

Connecting Life and Learning: Transformative Learning to Increase Student Engagement

Authors : Kashi Raj Pandey

Abstract : Transformative learning is a form of learning rooted in learners' life experiences and their inherent love for learning. It emphasizes the importance of incorporating students' everyday work through the use of learning diaries and reflective journals. It encourages learners to take a proactive role in their own improvement, fostering creativity and promoting informed discussions about the learning process. Reflecting on the personal experience with English language learning in a rural village in Nepal where rote memorization was the prevailing teaching method, this traditional approach hindered a deeper understanding of the language, prompting the author to recognize the need for more effective pedagogy. In this study, the author delved into the cultural contextualization of English language learning, taking into account learners' backgrounds. The study's findings highlighted the importance of equity, inclusion, mutuality, and social justice in the classroom, emphasizing the significance of integrating students' lived experiences into the pedagogical approach. This, in turn, can encourage students to engage in profound and collaborative learning practices within the realm of English language education. Upon successfully implementing the research findings, including the eight key conditions of transformative learning, in multiple classrooms, the author collaborated with international educationists and government stakeholders in Nepal. The purpose was to disseminate the research findings, conduct teacher training workshops, and systematically enhance Nepali students' English language learning. These methods have already demonstrated a significant improvement in student engagement within the same school where the author once learned English as a child. This study aims to explore teachers' decision-making process regarding the transition from traditional teaching methods to interactive ones, which have gained national recognition within the ESL/EFL teaching community in Nepal. By sharing these experiences, it is expected that other teachers will also contemplate adopting transformative learning pedagogy in their own classrooms.

Keywords : reflection, student engagement, pedagogy, transformative learning

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