RABSEL: The CERD Educational Journal

ISSN 2957-8019 (Online)|ISSN 2077-4966 (Print)| 26(3) 1-16
Journal homepage: Journal.pce.edu.bt

Implementation of Transformative Pedagogy in English Classes of Secondary Schools Under Samtse Dzongkhag and Thimphu Thromde

Authors: Tashi Gyeltshen and Yangdon
Affiliation: Samtse College of Education, Royal University of Bhutan
Corresponding Author: tgyeltshen.sce@rub.edu.bt

http//doi.org/10.17102/rabsel.26.11.260304| Accepted June 2026 | Published November 2026

Abstract

This study investigated the status of the implementation of transformative pedagogy in English classes at secondary schools under Samtse Dzongkhag and Thimphu Thromde. In alignment with the interpretivist worldview and qualitative approach, the data for the study were collected through one-on-one interviews with English teachers, focus group discussions with students, and classroom observations from six secondary schools in Samtse Dzongkhag and Thimphu Thromde. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data. The findings suggested that transformative pedagogy strategies are useful and effective, and were extensively used following the 2016 workshop. However, the study revealed that implementation of these strategies gradually declined due to challenges such as inadequate understanding of the strategies, difficulty in negotiating the strategies with the syllabus coverage, and lack of follow-up and monitoring. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education and Skills Development provide ongoing training on transformative pedagogy and collaborate with Colleges of Education to integrate these strategies into pre-service teacher education.

Keywords*:* Transformative pedagogy, implementation, English teachers, secondary schools, opportunities, challenges

Introduction

Pedagogy plays a crucial role in promoting student engagement, nurturing lifelong learning, and cultivating critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Darling-Hammond, 2015). Realising its important role, the then Ministry of Education (MoE) took the initiative to provide a five-day transformative pedagogy workshop to all school teachers in Bhutan in 2016 (Wangdi, 2016). The workshop was intended to help teachers critically reflect on their current teaching practices, update their teaching approaches and induce a sense of enjoyment and excitement into the learning process and cultivate interactive classroom climate scenarios (MoE, 2016). The content of the workshop was devised to inform teachers about the philosophical foundations of engaging students through discourse, group work, and partners (Royal Education Council, 2016). The training provided first-hand experience of teaching through Kagan's cooperative learning structure, team building, and learning community (MoE, 2016). The workshop equipped participants with skills and tools for creating interactive classrooms, inspiring and motivating them to shift from traditional didactic teaching to learner-centred approaches (Dorji et al., 2020). Teachers were expected to use the knowledge and skills acquired from the workshop in their teaching to empower students to develop a reflective knowledge base, appreciate multiple perspectives, and become critical thinkers (Khedkar & Nair, 2019).

Problem Statement

Scepticism regarding the implementation of transformative pedagogy was noted due to challenges such as a dense curriculum, crowded classrooms, and heavy teacher workloads (Dorji et al., 2020). Despite concerted efforts and evident prioritisation of pedagogical training by the Ministry of Education and Skills Development [MoESD], little is known about the implementation of transformative pedagogy in the English classrooms of Bhutanese secondary schools. Observing the current scenario in the school system, there is minimal implementation of interactive pedagogies in English classrooms, suggesting that teaching and learning mostly happen through lecture, chalk and talk, and rote learning that may not offer optimal learning avenues for students in today's dynamic educational context (Dorji, 2020). There exists a gap between the intentions of the training initiative and its actual impact on nurturing the desired qualities in students. It is likely that factors such as a bulky syllabus and assessment practices, especially the year-end and national board examinations, hinder the effective implementation of pedagogy (Black et al., 2017). Besides, class size, resources, and teachers' workload are likely to impede the effective implementation of transformative pedagogy. This study aimed to explore the status, opportunities, and challenges of the implementation of transformative pedagogy in English across six secondary schools and provide evidence-based recommendations to the MoESD.

Research Questions

What is the status of transformative pedagogy implementation in English in secondary schools under Samtse Dzongkhag and Thimphu Thromde?

Sub-questions

1. How do the Bhutanese secondary school English teachers understand transformative pedagogy?
2. What are English teachers' perceptions of the implementation of transformative pedagogy in English?

3. What strategies of transformative pedagogy are implemented in English classrooms?
4. What are the perceived benefits and challenges of implementing transformative pedagogy?
5. What strategies do the English teachers use to overcome the challenges of implementing transformative pedagogy, if any?

Literature Review

Transformative Pedagogy

Transformative pedagogy actively engages students in critical inquiry and creative thinking, moving beyond rote learning and passive reception of information. Classrooms adopting transformative pedagogy prioritise active student participation and cultivate an enjoyable learning atmosphere (Wangdi, 2016). Learning becomes meaningful when students are actively involved in constructing their understanding of concepts and applying them in diverse contexts (Levy & Kerpelman, 2010). This shift in educational practice emphasises the importance of student-centred learning (Levy & Kerpelman, 2010) and encourages students to critically examine their own beliefs, values, and assumptions which is crucial for developing a deeper understanding of the subject matter and its application to real-world contexts (Meyers, 2008; Vijayachandran, 2018). This cooperative learning, based on Spencer Kagan's structures for this study, was used to investigate enhancement of students' academic engagement and a sense of ownership and responsibility for their learning.

Opportunities of Transformative Pedagogy

Transformative pedagogy provides a number of opportunities to students. It enhances their engagement through dynamic discourse, collaborative group work and partnerships, ultimately making learning enjoyable (Wangdi, 2016). It also empowers learners as active agents in their own learning (Taylor, 2007) and fosters deeper engagement, critical thinking, and holistic skills development (Hattie, 2009). While Darling-Hammond (2017) accentuates its role in promoting long-term retention of information, Cranton (2006) points to its facilitation of personal growth. Moreover, Mezirow (2003) stresses that this approach nurtures lifelong learning habits, and Brookfield (2005) highlights the development of inclusive learning habits. Moreover, Dorji et al. (2020) point out that learning becomes interactive and participatory. Thus, literature shows that transformative pedagogy enhances student engagement, ownership of learning and empowers them to develop vital skills. However, while a few studies have examined transformative pedagogy in general, limited research has explored the status, benefits, and challenges of its implementation in secondary school English classrooms following the 2016 workshop.

Types of Transformative Pedagogical Strategies

Transformative pedagogical strategies include important elements of Spencer Kagan's cooperative learning. Some of the strategies include Think-Pair-Share, Jigsaw, Collaborative Writing, Round Robin, Rally Robin, Round Table, and Peer Tutoring. Moreover, Face Partner and Shoulder Partner are used in cooperative learning and classroom management to facilitate discussion (Kagan & Kagan, 2009).

Classroom Management Techniques

Gaining and sustaining the attention of students in the class can be difficult. This necessitates that teachers employ classroom behaviour management techniques such as attention grabbers, brain breaks, and cheers (Recard & Nathania, 2021). These classroom management techniques form an important part of Kagan's transformative pedagogy as they assist in maintaining a lively classroom and meaningful student engagement (Thinley et al., 2021). Attention grabbers can include both verbal and non-verbal cues. An example of a verbal attention grabber includes the teacher saying, "Class, class," and students responding "Yes, yes". Other examples include "One, two: Eyes on you", "One, two, three: Eyes on me", "Hello class: Yes, yes miss" and so on (Kagan & Kagan, 2009; Recard & Nathania, 2021). Non-verbal attention grabbers can be teachers showing the sign "STOP" in a creative and fun way to quieten a noisy class (Copland et al., 2014).

Another way to maintain classroom behaviour is through brain breaks. Students spend long sedentary hours in class sitting and listening to instructions in various subjects (Barker, 2021), which is tiring and students can lose focus on their studies. Brain breaks provide breaks in the learning process, help release tension, refocus their attention, and recharge their cognitive capabilities (Learning and Development, 2023). Some of the brain breaks can include mental exercises and physical exercises such as standing up and stretching and yoga exercises.

Cheers or praise are effective ways to manage classroom behaviour. They are positive reinforcement or rewards for students' participation or performance in the learning process (Helean, 2022) and for students' positive classroom behaviour (Moore et al., 2018). They make the class conducive and supportive of language learning (Helean, 2022; Rosa, 2022), and motivate students to change their behaviour (Benson-Goldberg & Erickson, 2021; Pattiasina et al., 2017). Additionally, cheers build camaraderie among the students. In order to generate excitement, teachers can incorporate gestures and movement while students say cheers (Pattiasina et al., 2017). Teachers can make their own cheers relevant to their culture. For example, Rosa (2022) used the Manny Pacquiao cheer, in reference to a successful Filipino boxer, in which students clap three times and throw fist bumps into the air.

Challenges in Implementing Transformative Pedagogy

There are a few challenges regarding the implementation of transformative pedagogy in secondary schools. One common challenge to the implementation of transformative pedagogy is resistance to adopting new pedagogical approaches (Smith, 2018) owing to familiarity with traditional methods, fear of failure, and a lack of understanding of the benefits of new approaches (Al-Harrasi & Al-Bulushi, 2016). Some pedagogical approaches, such as student-centred learning, require a shift in classroom dynamics and management (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2019). Limited resources can also hinder successful implementation of pedagogical strategies (Mackay & Stockton, 2019). Implementing some approaches often requires resources such as technology, teaching materials, and additional training for teachers (Biesta, 2019). Further, teachers frequently face time constraints in their daily schedules, which can impede the incorporation of new pedagogical strategies (Hattie, 2020).

The implementation of new approaches may require additional time for planning, collaboration, and implementing innovative instructional strategies (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2020). It often necessitates professional development to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge (Guskey & Yoon, 2019), posing logistical and financial challenges (Timperley, 2019). Teachers may encounter challenges in facilitating active student

engagement, managing group work, or maintaining discipline while implementing these approaches (Marzano & Marzano, 2017), especially when students have diverse learning styles, abilities and backgrounds (Rose & Meyer, 2022; Tomlinson, 2017). Teachers need to differentiate instruction, provide appropriate scaffolding and address individual learning gaps effectively (Gregory & Chapman, 2019).

Strategies to Overcome the Challenges

Studies indicate strategies to address the challenges in the implementation of transformative pedagogy. For example, Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) identify professional development and training as one of the strategies. Other strategies include allocation of adequate resources (Bebell & O'Dwyer, 2010; Popham, 2021), supportive leadership (Leithwood et al., 2004), creating a collaborative learning community (Fullan, 1993), and encouraging educators to embrace evidence-based practices (Hattie, 2009). Moreover, involving all stakeholders, such as teachers, administrators, students, parents, and the community in decision-making processes can lead to a more inclusive and effective implementation (Leithwood, 2018). Thus, overcoming challenges in the implementation of pedagogy requires a multi-faceted approach.

Methodology

Guided by the interpretivist worldview, the study aimed to understand individuals' or groups' perceptions of a phenomenon through their multiple subjective views (Cohen et al., 2018). This interpretive approach allowed participants to see the social world from their standpoint (Creswell, 2007), thus enabling the development of individual subjective meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2009). The participants shared their perspectives on the status, effectiveness, opportunities and challenges of incorporating transformative pedagogy in English teaching and learning.

The study adopted a qualitative case study design. It involved the interpretation of teachers' and students' perspectives on the implementation of transformative pedagogy in the teaching and learning of English through detailed, in-depth data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2007), allowing a holistic investigation that uncovers the particularity and complexity of a case (Stake, 1995). The six units/schools were strategically selected to serve as examples, rather than samples (Payne & Payne, 2004; Stake, 1995), indicating that the six schools are examples of any secondary school in Samtse Dzongkhag and Thimphu Thromde. Insights arising from this instrumental case study addressed the knowledge gap about the implementation of transformative pedagogy at the six selected secondary schools. The study used a "non-interventive" case study (Stake, 1995, p.12) where the investigators did not have any influence over the issue being investigated.

Sample and Sampling

The sample for this study consisted of Bhutanese secondary school English teachers and students from Samtse Dzongkhag and Thimphu Thromde. Specifically, the study employed stratified purposive sampling; that is, English teachers and students from secondary schools under Samtse and Thimphu Thromde were purposely selected from strata of one higher secondary school, one middle secondary school, and one lower secondary school from both sites.

Within the strata, students' age and the English curriculum across the three levels of secondary schooling could be considered relevant factors. Samtse Dzongkhag and Thimphu Thromde were selected to see if there were any differences in the implementation of transformative pedagogy owing to rurality and urbanity, and availability of adequate teachers and resources.

Data Collection Procedures

The data for the study were collected through one-on-one interviews with two English teachers and one focus group discussion with the students at each school. Direct observation was also used to gain insights into the implementation of transformative pedagogy. Observations were conducted prior to the interviews, providing contextual data on natural behaviours and classroom dynamics. This approach was beneficial in developing more targeted interview questions and enhancing the overall quality of the research.

Interview

Focus group discussions with four to six students from Classes VII to XII were conducted. The use of focus group discussions helped elicit rich and detailed information about the participants' perceptions pertaining to the research aim. Moreover, this technique aided in finding out not only what the participants thought but also why they held those views on the application of transformative pedagogy. The focus group discussion was followed by one-on-one semi-structured interviews with two English teachers from each school. However, only one English teacher from a middle secondary school in Samtse was interviewed because this was the only teacher teaching both Classes IX and X, resulting in a total of 11 teacher interview participants.

Criteria such as teaching experience, qualifications, and gender were used to ensure diverse perspectives. Eight female and three male English teachers participated in the interview. Audio recordings of the interviews ensured an accurate account of the conversations and prevented data loss, as not all details can be captured in writing during the interviews (Noor, 2008).

Observation

Direct observation of two periods ranging from 35 to 45 minutes from each school was conducted to obtain first-hand data, providing real-time information that enhanced contextual understanding and offered rich, detailed insights into the application of transformative pedagogy. The observation focussed on the implementation of transformative pedagogy by the teachers, classroom environment, and resources. The class observation enriched the data and enabled triangulation of the findings. Ten English classroom teaching sessions were observed using a standardised observation form. The number was reduced by two observations: one teacher in Samtse taught English in both Classes IX and X, while one teacher in Thimphu was on leave on the day of the classroom observation.

Data Analysis

Braun and Clarke's (2018) thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data from one-to-one interviews with teachers, focus group discussions with students, and classroom observations. Following data preparation, including the transcription of audio recordings, the

analysis proceeded through six steps: familiarisation with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up the analysis. Codes were developed using both descriptive and in vivo coding. The data were analysed inductively, allowing themes to emerge from the data sets.

Ethical Considerations

Since the study involved visiting schools, official permission was obtained from the Director of the Department of School Education, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Bhutan. Informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in the study. Participation in the research was voluntary and participants were assured that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Permission was sought from the participants to record the conversation. Measures were taken to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of informants. Pseudonyms were used for the participants. Thus, all ethical procedures were upheld during the study.

Findings and Discussion

Participants' Understanding of Transformative Pedagogy

The findings revealed different levels of understanding of transformative pedagogy among the participants. This understanding ranged from viewing it as a means of improving teaching to a more pedagogically oriented understanding centred on student participation, interaction and collaboration. For instance, SIT1 described transformative pedagogy as a "necessary tool for teachers and educators to help them teach better." This understanding indicates transformative pedagogy mainly as a source for improving the quality of teaching rather than as an approach that transforms learners' ways of thinking and understanding. Other participants demonstrated a more student-centered understanding, emphasising active participation collaboration and interaction. S6T2 explained that transformative pedagogy emphasises on more student involvement to make the lesson more interactive and collaborative. This shows an understanding that transformative pedagogy requires a shift away from teacher-dominant instruction towards more active learner participation. These responses suggest that participants' understanding of transformative pedagogy was not uniform. While some participants associated transformative pedagogy primarily with improving teaching, others connected it with student-centred and interactive learning. Transformative pedagogy engages students in critical inquiry and creative thinking (Wangdi, 2016). Similarly, active participation in constructing and applying knowledge is central to meaningful learning (Levy & Kerpelman, 2010). The participants' responses, therefore, indicated an emerging understanding of transformative pedagogy, while also highlighting a need to deepen their conceptualisation of how student participation, critical reflection and changes in perspective are connected to educational transformation.

Transformative Pedagogy Training

The study participants found the transformative pedagogy workshops highly engaging and effective, eagerly integrating new strategies into their classroom practices following the training. However, the participants' accounts suggested that the extent to which the strategies were sustained varied over time. As this finding was based on participants' retrospective

accounts, rather than longitudinal observation of classroom practice, the reported decline should be understood as participants' perceptions of reduced implementation over time. SITI shared that, not notwithstanding the reported decline in the use of transformative pedagogy, specific components of the workshops, such as "cheers" and "gambits," continued to be frequently used by English teachers to engage secondary school students and gain their attention. Both teacher and student participants observed that cheers are more applicable in primary school classes.

The participants valued the practical applicability of brain breaks and attention-grabbers, finding them both refreshing and useful. Thus, the sustained use of these strategies appears to have been associated with their practicality and visible classroom benefits rather than the participants' initial enthusiasm for the training. Initial scepticism among some participants regarding the effectiveness of the transformative pedagogy workshop was replaced by a positive shift in perception post-workshop, with participants acknowledging its effectiveness and the acquisition of valuable skills. The findings suggest that the training had an immediate positive influence on teachers' perceptions and provided practices that were subsequently incorporated into classroom teaching. However, sustained implementation was uneven. The persistence of immediately applicable strategies such as cheers, gambits and brain breaks, alongside the less consistent use of other strategies, highlights an important distinction between teachers' positive perceptions of professional development and their capacity to sustain its practices in everyday teaching.

Compared to other professional development sessions, the transformative pedagogy training consistently stood out as one of the most impactful experiences for the participants. Literature shows that the transformative pedagogy workshop equipped teachers with skills and tools for an interactive classroom and learner-centred teaching (Dorji et al., 2020). The present findings extend this understanding by suggesting that the impact of such training may depend not only on the quality or perceived effectiveness of the training but also on the extent to which individual practices can be readily adapted to teachers' everyday classroom contexts. The difference in the sustainability of workshop practices, therefore, provides useful insight into how transformative pedagogy training may be translated into sustained classroom practice.

Effective Transformative Pedagogy Strategies Used

The findings highlighted the use of transformative pedagogical strategies to enhance student engagement and collaborative learning. Teachers employed strategies such as Think-Pair-Share, Round Table discussions, and advanced grouping techniques, including Rally Robin and Numbered Heads Together, which effectively promoted student interaction. Across the teacher interviews, student focus groups and classroom observations, these strategies emerged as commonly used approaches for facilitating student participation and interaction, although the extent to which particular strategies were used varied across the different sources. Students engaged in individual and group activities, improving their understanding through presentations and games. However, these reported benefits should be understood primarily as participants' perceptions and observed classroom practices rather than as objectively measured improvements in student learning. S2T2 reported, "Round Robin and Rally Robin can easily be incorporated into various English lessons." The literature on transformative pedagogy aligns with these findings, demonstrating that inquiry-based, experiential, and collaborative methods are key to fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and real-world applications (Harwell & LeBeau,

2010; Smith, 2020; Springer et al., 2019). Group-based strategies, particularly the Round Table, were highly valued by participants because they were perceived to facilitate idea sharing in smaller groups, reducing public speaking pressure and boosting confidence, while fostering a supportive environment and encouraging introverted students to participate actively leading to increased engagement. The collaborative nature of group work also cultivates essential skills such as cooperation and teamwork.

Teachers appreciated the versatility of strategies, such as Round Robin and Rally Robin, which promoted dynamic interaction, while other methods such as the Five-finger rule and incorporating music with video were noted to a lesser extent. These strategies align with contemporary educational theories emphasising social interaction and peer support in learning, and are consistent with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Moreover, integrating music with video as part of brain breaks enriches learning experiences, aligning with multimodal learning theory and suggesting that integrating various sensory modalities can enhance engagement and retention (Moreno & Mayer, 2007). The findings indicate that collaborative strategies were valued and regularly used by teachers and were associated, in participants' accounts and classroom observations, with opportunities for student engagement, interaction and participation. However, the qualitative evidence does not establish that these strategies independently or significantly improved students' confidence, teamwork or learning outcomes. Rather, the convergence of teacher, student and observational evidence suggests that the strategies created a classroom environment that supported interaction, participation and collaborative learning. Thus, the effectiveness of these strategies is best understood in terms of their perceived and observed contribution to classroom engagement and collaboration rather than as a measured causal effect on student outcomes.

Opportunities of Transformative Pedagogy

The literature and findings concurred that applying transformative pedagogy in secondary schools offers several opportunities for students. The opportunities included active student engagement, class participation, collaborative learning, learning through fun, and the development of essential skills. These opportunities were reflected across the teacher interviews, and student focus groups, particularly in relation to student participation, interaction and collaborative learning. S4T2 articulated that transformative pedagogy is beneficial in making the class interactive, enabling the exchange of ideas, motivating students, and developing lifelong skills in students. Student engagement, the core of transformative pedagogy, is fostered through dynamic discourse, collaborative pair/group work, and partnerships (Wangdi, 2016). Through active engagement in pairs and groups, students were provided with opportunities to take greater responsibility for their learning and to learn from their peers.Through active engagement in pairs and groups, students take ownership of their learning, which is meaningful and retained for a longer duration (Darling-Hammond, 2017). The findings pointed out that while engaging in collaboration, students got the opportunity to listen to different views as opposed to the views shared by the teacher in the lecture method. This finding was evident particularly in the student focus groups, where they described opportunities to exchange ideas and learn from their peers.

In the process of active participation, students were perceived to develop confidence and communication skills in addition to other essential life skills, such as critical thinking, analytical skills, negotiation skills, responsibility, and interpersonal skills (Hattie, 2009; Taylor, 2007). Students' communication skills are enhanced through enrichment of vocabulary

and improvement of fluency as they interact with each other. Some students learn better from friends than from teachers as they feel more comfortable with their friends. Students' accounts also suggested that some students felt more comfortable learning from and interacting with their peers than through teacher-led instruction.

Classroom Behaviour Management Techniques

Both the findings and literature emphasised the importance of maintaining classroom behaviour and suggested ways to effectively manage it. One of the ways is to use attention grabbers. Attention grabbers are necessary tools to gain students' attention when they are seemingly distracted, or the class gets disorganised (Copland et al., 2014). In transformative pedagogy, teachers generally employ either verbal or non-verbal cues and expect students' instant response, such as "Class, class: Yes, yes", "One, two: Eyes on you", "Hocus, focus: Everybody focus", "Ready to rock: Ready to roll" and so on (Kagan & Kagan, 2009). These examples are drawn from the literature, however, the findings from the classroom observations and students' and teachers' interviews indicated that teachers also used attention grabbers as a means of regaining students' attention and refocusing them during lessons. For example, FGD4S4 noted, "To gain everyone's attention and make us focus during the lesson, my teacher uses attention grabbers."

Providing brain breaks during the lesson also helps manage classroom behaviour. Students generally sit in class for long hours listening to teachers, resulting in exhaustion and loss of attention (Barker, 2021). Frequent use of a variety of brain breaks is recommended, especially when classes are long, content is heavy or students are stressed, giving a meaningful break from the lesson. The findings suggested that brain breaks were perceived by participants as helping to energise students and maintain their focus during lessons. This finding was reflected in teacher interviews and student focus groups discussions. FGD2S1 observed that brain breaks boost and help students to remain active enabling them to concentrate on the lesson. The findings also affirmed that, irrespective of the class level, students find brain breaks useful. However, in a higher class situation, both teachers and students are occupied with the subject content in English and use brain breaks less frequently.

Giving cheers is another way to help maintain conducive classroom behaviour. Teachers generally give cheers to acknowledge students' achievement and performance (Helean, 2022), and to motivate students' participation in the class as a result of the excitement cheers induce in them (Helean, 2022; Rosa, 2022). As students are excited and acknowledged for their contribution in learning, misbehaviour in the class is reduced. The findings suggested that English teachers used cheers minimally. This is attributed to secondary school students' reluctance as they sometimes find cheers kiddish, and teachers' uneasiness in doing cheers in the secondary school context.This finding suggests that the suitability and acceptability of particular transformative pedagogy strategies may vary according to students' age and the secondary school context. While cheers may be useful for younger learners, their perceived "kiddish" nature may reduce their acceptability among some secondary students. Teachers' uneasiness in using them further suggests that the successful adoption of a strategy may depend not only on its intended pedagogical purpose but also on how appropriately it fits the learners and classroom context.

Challenges of Transformative Pedagogy Implementation

There are a few challenges associated with the implementation of transformative pedagogy by the English teachers of secondary schools. First, both literature and the findings pointed out teachers' resistance to change. The ease of use and familiarity with traditional methods, fear of failure and limited understanding of new approaches led teachers to resist change (Al-Harrasi & Al-Bulushi, 2016). In the present study, some participants specifically associated resistance with senior teachers, reporting that some senior teachers were reluctant to use transformative pedagogy. Some participants also reported instances in which senior teachers discouraged other teachers from using the pedagogy. These accounts represent participants' perceptions and experiences and should not be generalised to senior teachers as a group.

Second, completion of the syllabus poses a challenge to the teachers (Black et al., 2017). English teachers spend a lot of time covering the syllabus. This is aggravated when teachers have to pay attention to the fulfilment of the four strands of reading, writing, speaking and listening in addition to the bulky syllabus on language and literature. Covering the syllabus becomes crucial especially when there are summative board examinations which necessitate the completion of the prescribed syllabus to avoid students losing marks if questions are set on the material from the uncovered syllabus. These pressures can constrain transformative pedagogy because interactive and collaborative approaches may require additional classroom time for student discussion, group work, presentations and reflection. Consequently, teachers may perceive more teacher-directed approaches as more manageable when they are under pressure to complete the prescribed content and prepare students for examinations.

Third, the findings suggested that the teachers are not very confident in implementing transformative pedagogy. While some teachers have forgotten most aspects of the pedagogy, there are English teachers who have not attended the 2016 national level pedagogy training. A lack of follow-up by the Ministry of Education and school leaders has led to the inconsistent or non-implementation of the pedagogy. These findings provide a possible explanation for the earlier finding of declining implementation over time. The loss of knowledge about the pedagogy among some teachers, together with limited follow-up support after the initial training, may have made it difficult for teachers to sustain the practices introduced through the workshop. Thus, the decline in implementation appears to be linked not only to teachers' initial willingness to use the pedagogy but also to the continued support and reinforcement required to sustain its use.

Fourth, there is a time constraint for the implementation of transformative pedagogy (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2020). A lot of time is required for planning and preparing to implement the pedagogy. Lastly, there are concerns regarding the non-availability of resources that affect the application of transformative pedagogy (Mackay & Stockton, 2019). While transformative pedagogy does not require additional resources, findings suggested that resources such as adequate classroom space and appropriate class size are inevitable.

Strategies to Overcome the Challenges in Transformative Pedagogy Implementation

The findings indicated that participants suggested broader measures to support sustained implementation of transformative pedagogy. The strategies and suggestions were related to professional development, curriculum alignment, resource provision, and leadership support, corresponding to the challenges of limited knowledge and confidence, syllabus demands, resource constraints, and limited follow-up identified earlier. In relation to teachers' limited

confidence and the loss of knowledge about transformative pedagogy, participants emphasised the importance of continued professional development. Offering professional development courses to teachers is an effective strategy (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009) to help teachers gain deep understanding of the pedagogy, which will enable them to implement it effectively in their teaching. Participants also suggested refresher training for teachers who attended the 2016 training and training opportunities for teachers who had not received the training. These suggestions represent participants' proposed measures rather than strategies currently being implemented by the teachers. Similarly, the challenge of completing the syllabus and meeting examination requirements highlights the need to consider how transformative pedagogy can be aligned with existing curriculum requirements. Resources play an important role in the implementation of the pedagogy (Bebell & O'Dwyer, 2010). In relation to the reported resource constraints, participants identified the need for appropriate classroom space, manageable class sizes, and suitable furniture to facilitate implementation. Specific to this study, resources such as classroom size, class strength and furniture appropriate to transformative pedagogy need to be considered to enable the effective implementation of the pedagogy. At the same time, leadership support plays a vital role in the proper implementation of the pedagogy (Leithwood et al., 2004). In response to the earlier finding concerning limited follow-up by school leaders, participants highlighted the importance of leadership awareness and support for implementation. The findings suggested that school leaders need to be included in the pedagogy training and the refresher courses so that they are aware of it and can provide support and monitor its implementation in teaching. This is a proposed measure emerging from the participants' suggestions rather than evidence of a strategy currently used by teachers. Another strategy to overcome the challenges is to include the pedagogy in the curriculum of the teacher training colleges to ensure uniform and sustainable knowledge and skills training. This, together with refresher training and greater leadership involvement, is more appropriately treated as a recommendation for strengthening future implementation rather than as a strategy currently used by English teachers.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study revealed varied perceptions of the implementation of transformative pedagogy. While teachers recognised the benefits of transformative pedagogy for enhancing student engagement and critical thinking, their understanding of the concept was inconsistent. Some teachers viewed it as a broad educational philosophy, whereas others associated it with specific pedagogical techniques. The 2016 national transformative pedagogy workshop initially sparked enthusiasm, equipping teachers with valuable strategies. However, participants' retrospective accounts suggested that the extent to which these practices were sustained varied over time, possibly due to limited follow-up support. The findings also indicated that some teachers had limited confidence or had forgotten aspects of the pedagogy, while accounts of resistance among some senior teachers reflected participants' perceptions and should not be generalised to senior teachers as a group.

Despite the challenges, the study identified transformative pedagogy strategies such as group work and discussions, particularly the Round Table approach. Participants associated these strategies with opportunities for collaboration, student participation and idea sharing. Attention grabbers and brain breaks were also perceived by participants as useful for gaining students' attention and maintaining focus. The use of cheers was limited in the secondary school context, as some students perceived them as childish and some teachers felt uneasy using them. Overall, teachers recognised the potential of transformative pedagogy strategies to create a more

interactive learning environment, promote idea exchange, and develop essential skills. However, several challenges hindered its consistent application. These included inadequate understanding of transformative pedagogy, balancing it with syllabus coverage, the time required for planning and preparation, inappropriate classroom size, managing large class sizes, and limited follow-up support. Participants also reported resistance among some senior teachers, rather than establishing it as a general characteristic of senior teachers.

To create a more supportive environment for transformative pedagogy and make its implementation more vibrant, the following recommendations are proposed. The MoESD could organise refresher courses for English teachers who attended the transformative pedagogy workshop, and a full-scale training programme for those who did not participate in the workshop. The MoESD and school leaders could also provide continued follow-up and support after the training to help teachers sustain the practices introduced through the workshop. The MoESD, in collaboration with the two Colleges of Education, can explore the possibilities of incorporating transformative pedagogy strategies into the curriculum of these institutions. This collaborative effort can help ensure that pre-service teachers are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement transformative pedagogy strategies upon entering the teaching profession.

References

Al-Harrasi, A., & Al-Bulushi, Y. (2016). Factors contributing to resistance to change in pedagogical approaches. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 42*(3), 201-215.

Barker, M. M. (2021). *Brain breaks improve student behavior and focus*. Northwestern College, Master's Theses & Capstone Project.

Beauchamp, C., & Thomas, L. (2019). Shifting classroom dynamics and management in student-centered learning. *Teaching and Learning Journal, 40*(2), 201-215.

Bebell, D., & O'Dwyer, L. M. (2010). Educational outcomes and research from 1:1 computing settings. *Journal of Technology, Learning, and Assessment, 9*(1), 1-24.

Benson-Goldberg, S., & Erickson, K. (2021). *Praise in education.* Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Education.

Biesta, G. (2019). Implementing pedagogical approaches: The role of resources. *Journal of Educational Research, 48*(3), 201-215.

Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B., & William, D. (2017). Balancing curriculum content and external standards in pedagogical approaches. *Educational Policy Review, 23*(1), 20-34.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2018). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.

Brookfield, S. D. (2005). *The power of critical theory: Liberating adult learning and teaching.* Jossey-Bass.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed). Routledge.

Copland, F., Garton, S., & Burns, A. (2014). Challenges in teaching English to young learners: Global perspectives and local realities. *TESOL Quarterly, 48*(4), 738-62.

Cranton, P. (2006). Transformative learning: Meaningful learning and change. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education,* (74), 5-12.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative enquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Sage Publication.

Creswell, J. M. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publication.

Darling-Hammond, Wei, R. C., Andree, A., Richardson, N., & Orphanos, S. (2009). *Professional learning in the learning profession: A status report on staff development in the US and abroad.* National Staff Development Council

Darling-Hammond, L. (2015). Teacher education around the world: What can we learn from international practice? *European Journal of Teacher Education, 38*(1), 3-14.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). Teacher education around the world: What can we learn from international practice? *European Journal of Teacher Education, 40*(3), 291-309.

Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development.* Learning Policy Institute.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Baratz-Snowden, J. (2020). Additional time requirements for implementing new pedagogical approaches. *Journal of Teacher Education, 35*(2), 201-215.

Dorji, K., Pema Tshering, Tempa, W., & Jatsho, S. (2020). The implication of transformative pedagogy in classroom teaching: A case of Bhutan. *Journal of Pedagogical Sociology and Psychology, 2*(2), 59-68.

Dorji, T. (2020). Integration of ICT in Bhutanese school: Common obstacles and the way forward. *The Druk Journal: A Journal of Thoughts and Ideas.* ISSN 2411-6726

Gregory, G. H., & Chapman, C. (2019). *Differentiated instructional strategies*. Corwin Press.

Guskey, T., & Yoon, K. (2019). Professional development needs for implementing new pedagogical approaches. *Professional Educator, 18*(3), 55-68.

Fullan, M. G. (1993). *Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform*. Falmer Press.

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement.* Routledge.

Hattie, J. (2020). Time constraints and the incorporation of new pedagogical approaches. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 42*(2), 101-115.

Hattie, J., Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2017). *Visible learning for mathematics: What works best to optimize student learning.* Corwin.

Harwell, M., & LeBeau, B. (2010). Inquiry-based teaching in diverse classrooms: Indicators of effective practice. *Journal of Educational Research, 45*(2), 201-215.

Helean, T. (2022). *Classroom cheers*. Eastern Washington University.

Kagan, S. & Kagan, M. (2009). *Kagan cooperative learning*. Kagan Publishing.

Khedkar, D., & Nair, P. (2019). Transformative pedagogy: A paradigm shift in higher education. *3rd International Conference on Multidisciplinary Research & Practice, 4* (1), 332-337.

Learning and Development. (2023). *Brain breaks in the classroom: Active breaks and mental rest*. Retrieved https://smowl.net/en/blog/brain-breaks-in-the-classroom-active-breaks-and-mental-rest/

Leithwood, K. (2018). Involving all stakeholders in decision-making processes for effective implementation. *Community Engagement in Education, 12(*4), 150-166.

Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning.* University of Minnesota.

Levy, M. K. H., & Kerpelman, J. L. (2010). Identity process and transformative pedagogy: Teachers as agents of identity formation. *An International Journal of Theory and Research, 10*(1), 76–91.

Mackay, J., & Stockton, R. (2019). The impact of limited resources on the implementation of pedagogical approaches. *Journal of Educational Resources and Technology, 35*(2), 101-115.

Marzano, R., & Marzano, J. (2017). Challenges in facilitating active student engagement in pedagogical approaches. *Educational Psychology Review, 25*(1), 20-34.

Meyers, S. A. (2008). Using transformative pedagogy when teaching online. *College Teaching, 56*(4), 219–224. http://dx.doi.org/10.3200/CTCH.56.4.219-224

Mezirow, J. (2003). Transformative learning as discourse. *Journal of Transformative Education, 1*(1), 58-63

Ministry of Education. (2014). *Teacher human resource policy*. https;//planpolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planpolis/files/resources/bhutan_teacher_human_resource_policy.pdf

Ministry of Education. (2016). *Transformative pedagogy*. Ministry of Education.

Moore, T. C., Maggin, D. M., Thompson, K. M., Gordon J. R. Daniels, S. & Lang, L. E. (2018). Evidence review for teacher praise to improve students' classroom behavior. *Journal of Positive Interventions, 21*(1), 3-18.

Moreno, R., & Mayer, R. E. (2007). Interactive multimodal learning environments. *Educational Psychology Review, 19*(3), 309–326.

Noor, K. B. M. (2008). Case study: A strategic research methodology. *American Journal of Applied Sciences, 5*(11), 1602-1604.

Pattiasina, P. J., Saryono, D., & Mudjianto, M. (2017). Teacher's act of praise in the classroom. *International Journal of Science and Research, 6*(5), 1315-1318.

Payne, G., & Payne, J. (2004). *Key concepts in social research*. Sage Publication.

Popham, W. (2021). Support and resources for teachers in implementing pedagogical approaches. *Journal of Educational Resources and Technology, 38*(5), 301-315.

Recard, M. & Nathania, Y. H. (2021)**.** The implementation and impact of attention grabbers in young learners classrooms: A case study. *Teknosastic, 19*(1), 1-13.

Rosa, J. P. O. D. (2022). Using cheers and claps to motivate world language students. *Edutopia.*

Rose, D., & Meyer, A. (2022). Differentiating instruction and addressing individual learning gaps in pedagogical approaches. *Journal of Inclusive Education, 48*(3), 201-215.

Royal Education Council. (2016). *Royal Education Council Annual Report* 2016. Royal Education Council.

Smith, C. (2020). *Experiential learning: A handbook for education, training and coachin*g (2nd ed.). Kogan Page.

Smith, J. (2018). The teacher-centered approach: An analysis of its impact on student learning. *Journal of Education, 40*(3), 321-335.

Springer, L., Stanne, M. B., & Donovan, S. (2019). C*ooperative learning in higher education: Across the disciplines, across the academy.* Stylus Publishing.

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research* (4th ed.). Sage Publication.

Taylor, E. W. (2007). An update of transformative learning theory: A critical review of the empirical research (1999-2005). *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 2*6(2), 173-191.

Thinley, Dorji, K., Ghalley, D. M., & Tshering, D. (2021). The Impact of Kagan's Cooperative learning structures (KCLS). *Contemporary Education and Teaching Research. 2*(1), 95-100.

Timperley, H. (2019). Logistical and financial challenges of providing relevant professional development opportunities. *Journal of Educational Resources and Technology, 30*(4), 102-117.

Tomlinson, C. (2017). *Diverse student needs and adapting pedagogical approaches*. Diversity in Education, *55*(1), 78-92.

Vijayachandran, P. (2018). *Transformative pedagogy and learning.* https://www.ukessays.com/essays/education/transformative-pedagogy-and-learning-education-essay.php

Wangdi, T. (2016). *Teachers introduced transformative pedagogy.* https://kuenselonline.com/teachers-introduced-to-transformative-pedagogy/