are irrelevant. This implies that a view of teaching that is not just about facts, concepts and principles to be covered and understood, but which also requires us to be clear that what it is the students are to learn, the way they learn, the kind of teaching/learning activities they enjoy for their outcomes are more important.

In contemporary higher education, the alignment or proximity of teaching approaches with students' learning needs and practices has become a key determinant of educational quality. Proximity refers to the degree of connectedness, relevance, and responsiveness between the instructional strategies employed by educators and the actual learning experiences of students (Biggs & Tang, 2011). In Nepal, where higher education is undergoing reforms through accreditation and quality assurance processes, understanding this proximity is critical for achieving meaningful educational outcomes. How effectively we teach depends, first, on what we think teaching is. The latest concept of teaching at University level as well is that there should be the integration of teaching and learning, seeing effective teaching as encouraging students to use the learning activities most likely to achieve the outcomes students intended (Biggs and Tang, 2011, p. 16). It is widely accepted that every teacher must have well understanding of what and how students learn in any specified program. This leads us to think and apply the student-centered approach for updating the learning-teaching activities.

This paper investigates how teaching practices align with students' learning approaches in an accredited institution of Nepal, aiming to provide insights into improving educational quality and learner engagement. Thus, it explores the proximity between teaching and learning processes at an accredited higher education institution in Madhesh Province, Nepal. Focusing on JS Murarka Multiple Campus, Lahan, Siraha, an accredited community campus affiliated with TU, the research investigates how the alignment (or lack thereof) between teaching strategies and students' learning practices influences educational outcomes. Biggs and Tang, (2011) states that we intend students to be able to do after we have taught a topic. It is not just good enough for us to talk about it or teach with an impressive array of visual aids: the whole point, how well the students have learned, has been ignored. While teaching in a higher level as well, it is to be thought that teaching/learning activities are specifically attuned to helping students achieve the desired outcomes. Learning has been the subject of research by the educators at large, but remarkably little has directly resulted in improved teaching. Still there is more focus on how to teach effectively than the research of how students learn effectively.

Literature Review

Biggs' (1999) theory of constructive alignment highlights the importance of aligning curriculum, teaching activities, and assessment tasks with intended learning outcomes. Research in various contexts demonstrates that closer teaching-learning proximity enhances student motivation, critical thinking, and retention (Trigwell & Prosser, 1991; Ramsden, 2003). Interactive pedagogies such as problem-based learning (PBL), collaborative projects, and formative feedback are identified as means to enhance proximity (Prince, 2004). Nepal's higher education sector has witnessed efforts toward quality improvement through accreditation under bodies like the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) system. Yet, challenges such as lecture-dominated teaching, resource constraints, and limited faculty development persist (Parajuli et al., 2020). While studies in Nepal explore teaching quality

(e.g., Dahal, 2018; Shrestha & Joshi, 2019), few have focused specifically on the proximity between teaching methods and student learning practices in accredited institutions.

Yadav's (2024) study investigates the adequacy of teachers from the perspective of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) students at JS Murarka Multiple Campus. It provides insights into how students perceive their instructors' effectiveness, which directly relates to the alignment between teaching and learning processes. Tomás-Miquel, et al. (2025) examines how social proximity influences the development of academic relationships among undergraduate students. It highlights that closer interactions between students and faculty can enhance engagement and learning outcomes. Rana and Rana (2020) examines the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching and learning activities within Nepal's higher education. It discusses how ICT tools can bridge the gap between teaching and learning, especially in remote areas.

These research works provide valuable insights into various strategies for integrating teaching and learning to achieve better results in higher education.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative case study design (Yin, 2014) to explore teaching-learning proximity at JS Murarka Multiple Campus Lahan, Siraha, Madhesh Province, Nepal, an accredited institution (now in process of second cycle mechanism) having TU affiliation. Using a case study approach, data were collected through classroom observations by the help of CCTV, semi-structured interviews conducted with 10 faculty members including 2 HoDs regarding teaching strategies, challenges, and perceptions of student learning, and interviews with 20 students from BBS and BEd first year sampled randomly, and records of students' results (internal and final exams as well) of the institution.

Results and Discussion

Pass and Graduate Trend at JS Murarka Multiple Campus

As there are good facilities for fostering effective teaching-learning activities inside the or outside the classrooms of the institution, the outcomes/results of the running programs here show that altogether it is below 30% results in the final exams during last three fiscal years (Annual Report, 2080/081) and among all the results have remained even below 20% in Bachelor program of Management stream.

Similarly, the institution manages the internal exams twice for every program and the currently held exam result was published last Baishakh, 2082 that has brought the attention of the research faculties as there was not even single student passed in BBS first year, out of 96 students appeared in all subjects' exam on the one hand and on the other there was very poor rate results even in the education program. Regarding this case, the data can be put in the tables below:

Table 1.

Pass Trends of Students in Last Two Fiscal Years

Year	2079			2080		
Pass Trends	Appeared	Passed	%	Appeared	Passed	%
	2475	415	16.77	2180	126	5.78
Graduated Trends	Appeared	Graduated	%	Appeared	Graduated	%
	2475	112	4.52	2180	86	3.94

Annual Report (2080/081, pp. 6-9)

The data from JS Murarka Multiple Campus for the academic years 2079 and 2080 paints a concerning picture of student performance, both in terms of pass rates and graduation rates. In 2079, 2,475 students appeared for their exams, of whom 415 passed giving a pass rate of 16.77%. The following year not only did the number of students appearing drop to 2,180, but the pass rate also fell steeply to just 5.78%, with only 126 students passing. This sharp decline signals a significant setback in student achievement over the course of a year. Graduation figures follow a similar pattern. In 2079, 112 students graduated, which was 4.52% of those who sat for exams. In 2080, that number fell to 86 graduates, or 3.94% of the cohort.

The data point to a troubling trend: both pass and graduation rates are decreasing. The dramatic fall in pass rates suggests underlying issues possibly including a disconnect between teaching approaches and students' learning preferences, a lack of adequate academic support, or broader institutional challenges.

Table 2.

1st Internal Exam Result, Management, BBS 1st (2081/85), F.M.: 50, P.M: 18

Students' Name	Roll No	B.Eng	PM	Eco	B. Stat.	Acc.	Total	Remarks
Rupesh Das	3	3	14	2	14	13	46	Failed
Asmita Chaudhary	8	22	0	6	7	14	49	Failed
Chandani Kri Chy	19	16	7	7	4	6	40	Failed
Sunam Kri Chy	20	16	7	5	19	1	48	Failed
Pratima Kri Chy	21	23	9	6	3	7	48	Failed
Priyanka Kri Yadav	23	14	11	7	11	8	51	Failed
Kalpana Kri Sharma	26	20	14	11	11	11	67	Failed
Aarti Kumari Sharma	27	20	12	16	18	13	79	Failed
Sharika Kumari Sah	31	22	18	6	22	16	84	Failed
Durganand Singh	34	23	3	14	6	15	61	Failed
Riya Soni	36	20	4.5	5	6	18	53.5	Failed
Tejendra Kumar Chy	37	26	7	11	14	16	74	Failed
Priyanka Kri Chy	38	20	5	4	18	2	31	Failed
Nirjala Kumari Sahani	39	18	8	12	1	12	51	Failed
Jiya Sah	40	17	8	10	3	15	53	Failed

The results of the 1st internal exam for BBS 1st year management students (2081/85), out of more than 300 students, only 15 were selected from the list (from 1 to 40 who appeared in all subjects) reveal a concerning scenario. Despite some students securing decent marks in individual subjects, all have been marked as failed overall. For example,

students like Aarti Kumari Sharma and Sharika Kumari Sah scored relatively higher totals of 79 and 84 respectively yet did not meet the passing criteria. The scores reflect inconsistencies across subjects, with many students performing well in one or two areas but struggling significantly in others. This pattern suggests gaps in subject-wise understanding and points to the need for more targeted academic support and balanced preparation across all subjects to help students achieve passing grades.

The table highlights a critical gap between teaching and learning at JS Murarka Multiple Campus, clearly reflecting poor proximity between the two. Despite students putting in effort-evidence by some achieving strong marks in certain subjects-their overall failure suggests that teaching strategies may not be effectively supporting students' comprehensive learning across all subjects. The inconsistency in individual subject scores indicates that while students grasp parts of the curriculum, they struggle to integrate knowledge or perform consistently. This could point to a teaching approach that focuses more on delivering content than on ensuring that students truly understand and can apply what they learn. The data imply that teaching is not sufficiently aligned with students' learning needs, styles, or challenges.

Faculty Details at JS Murarka Multiple Campus

Table 3.

The number of faculty working at present and their experiences

SN	Faculty number	Service type	Experience year					Last degree
			1-5	**5-10**	**11-15**	**16-20**	**20-**	
1.	1	Permanent						PhD
2.	6	Permanent						Master
3.	1	Permanent						PhD
4.	2	Permanent						Master
5.	7	Permanent						Master
6.	1	Permanent						Master
7.	1	Contract						Master
8.	3	Contract						Master
9.	1	Contract						Master
10.	1	Part time						Master
11.	8	Part time						Master

Yadav (2024)

The table provides an overview of the current faculty composition at JS Murarka Multiple Campus, highlighting both their employment status and qualifications. From a faculty profile like that of JS Murarka Multiple Campus, certain key expectations naturally arise when it comes to enhancing teaching-learning proximity. Given that most faculty members hold at least a master's degree-and a few have PhDs-they are expected to go beyond traditional lecture methods and adopt more student-centered, interactive, and reflective teaching approaches. Their academic background and permanent status should ideally motivate them to continuously update their teaching strategies to align with

students' learning needs, encouraging critical thinking, participation, and applied learning rather than mere content delivery.

Additionally, faculty with greater experience are expected to mentor junior colleagues, share best practices, and help build a more supportive academic environment that fosters student engagement. Regardless of contract type, all faculty members are expected to actively bridge the gap between what is taught and how students learn-by using varied instructional methods, incorporating technology, and creating opportunities for feedback and dialogue. Ultimately, the expectation is that such a faculty body takes collective responsibility for ensuring that teaching connects meaningfully with students' learning processes, helping improve outcomes and reduce the current mismatch that is evident in student performance.

This faculty profile points to a teaching force that is relatively stable in terms of job security but could benefit from greater diversity in academic qualifications and potentially more experienced educators. These factors may influence the teaching-learning proximity, as faculty expertise and stability play important roles in addressing student learning needs and improving educational outcomes.

Program Details at JS Murarka Multiple Campus

Table 4.

The professional development programs up to 2079

SN	Name	Title	Date	Participants
1.	Symposium	Discussion on Article Writing	11/02/075	All faculty
2.	Seminar	Pure, Applied and Social Sciences	16/04/075	All faculty
3.	Workshop	Research Writing	06/05/075	All faculty
4.	Training	Proposal and Thesis Writing	18/08/075	All faculty
5.	Workshop	Advanced Research Methodology	01/12/075	All faculty
6.	Training	Thesis writing	31/01/076	20 faculty
7.	Program	Article & Proposal Writing	11/06/076	All faculty
8.	Seminar	Current Trends	11-12/09/076	All faculty
9.	Workshop	Comprehending Research Article	01/07/077	All faculty
10.	Workshop	Experiences for Experiencing	25/09/077	All faculty
11.	Workshop	Professional Development	24 -25/6/078	All faculty
12.	Seminar	Basic Science Lab Safety	15-17/3/079	15 faculty
13.	Workshop	Manuscript Drafting	13-14/3/079	All faculty
14.	Symposium	Research Findings Dissemination	21/08/079	All faculty

Yadav (2024)

The data in Table 4 reflect the campus's notable efforts in offering professional development opportunities to its faculty up to 2079. A variety of programs-including symposia, seminars, workshops, and training sessions-have been organized, covering important academic and research-related themes such as article writing, proposal and thesis writing, advanced research methodology, and manuscript drafting. Most of these programs were inclusive, with participation open to all faculty members, while a few, such as the thesis writing training and lab safety seminar, involved selected groups.

While the range and frequency of these activities demonstrate the campus's commitment to fostering professional growth, the persistent gap between teaching and

learning outcomes suggests that these programs have not yet translated into significant changes in classroom practices. This highlights the need for follow-up measures-such as mentoring, practical application support, and monitoring-to ensure that the knowledge and skills gained from these initiatives are effectively integrated into day-to-day teaching, ultimately strengthening teaching-learning proximity at the campus.

Students' Responses on Teachers' Teaching

The data regarding the students' responses about the teachers' teaching activities are also very interesting for creating the proximity between learning and teaching about the subject matters the students need to study. The table below shows the responses.

Table 5.

Students' responses on teachers' teaching

SN	Indicators	Students No.	Responses
1.	Do your teachers explain topics in a way that is easy to understand?	15	No
		5	Sometimes
2.	Do they encourage you to ask questions and express your ideas during class?	18	No
		2	Yes
3.	Do they try to connect what they teach with practical examples?	12	No
		8	Sometimes
4.	Do they give you a chance to participate actively in learning activities (e.g., group work, discussions)?	14	No
		6	Sometimes
5.	Do they use different methods to teach, beyond just lectures (e.g., presentations, technology, fieldwork)?	13	No
		7	Yes
6.	Do they check if students have understood before moving on to new topics?	16	No
		4	Yes
7.	Do they provide helpful feedback on your assignments or classwork?	20	No
		0	0
8.	Do they motivate you to learn and study beyond the classroom?	12	Yes
		8	No
9.	Do they adapt their teaching to suit different students' learning needs?	16	No
		4	Some-some
10.	Overall, do their teaching styles help you to learn effectively?	15	No
		5	Yes

The data in the table paint a clear picture of the gap between how teachers are teaching and how students are experiencing learning at the campus. Most students shared that their teachers don't explain topics in a way that's easy to understand (15 out of 20) and rarely encourage them to ask questions or share their ideas in class (18 out of 20). Many also felt that teachers don't link lessons to real-life examples or create enough chances for active participation-both key for helping students engage with what they're learning. A good number of students (13 out of 20) noted that teachers mostly rely on traditional lecture methods, with little use of other tools or techniques. What's most worrying is that all students said they don't get useful feedback on their work, and most (16 out of 20) said teachers don't check if students have understood before moving ahead. While some students (12 out of 20) felt encouraged to learn beyond the classroom, overall, the findings suggest that teaching is still very teacher-centered and not well-matched to how students

learn best. This shows an urgent need for change to bring teaching and learning closer together and help students succeed.

Teachers' Responses on Teaching-Learning Proximity

It was found that some teachers are making efforts to align teaching with students' learning as they are always using the latest devices but many face barriers such as time pressure, institutional challenges and others as well. The table below indicates teachers' responses for creating the proximity for learning with their teaching activities.

Table 6.

Teachers' Responses on Teaching-Learning Proximity

Indicators/Questions	No. of Teacher	Responses	Reason
Do you regularly check if students have understood the topic before moving on to new content?	5	Yes	
	5	No	Time lack
Do you try to connect your lessons to practical examples or real-life situations?	6	Yes	Topic
	4	No	No found
Do you encourage students to ask questions and share their ideas during class?	8	No	Time lack
	2	Yes	
Do you use different teaching methods (beyond lectures) to address varied learning styles?	7	Yes	
	3	No	Management
Do you provide feedback to students that helps them improve their learning?	5	Yes	
	5	No	

The data in the table provide a revealing look at how teachers view their role in aligning teaching with student learning at the campus. While half of the teachers (5 out of 10) said they check students' understanding before moving on, the other half admitted they do not-mainly citing lack of time. Similarly, although 6 teachers said they connect lessons to practical examples, 4 said they do not, with some stating they didn't find suitable opportunities within their topics. Worryingly, 8 teachers said they do not encourage students to ask questions or share ideas during class, again pointing to time constraints as a reason. On a positive note, 7 teachers reported using varied teaching methods beyond lectures, but 3 said they stick to lectures, blaming management or resource limitations. The responses on feedback were evenly split, with 5 teachers providing feedback that supports learning and 5 not offering such feedback. Overall, the table highlights that while some teachers are making efforts to align teaching with student learning, many face barriers such as time pressure and institutional challenges. This gap calls for stronger institutional support, better time management strategies, and a shift in teaching culture to truly enhance teaching-learning proximity.

Class Observation through the CCTV

Regarding the data related to how actually the teachers are teaching in their classrooms, seven days the researcher observed their classes using CCTV, noticing their teaching styles during their specified periods. It was seen that many of them were applying the lecture methods focusing more on how to complete the topic rather than taking consideration on the students' paces of learning about the contents. Mostly they were found

ignoring the most important side of the class focus, i.e., how their students desired to learn the topic. Despite the opportunities for the students in the classes, the teachers happened to be dominant throughout the period where the students remained passive listeners that caused them not to take any action for doing their assignments and more. It was observed in the BBS first year that there were many students (approximately over 60), yet many of them were found very interested in some classes that indicate if teaching is addressing their learning, they were better performing. Thus, traditional lectures dominate (80% of class time): Most faculty members relied heavily on one-way delivery, reading from textbooks or notes. Teachers who provided practical examples linked to Siraha's socio-economic context (e.g., local businesses, agriculture) saw more student participation. Similarly, classes with smaller groups (elective subjects) showed higher interaction levels.

In many classrooms, students often feel frustrated by certain teaching activities that don't support their learning well. One common issue is when teachers rely too much on one-way lectures, speaking continuously without engaging students or checking if they've understood the material. This makes students feel like passive listeners rather than active participants. Similarly, when lessons focus mainly on rote memorization or theoretical content without linking it to real-life examples, students struggle to see the relevance of what they're learning. They also dislike when teachers move too quickly through topics, use complicated language, or discourage questions - all of which can leave them confused or hesitant to participate. A lack of variety in teaching methods, unclear instructions for tasks, or showing favoritism in class can further reduce students' motivation and confidence. In short, students want to feel involved, respected, and supported in their learning, and they tend to dislike activities that make them feel overlooked or disconnected from the purpose of their studies.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of the final exams and graduate trends of some past years and the internal exam result published in last Baishakh reveal very poor condition of the institution. Similarly, it has been managing different opportunities to the faculties for their professional upgrades, however, there still seem a lot of gap between what they teach and the students understanding. The responses of the students are also found very irrelevant to what they desired, and the class observation also showed the teachers were following mostly the traditional ways of delivering the contents. These outcomes highlight the pressing need for reforms that can bring teaching and learning closer together. It is essential for faculty to align their teaching strategies with students' learning needs to help reverse this decline. Without timely intervention, student performance and overall institutional success may continue to suffer.

It signals the need for a shift toward more student-centered, supportive, and interactive teaching practices that bridge the gap between what is taught and what is actually learned. Without improving this alignment-this proximity-between teaching and learning, student outcomes are unlikely to improve significantly. Based on the data, it is recommended that teachers at the campus adopt more student-centered methods, moving

beyond traditional lectures to include discussions, group work, and practical activities that engage learners. Teachers should create a supportive environment where students feel comfortable asking questions and sharing ideas, while also linking lessons to real-life examples to make learning more meaningful. Regular, constructive feedback and simple checks for understanding before moving on to new topics are essential to help students stay on track. Furthermore, teaching should be adapted to address different learning needs, supported by ongoing professional development focused on modern teaching strategies and educational technology. These steps can help bridge the gap between teaching and learning, ultimately improving student engagement and academic outcomes.

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