

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This is the research study entitled “Challenges in Managing Mixed Ability Students in ELT Classes”. This part consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and operational definitions of the key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is the most advanced and powerful means of human communication. The vast knowledge in different fields of human activity is accumulated and stored by the use of language. Language teaching and learning is considered as the centre of the classroom procedures. Teaching and learning is the means of delivering and transmitting the knowledge from teacher to student and vice-versa. We know that, English is taken as world language in this contemporary phenomenon. English has been successfully promoted and has been eagerly adopted in the global linguistic market place. ELT has boomed and seen a proliferation of universities, departments, language schools, publications, conferences and all the paraphernalia. It is an international language and has become an international lingua franca for many speakers. Crystal (2003a, as cited in Harmer, 2007, p. 13) suggests that there are currently around 1.5 billion speakers of English worldwide, of whom only some 329 million are native speakers. Moreover, he writes the population growth in areas where English is a second language is about 2.5 times that in areas where it is a first language. Thus, English language has become a threat to global linguistic diversity. White, Hockley, Vandor, Jansen and Laughner (2008, p. 5) state: “English Language Teaching (ELT), also referred to as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), given the status of English as a global language, is a global phenomenon, taking place in virtually every country in the world and

being provided in a wide range of institutions or Language Teaching Organizations (LTOs)". Therefore, English language has become a common language for many speakers. The user of English is expanding day by day all over the world.

Similarly, in Nepal, English language is taught and learnt as a foreign and second language. It is being included from the very beginning to the university level in the curriculum. We know that Nepal is a multicultural, multilingual and multi-ethnic country. In such a situation, our classes have obviously full of heterogeneous learners. As a class is composed up of individuals, most of the ELT classes have mixed ability learners. Richards (2004, as cited in Valentic 2005, p. 1) says, "Every class we should ever teach is mixed ability." Similarly, Copur (2005) also believes that no two students can be the same in terms of their abilities. Therefore, mixed ability classes have the diverse learners with varied language proficiency, ability, competency, interest, aptitude and learning styles. Due to the learners' multiple intelligences, learner greatly differs in their ability. In the same classroom, some are fast learners, some are slow learners and some are of average. It shows that people express their various responses even to the same stimuli. It is really become an issue for English teachers to deal with this context.

Researches have shown that managing mixed ability students in ELT classroom is an important factor for the effective learning. Gurgenidze (2012) believes that every class is full of mixed ability. Some classes might be more multileveled than others and as a result, they are more challenging for the teachers. She further stresses that teaching in mixed ability classes is a very difficult and demanding task as it involves planning lessons which include a rich diversity of tasks corresponding to a variety of learning styles and abilities. Likewise, Bowman (1992, p. 23) mentions, "Students are very resourceful. They can create problem or generate solutions depending on how you engage and maintain their attention." It indicates that teachers are very responsible for their success in teaching and learning. Similarly, the research from Brophy and

Good (1987), shows that the time that teachers take to correct misbehavior of students is caused by poor management skills of teachers which produces lower rate of teaching and learning in the class. It indicates that the meaningful learning depends on how the teachers manage their class.

Classroom management is an important factor of every classroom which directly influences the learning environment and even creates necessary impetus for the students to learn the teaching point. In the present situation, many teachers are facing difficulties while managing mixed ability students in their ELT classes. However for a successful learning, every classroom should be managed in a very effective way. It is therefore a major responsibility for the teachers to manage the mixed ability classes and create a learning environment. It is also very important for teachers to examine the classroom issues in depth and the identification of students' management techniques that are suitable for the class.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Researches have shown that mixed ability classroom consists of learners having with different age, gender, language abilities, levels, competence, attitude, learning styles, intelligence, personality, different cultural and educational background. Thus, in mixed ability classes, teachers have to address and focus all the different qualities of the students. Because of the learner differences in the class, teachers have to tackle the problem of classroom management. Mixed ability is not a problem itself. However, many teachers have been facing so many challenges such as selecting appropriate classroom tasks, teaching methods, teaching materials and teaching techniques for the students; lack of students' participation in classroom activities; discipline problems; correction problems; making the classroom interesting; giving equal attention to all etc. In this regard, Harmer (2007, p. 127) says, "Many teachers are extremely worried about the fact that they have students in their classes who are at different levels of proficiency." In mixed ability

classes, even the experienced teachers face classroom management problems and it is really very difficult for the novice teachers to handle their classroom. In this regard, Kyriacou (1991, as cited in Merc and Subasi, 2015) states, “Even teachers with 25 years of experience can still face classroom management problems.” In such a classroom, the teaching methods, techniques and strategies that the teachers use may not be suitable for all the learners because of the learners’ mixed and different learning abilities, levels and strategies. So that teachers are not able to meet the target goals of teaching and learning. It shows that managing mixed ability students in ELT classes has become a common problem in the present scenario. Students’ having with different level of proficiency is one of the biggest problems teacher faces all over the world. Thus, classroom management is an important factor in mixed ability ELT classes. If the class is not managed, no learning takes a better place. Therefore, it is important for teachers to monitor every student and to reach their needs in a variety of ways to achieve effective teaching.

Considering all these issues related to the management of mixed ability students in ELT classroom, I have selected this topic in order to explore management of mixed ability students in ELT classes because it has become a problem for many teachers. I myself have faced this problem many times while teaching in mixed ability ELT classes. I have faced difficulty in selecting appropriate materials and teaching techniques in order to address all the learners’ needs, making the topic interesting and controlling the classroom. Therefore, I have selected this topic in order to find out the challenges of managing mixed ability students faced by secondary level ELT teachers along with the coping strategies.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of my study were as follows:

- a. To identify the challenges of managing mixed ability students in ELT classes faced by secondary level ELT teachers.

- b. To explore the ways of managing mixed ability students in ELT classes followed by secondary level ELT teachers.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions of my study were as follows:

- a. What are the challenges that the secondary level ELT teachers face while managing mixed ability students in ELT classes?
- b. What are the different ways followed by the secondary level ELT teachers to manage their mixed ability students in ELT classes?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research study has identified challenges in managing mixed ability students in ELT classes along with the coping strategies followed by teachers which provided insights into the importance of the classroom management from different perspectives. Thus, the study will shed light on the classroom management for the better learning achievements. The findings of this research will assist the ELT teachers and learners to attain a better understanding on mixed ability ELT classes. They will be made familiar with the term ‘mixed ability’, learner differences, challenges and strategies of managing mixed ability students in ELT classes. The teachers will try to find out some more challenges of teaching in multilevel classroom and also will attempt to apply different strategies in their classroom for effective teaching and learning. This research will be equally beneficial to curriculum experts, designers and textbook writers in the sense that they can utilize the findings of this research while designing curriculums, syllabuses and writing textbooks conveniently. This research study also will encourage researchers to conduct further research in the area of the study. At last, this work will give valuable ideas in teaching mixed ability students in ELT classes that will be fruitful for any ELT practitioners.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

The present study was limited to 30 secondary level ELT teachers working in private schools of Lalitpur district. The study was delimited to the management of mixed ability students in ELT classes from the teachers' perspectives. Similarly, this study was confined in collecting data through only questionnaire to teachers. This study was delimited to descriptive and statistical data analysis procedure.

1.7 Operational Definitions of the Key Terms

The key terms used in this study and their operational definitions were as follows:

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|-----------------------------|---|
| Mixed ability | - different students having with varied learning abilities, levels and strategies |
| Classroom management | - designing and maintaining a good classroom environment for the effective teaching and learning |
| Classroom discipline | - creating a safe and good classroom atmosphere where students involve comfortably in learning activities |
| Heterogeneous | - A wide variation of the students that is seen in the classroom such as age, gender, aptitude, motivation, learning abilities, personality, learning preferences, different educational, cultural and linguistic backgrounds |

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This part of research study consists of reviews of related theoretical literature and empirical literature related to mixed ability ELT classes, implications of reviewed literature and conceptual framework of the study.

2.1 Review of Related Theoretical Literature

This sub-section of the study deals with different theoretical perspectives regarding on management, classroom management, mixed ability ELT classes, learner differences, activities used for developing multiple intelligent learners in the class, challenges in managing mixed ability students in the class along with the different ways of managing strategies.

2.1.1 Management

Researches on classroom management have shown that management is a term which is very essential in each and every sector. Its great importance in education is multiplied day by day. Management generally refers to the development and maintenance of an organization using available resources. Different scholars have defined the term 'management' variously. White et al. (2008, p. 8) define, "Management is something which is fundamental to the way any organization, including any LTO, operates, survives and develops". Thus, it is an overall development of an organization. Similarly, Gardner and Miller (1999, p. 65) state: "This is a field in which commercial management techniques are adapted and applied to meet the specific and unique requirements of educational institutions." It indicates that management is the process of fulfilling the goals by adapting the various management techniques. Management is the process of organizing and creating best situations for the success of an organization where each individual can achieve their aims. As a

whole, management is an effort made by any organizations to accomplish the desired aims very effectively.

2.1.2 Management Functions

Generally, the functions which are accomplished by managing anything are called management functions. Gardner and Miller (1999, p. 66) mention: “The task of management is about operating an organizational unit in a way which makes the best use of its resources in pursuance of its goals and the goals of any governing bodies.” Therefore, management is a process of organizing and maintaining anything by using resources which are appropriate for the achievement of goals. Management operates through various functions. White et al. (2008, p. 10) classified management functions into four categories which are very useful for teachers to manage their classes. They are:

1. Planning

Planning includes deciding what has to happen in the future and producing plans to achieve intended goals. In this regard, Richards and Renandya (2010, p. 27) mention: “planning is often viewed as a key aspect of teaching a successful lesson.” Without better planning, no learning will take a better place in the class. Thus, teachers should make a good plan of the lesson before they enter the class.

2. Organizing

According to White et al. (2008), organizing function of management includes making optimum use of the resources required to enable the successful carrying out of plans. Planned activities and tasks should be organized in a good way. Therefore, teachers should organize their planning of teaching and learning for the better learning outcomes in the class.

3. Leading/Motivating

White et al. (2008, p. 10) opine this function includes employing skills in management for getting others to play an effective part in achieving plans and developing people's skills. This function of management helps teachers to present their lesson in the class, to impart the knowledge and to increase learners' involvement in the classroom activities.

4. Controlling

White et al. (2008) believe controlling function of management incorporates checking progress against plans, which may need modification based on feedback. By controlling function of management, teachers can evaluate their teaching, learning progress, learning achievements and modify the plan if it is needed.

Management is the overall development and systematic process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling. For the effective teaching and learning outcomes, teachers should have the knowledge of all these aforementioned functions of management. Teachers can implement these functions of management in the class and create a best classroom climate.

2.1.3 Classroom Management

Researches have shown that a class is full of heterogeneous learners having varied opinions, perceptions, language levels, abilities and preferences. In such a class, the teachers have to address and respect all these varieties for the successful learning outcomes. Because of these varieties, teachers are experiencing a handful of problems related to classroom management. In the present context, classroom management is an important concern of every teacher experienced or novice, old or young. White et al. (2008, p. 5) opine, "Despite this diversity, there is one unifying factor. All of these LTOS, regardless of size and context, have to be managed." It is crystal clear that the well managed classes facilitate the teaching and learning and foster the

learners' participation. Thus for the better teaching and learning, every class should be managed properly.

According to Merc and Subasi (2015), the term classroom management is used by some other terms in the language teaching arena interchangeably; 'Classroom control' and 'classroom discipline' are the most commonly used concepts to refer to what we call the management of the classroom during teaching. Prodromou (1992) defines classroom management as encompassing the decisions teachers make concerning their use of space and time; where teachers stand and who they ask questions and check understanding; the way they use their voice. Similarly, Wragg (1981, p. 7) defines classroom management as "What teachers do to ensure that children engage in the task in hand, whatever they may be." It shows that classroom management is the process where teachers maintain and organize all the activities done in the classroom by involving learners in classroom activities. Baker and Westrup (2002, p. 106) mention: "Good classroom management makes your job easier and helps students to learn better." It indicates that good classroom management fosters the learning and enhances the learners' participation. Eggen and Kauchak (cited in Campbell 1996, p. 34), mention the two basic goals of classroom management: creating the best learning environment possible and to develop students' responsibility and self-regulation.

The goal of effective classroom management is to provide a positive climate that enhances learning. Prodromou (1992) stresses the importance of the seating arrangements; board usage, nominating the students and establishing eye contact with the students on the basis of achieving classroom management. Baker and Westrup (2002) also highlight the significance of achieving good classroom management in large classrooms. They further stress the several strategies such as balancing teacher talking time and students talking time, teachers' insecurity with English, giving clear instructions, considering reasons for using the students' first language in the classroom: using consistent language; questioning techniques and dealing with students with mixed

abilities. Similarly, Hess (2001) stresses the importance of letting the students monitor their work and their progress by for example using checklists of what to do. Gardner and Miller (1999) also stress the importance of involving learners in managing their learning. This would indicate that learners are equally responsible for managing their class by themselves. From these views, it is clear that classroom management is an important concern of every class and it can be managed with the co-operation of both teachers as well as students. According to Baker and Westrup (2002, p. 107), classroom management involves:

-) Planning lessons which include variety and which meet objectives.
-) Giving clear instructions to students on what you want to them to do.
-) Setting up and monitoring student interactions in pair and group work;
-) Using teaching and learning resources;
-) Moving clearly from one phase of the lesson to the next phase;
-) Timing and balancing and learning activities;
-) Starting and finishing the lesson.

The aforementioned classroom management techniques reveal that teachers should make a good plan of the lesson before they enter to the classroom which has to include appropriate classroom activities, effective presentation of the lesson and so on. Similarly, group work and pair work should be conducted by making a good pair of students. Teachers should teach the students using various teaching and learning resources such as library, science lab, whiteboard, poster, chart paper and so on. They should clearly explain the lesson and move from one phase to next. For the effective management of the class, teachers should maintain the balance between time and learning activities which should be suitable for all the learners in the class. Teachers should start and finish the lesson by arousing interest in all the learners and making their greater participation in classroom activities from start to end phase. Therefore, classroom management is the all efforts made by teachers in the classroom for the successful learning outcomes along with the help of students. It includes

maintenance of all the classroom activities done by teachers themselves as well as by learners which greatly helps both teachers and learners to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

2.1.4 Mixed Ability ELT Classes

Mixed ability of learners is universal and we find mixed ability students in almost all classes in the world. Thus, it is natural to have different abilities and levels of students in the classroom. A class is composed of individuals consisting learners having varied nature, language levels, needs, attitude, motivation and learning experiences. Baker and Westrup (2002, p. 125) state: “Students in every class have: different language levels; different language skills; different learning speeds; different interests and different levels of confidence.” They further stress that some classes may also have a wide range of ages, so all classes are mixed ability. Educators give different explanations and definitions for mixed ability classes. Some define it as synonymous with multi-level or heterogeneous classes where students differ clearly on the learning styles, preferences and abilities. In this regard, Ur (1996) states:

Even if we rephrase the term ‘mixed-ability’ and say ‘mixed proficiency’ this still does not cover all aspects of heterogeneity as applied to a class of language learners. Learners are different from one another in all sorts of other ways that affect how they learn and need to be taught. (p. 303)

The term “mixed ability” is a broad term which includes wide range of learner differences such as learners’ various aptitude, needs, interests, language levels, language knowledge, learning strategies, educational and cultural background in the class. Every class has multiple intelligent students and they are totally different from each other. (Harmer 2008, p. 21) mentions that learners are different in terms of age, learning styles, levels, educational and cultural

background, motivation and responsibility for learning. Because of their varied nature, there are differences in the ways the learners learn too. However, teachers should treat all the students according to their varied abilities of learning and interests.

Similarly, Hess (2006) uses mixed ability classes as multilevel class. In this regard, Ur (2013) states:

The heterogeneous class is often called ‘mixed level’, but its population is inevitably mixed in more than just level of knowledge of English. The opposite is homogeneous class; all students are different, even if they have been put into groups according to ability or level. (p. 272)

Mixed ability is common in every classroom where learners have clear differences in their language levels. Valentic (2005) states: “There are differences in the level of their abilities in the receptive and productive skills, fluency and accuracy work, grammatical knowledge, size of vocabulary, command of pronunciation and so on” (p. 74). It shows that learners have the multiple abilities and they possess varied opinions even for the same learning activities. Some learners are very excellent in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, reading, writing, speaking and listening skill whereas others need a big effort for the same skill. Likewise, in the words of Ainslie (1994), mixed ability classes means classes where students differ greatly in ability, motivations for learning English, needs, interests, educational background, styles of learning, anxiety, experiences and so on. Similarly, Ur (1996) opines, ‘ability’ includes ‘potential learning ability’ not just only the immediate observable ability to perform. Thus, learners’ present proficiency may have been influenced by various other factors such as different previous opportunity for learning, higher or lower motivation. Similarly, Bill and Melinda Gates foundation (2006, as cited in Dhami, 2016), believes not only do students come from different cultural, racial and socio-economic backgrounds but some also

are formally or informally labeled gifted and talented, while others require individual education plans to address specific needs. It is true that there are high fliers and low achievers in each and every class. In such a class, the brighter ones need less support from their teachers than the other students whereas low achievers need a specific treatment in the class.

Mixed ability classrooms consist of learners with different abilities along with the different socio-economic, educational and cultural backgrounds which make them different from one another. In a nutshell, multiple intelligences of learners can be noticed in each and every mixed ability classes. Henceforth, teachers have to recognize their learners' particular gifts and talents for the successful learning outcomes.

2.1.5 Learner Differences in Mixed Ability ELT Classes

Mixed ability ELT classes are common in schools and universities throughout the world. There are different kinds of learners having different learning preferences, needs, aptitudes and learning abilities in mixed ability ELT classes. However, many teachers are unable to identify their learners' background, various intelligences, interests, learning levels and abilities so that they are unable to use appropriate teaching methods techniques, tasks and materials to the students. Without knowing learners varied nature, teachers cannot teach and treat them in good way. Ur (1996, p. 304) has mentioned some points which make the learners different in heterogeneous mixed classes. They are: language learning ability; language knowledge; cultural background; learning style; attitude to the language; mother tongue intelligence; word knowledge; learning experience; knowledge of other language; age of maturity; gender; personality; confidence; motivation; interests; independence; self-discipline and educational level. Because of the learners' different language learning ability, learners show their varied educational performance in the class. The more proficient students can achieve the learning task very quickly than others whereas low proficient students need a more support from their

teacher to complete the same task. Thus, learners are totally different from each other not only in language learning abilities but also in other aspects like cultural background, age, extra-curricular activities, gender and what not. Similarly, Ur (2013, pp. 272-274) has mentioned some factors which make the classroom mixed. They are: gender and age; knowledge; ability; personal characteristics such as personality, learning style, attitude and motivation; background and experience such as cultural and linguistic background, learning experience and culture of learning.

Mixed ability is a broad term which involves wide range of learner differences that can be noticed in the classroom. In a nutshell, students' proficiency and ability to learn language is one of the most important factors of mixed ability ELT classes. Thus, learner's different ability of language learning in the classroom is the major focus of this research study.

2.1.6 Advantages of Heterogeneous (Mixed) Classes

Though the mixed ability classes are really problematic for ELT teachers, there are so many advantages also. Thus, mixed ability classroom is not only a problem or burden for teachers but also an opportunity to explore. Ur (1996, p. 305) states: "There is educational value in the actual contact between very different kinds of people". Through their interaction, students can help and learn from each other. Similarly, Tomlinson (1999, p. 28) mentions: "Mixed-ability classes provide opportunity for teachers to develop themselves professionally, as teachers need to adopt a problem solving approach to the difficulties they face and experiment with a range of teaching approaches." Mixed ability classes are not only the subject of problem for teachers but also the means of developing themselves professionally. Teachers can develop and apply different teaching approaches while teaching in the class. Therefore, teaching a non-homogeneous group of pupils can be viewed positively because it serves as a trigger for teachers' professional growth and development as it

involves the usage of variety of approaches, teaching techniques, interaction patterns, and tasks.

Ur (2013, pp. 275-276) has given some advantages of heterogeneous classes which are stated below:

1. **Human resources:** Heterogeneous classes provide a richer pool of human resources than more homogeneous ones. Learners' individual far more life experiences and knowledge, more varied opinions, more interests and ideas can be used in classroom interaction. In this regard, Harmer (2007, p. 125) states: "In large classes there are always enough students to get interaction going, and there is a rich variety of human resources." Therefore, in mixed ability classes, students share their ideas and experiences to the class and learn from each other.
2. **Educational value:** Mixed ability classes provide an opportunity for learners to know each other's cultures, experiences and opinions so that their own knowledge can be widened. Learners from different cultures in the group help students to understand and respect each other's cultures.
3. **Cooperation:** Cooperation is very essential in mixed ability classes. By working together, students can learn more items. They can share their knowledge to each other and learn more. Teachers can use pair work and group work in the class to foster cooperation. Peer-teaching and collaboration are likely to be common, contributing to a warm and supportive classroom climate. Ur (2013, p. 55) states: "Students work together to produce a better result than they could have done on their own." Thus, working together with a mutual cooperation helps to produce more varied learning achievements in the class.
4. **Teacher development:** Teaching in mixed ability classes is very challenging and interesting task which provides greater opportunity for creativity, innovation and general professional development on the part of the teacher. By teaching such classes, teachers can know about the

methods, techniques, tasks and strategies to deal with the mixed ability students.

Similarly, Hess (2001) has presented some of the advantages in a mixed level classroom. They are:

-) There are always enough students for interaction,
-) We get a rich variety of human resources,
-) The teacher is not only pedagogue,
-) We are never bored,
-) Professional development occurs naturally. (pp. 2-4)

Teaching in heterogeneous mixed ability classes provides a better opportunity for teachers for the successful learning outcomes where each and every individual learners get an opportunity to share their more varied opinions and learn from each other. The ability of the students helps the teachers to apply different learner-centered methods inside the same classroom as well as fosters professional development.

2.1.7 Activities Used for Developing Multiple Intelligences of Learners in Mixed Ability Classes

Different intelligence predominates in different people and it is clear that there are multiple intelligent learners in mixed ability ELT classes. In such a case, learner's abilities, interests and needs are also differ from each other. Thus, the same learning activities may not be appropriate for each type of learners. Many teachers are unable to use suitable classroom activities to their students which directly effects in teaching and learning. Thus, teachers' unawareness of using an appropriate teaching and learning activities in mixed ability classes creates a big problem in the class. Focusing on learners' various intelligences, Armstrong (1994, cited in Freeman, 2007, p. 170) has mentioned some activities that fit each type of intelligence. They are:

-) Linguistic-verbal: note taking, story-telling, debates

-) Logical-mathematical: puzzles and games, logical sequential presentations, clarifications and categorizations
-) Visual-spatial: charts and grids, videos and drawing
-) Musical: singing, playing music and jazz chants
-) Bodily-kinesthetic: field trips and hands-on activities
-) Interpersonal: pair work, project work, group problem solving
-) Intrapersonal: self-evaluation, journal keeping, options for homework

Linguistic and verbal ability is the ability to learn language in special and creative ways. By using this intelligence, learners can discuss about a controversial topic, short story and any other topic. Note taking, story-telling, debates, complex grammar explanation and oratory are the activities that come under linguistic and verbal intelligence. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), logical and mathematical intelligence refers to the ability to think rationally. This intelligence includes various activities such as ordering and re-ordering, puzzles and games, logical and sequential presentations of the story or text, clarification and categorization. Richards and Rodgers (2001) opine that visual-spatial intelligence refers that ability which is used to form mental models of the world. Students having with visual intelligence need the comfort of diagrams and physical demonstration. For this type of intelligence, teachers can use activities mentioned by Freeman (2007) like completing charts, diagrams and grids, drawing, painting and decorating etc. Similarly, musical intelligence is related to singing, playing music and jazz chants. According to this ability, students can complete a gap of a text, create rhyme and write the lyrics with melody about the topic that they have read in the class. According to Freeman (2007), teachers can use field trips and hands on activities for the students having with bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. Acting, report writing about the visiting places can be used in the class. Richards and Rodgers (2001) further believe that students with interpersonal intelligence have the ability of working well with people in groups. That means students who have strong interpersonal intelligence may require a more interactive climate. Thus,

teachers can use pair work, project work and group problem solving work for this type of Intelligence. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), intrapersonal intelligence is the ability to understand oneself and apply one's talent successfully. Freeman (2007) mentions some activities that fit intrapersonal intelligence they are self-evaluation, journal keeping, doing homework, completing sentence, writing diary and so on.

Different students have different intelligences and because of such multiple intelligences of learners in mixed ability ELT classes, teachers have to design and orchestrate rich mix of effective learning activities highlighting each intelligent which makes each learner as a whole person. Teachers should apply the best teaching and learning activities in the class. They can devise various activities individually as well as in groups. They should address all the learners by applying various activities according to the level and ability of the students so that there will be effective learning achievements.

2.1.8 Challenges in Managing Mixed ability Students in ELT Classes

It becomes clear that a class is full of multilevel groups having the students with different needs and learning styles. Though this type of diversity brings many opportunities to the class, there are some problems which hinder the management of mixed ability ELT classes. Teachers face challenge while adopting an appropriate methodology to teach in a mixed ability ELT classes. Lewis (1998) as cited in (Richards and Renandya, 2010, p. 41) mentions, "There are many ways in which students can be "off-task": They fail to take part by sitting in silence, they distract other students by talking off the topic, and they provide "nonlanguage" entertainment." Therefore, in such a class, teachers have to put more effort while designing their lessons, managing the class and that may be something beyond their pedagogical skills which creates the problems in the class. Bowman (1992) believes that teacher's unawareness of the need for adopting a new approach to deal with the mixed ability class has become a huge problem in ELT classes. Hess (2001, pp. 4-6) has presented

some challenges that the teachers faced in their mixed level classroom. They are:

-) Teachers often feel out of control.
-) In large class, teachers sometimes feel trapped in the problems.
-) It is difficult to provide for individual learning style.
-) Activating the quiet student is difficult.

As Hess indicates, in a multilevel classroom, teacher often feels out of control. In such a class, classroom management becomes a formidable obstacle. The most difficult task in the mixed ability class is the problem of managing the class and checking the home assignments. As there is mixed ability of the learners, only one method is not suitable for all and it is again the challenge for ELT teachers to devise different techniques and methods according to the needs and interests of an individual student.

Some of the major challenges of mixed ability ELT classes based on Ur (1996), Hess (2006) and Copur (2005) are briefly mentioned below:

2.1.8.1 Effective learning for all

Every student has a different way of learning. Thus, some students may find the learning task very easy to deal with; others may find it difficult to understand. Since each student comes from a different family background, it may be an obstacle for teachers in ensuring effective learning for all. Hess (2006, p. 6) says, “We would like to allow each of our students to find his/her preferred and unique way of learning.” Thus, it is important for teachers to monitor every student to achieve effective teaching and learning.

2.1.8.2 Selecting appropriate tasks and materials

It is very difficult for teachers to select appropriate tasks and materials because of the mixed ability of the learners. In this regards, Copur (2005) says:

Since most language textbooks are designed for ideal homogeneous classroom environment, teachers always have to deal with the problem that students react to the textbook differently. First of all, some students find the textbook boring and very hard, whereas some find it interesting or very easy.” (p. 2)

It is clear that tasks and materials are usually rigidly aimed at certain kind of learner and may not offer teachers options for flexibility.

2.1.8.3 Participation

Ensuring participation of all the students is another problem of mixed ability ELT classes. In this regard, Ur (1996, p. 303) says, “I cannot activate them all: only a few students the more proficient and confident ones seem to respond actively to my questions”. Similarly, Hess (2006, p. 6) says, “We often feel discouraged when only few students participate and we cannot manage activating a great many others who look and out bored.” It shows that some students participate and take many turns, while others do not speak for the entire lesson. More proficient students tend to participate in class activities than the weaker ones. Thus, it is difficult for teachers to activate the introvert ones.

2.1.8.4 Discipline Problems

In mixed ability ELT classes, teachers face problems related to discipline. In these classes, teachers cannot pay attention to every student and weaker may discuss on unnecessary topics. In this regard, Hess (2006, p. 4) says, “The weaker students cannot finish the task as quickly as the strong and lose their confidence and show ill-disciplined behaviour”. Teachers find their mixed ability ELT classes more chaotic or difficult to control because bright students find the subject matter easier to grasp whereas weaker needs more assistance from the teachers. When learners feel frustrated, lose concentration and get bored, discipline problems occur in the mixed ability ELT classes.

2.1.8.5 Interest

Keeping all the students interested in mixed ability ELT classes is also a challenging task for teachers. Some students find the topic and activities interesting whereas others may get bored. Ur (1996, p. 303) says, “They get bored: I cannot find topics and activities that keep them all interested”. The tasks, activities and topics may not be interesting for all the learners in the class. Thus, the teachers of mixed ability classes find it difficult to provide content and activities that are motivating and interesting to all learners in the class.

2.1.8.6 Individual awareness

In mixed ability ELT classes, teachers are not able to devote time and attention equally to all learners. They may find it difficult to get to know and follow the progress of all learners. Ur (1996, p. 305) says, “I cannot get to know and follow the progress of all the individuals in my class: there are too many of them, and they’re all so different”. Thus, paying equal attention to each individual is quite difficult for teachers.

2.1.8.7 Correcting assignments

Most of the teachers focus on teaching and ignore the correction task. They feel overwhelmed by the marking load and also not feel equipped to deal with the errors made by a student. In this regard, Ur (1996, p. 303) says, “I cannot keep up with the marking load”. Because of that, learner’s language errors are increased which badly affect the learning outcomes. However, the work load of teachers can be reduced by involving students themselves in correcting and improving each other’s work.

2.1.9 Ways of Managing Mixed ability Students in ELT Classes

Mixed ability ELT classes demand a multiple methodologies and teaching techniques along with varied activities and tasks. It is a duty and responsibility

of teachers to analyze the classroom needs and develop an appropriate teaching techniques and methods accordingly. Stevick (1996, p. 180) uses the metaphor of a chessboard for teacher on which the teacher is “the most powerful single piece”. According to this metaphor, the teacher is the most powerful player in classroom dynamics and determines the class structure. Similarly, Tomlinson (1999, p. 28) aptly stated that ‘A secure teacher comes from away from today with important questions to puzzle about overnight and the belief that today contains insights necessary for a more effective tomorrow.’ It shows that, without enough preparation of the lesson, teachers cannot teach in better way so that there may arise management problems in the class. Therefore, teachers should have the good skill of teaching and enough preparation for the well management of mixed ability ELT classes.

The teachers of mixed ability ELT classes face many challenges while managing such classes and there are no perfect solutions of avoiding those challenges. However, there is not a single way of managing the mixed ability ELT classes; rather various scholars have suggested the various ways and methods. Hess (2006, p. 7) says, “There are ways of coping as well as functional approach and strategies that can turn a struggle in a challenging trail.” Therefore, teachers of mixed ability classes can apply various approaches and techniques while teaching in the class. Baker and Westrup (2002) believe that, teacher’s attitudes towards a large class of mixed ability students can also have a good or bad effect on their attitudes and success in learning. In this regard, Dornyei (2001) claims that it is vital for the teacher to show his\ her own positive attitude and enthusiasm for what they teach: “...enthusiasm for one’s specialization area and the ability to make this enthusiasm public rather than hiding it is one of the most important ingredients of motivationally successful teaching” (p. 33). If the teachers use negative words like ‘lazy’ or ‘stupid’ to students who may not appear to be the faster or best students in the class, there may arise problems related to motivation and discipline. Thus, teachers of mixed ability classes have to develop positive

attitudes towards learners, teaching and learning processes for the better learning achievements. They need to devise techniques, materials and activities in order to manage the stronger students, average students and weaker students. Baker and Westrup (2002) also mention the another way of managing mixed ability students in ELT classes that is asking students to move around so that different students have the chance of working with each other during the term. That also gives students the best chance of feeling involved and of receiving maximum attention and help from the teacher. They further focus on conducting Pair work and group work which is a very good way to manage large classes with mixed abilities and it can improve motivation and students' use of English as well as gives all students lots of practice times. They also focus on the project work that can be adapted to almost all levels, ages and abilities and is therefore very suited to large classes with students of mixed abilities.

Lewis (1998) describes the effective management of classroom learning to produce the desired outcomes of language learning that is for learners to use the new language for a variety of communicative purposes and contexts. Her three aspects of classroom management: (1) motivation, (2) constraints, and (3) the teacher's role can lead to classroom atmosphere and make the most of the opportunities of learning and practicing language for learners. Richards and Renandya (2010) also express the two aspects of classroom management: one being the way time is managed, and the other the managing of students' questions. It indicates one way of managing the multilevel class is to plan for the teacher to work with the different groups of students at different times during the lesson. On the other hand, a second, and unplanned, aspect of classroom management is dealing with students' spontaneous questions where teachers have to make quick decisions about whether to answer, postpone, or dismiss a question. Underpinning them all is the ability of a teacher to manage students in mixed ability ELT classes for creating opportunities for learning

and practicing language. Moreover, being based on Ur (1996, 2013) and Hess (2006), the principle strategies of managing mixed ability ELT classes are:

2.1.9.1 Variation

In the heterogeneous mixed ability ELT classes, teachers have to give time and attention to the different groups of students in a balanced way, so that the inevitable occasional neglect of individuals is fairly distributed. Teachers should vary topics, method of teaching, materials and activities so that problem related to boredom, discipline and interest can be minimized. Variety helps to generate learner interest and motivation and lessons will accommodate different learner's level, abilities and learning styles. Under variation, Ur (2013, p. 276) has included the five different topics. They are:

i. Level and pace

While giving varieties to the mixed ability ELT classes, teachers have to design the activities that can be adapted to the correct pace accepted by the class. Hess (2006, p. 9) mentions: "Doing an activity too fast or too slow can ruin the process". She further states: "Each class has different demands for pacing and only careful observation can teach us just what kind of pace to set for our students" (p. 9). Thus, teachers can sometimes use more demanding texts and tasks, at other times easier ones; and similarly work sometimes at a faster pace, sometimes more slowly.

ii. Type of classroom organization

There are different learners in mixed ability ELT classes. Some students really like working with their classmates; some like working alone; others prefer to interact directly with the teacher. Therefore, teachers have to provide opportunities for all types of interactional organization viz: teacher-led work, individual work and pair or group work.

iii. Skill

The learners in the mixed ability classes have the different learning skills and abilities. Some students are more visually oriented and prefer written material. Some are more oral aural and prefer spoken. Some function better when being active and productive and prefer speaking and writing; others are more reflective and receptive, and prefer listening and reading. Thus, it is a duty of teachers to vary the focus on listening, speaking, reading, and writing and maintain a balance of all these skills.

iv. Topic

Usually, the topics are determined by the course book so that some of the class is getting bored; in this situation, teachers can find out what they are interested in and bring in new topics to supplement the book.

v. Task

In mixed ability ELT classes, a same task that the teachers applied may not be appropriate to all the students. So that teachers should bring varieties of task for the students. Ur (2013, p. 44) mentions, “A good task is heterogeneous: that is to say it provides opportunities for students to engage with it all, or most of the different levels of proficiency within a class.” Thus, teachers should vary the tasks such as applying rules, analysis, creativity, puzzle solving, and game like challenge and so on. So the knowledge of the students will be widened.

2.1.9.2 Interest

Making the class more interesting is another way of managing the mixed ability ELT classes. The level, pace and speed that the teachers work may not be appropriate for some students. These students may then become bored and stop participation, or even start misbehaving. Thus, teachers have to make most boring topic interesting by using it in a stimulating task which reduces the endless monotony of boring lesson. Ur (2013) opines that, teachers should

“Make their students interesting, so that more advanced students would not be bored by lower-level activities.” Therefore, teachers should arouse the interest of students by providing variety to them, involving their own ideas and experiences, using open-ended tasks. So that the content will hold interest and keep everyone participating. Giving the importance on interest, Hess (2001) states: “Teaching of course, ultimately depends on the willingness of the students to learn, unless the learner takes some responsibility in the shape of active cooperation and effort, there will be no learning in spite of the efforts of excellent teachers” (p. 159). Thus, teacher should be aware of the different interests of the students to organize and to arrange activities accordingly.

2.1.9.3 Individualization

Individualization is related to students learning level and includes strategies which enable students to learn at an appropriate pace and level, even when they are doing a routine teacher-led or course book exercise. Hess (2001, p. 12) describes individualization as ‘providing opportunities for students to work at their own pace, in their own style and of topics of their choosing.’ Thus, teachers have to individualize choice in order to allow flexibility in level and pace. Ur (2013, p. 227) mentions the two different ideas to individualization: (a) start whenever teachers like (b) set time not quantity. The first idea focuses on the students’ flexibility in choosing tasks. According to this idea, students can give answer of any items they like, where they do not have to start from the first one. It helps weaker students to start from the easier items. The second idea denotes that teachers should set the time of completing tasks not a quantity. For example, instead of saying ‘Do exercise one’, teachers should tell students: ‘Do as much of exercise one as you can in 10 minutes’ so that, students can work according to their own pace and ability. Therefore, teachers should be individually aware about the students. They should allocate their time for personal interaction and also should allow learners choice in tasks or materials so that students work at their own pace. They should design or adapt

task in order to allow for different individual responses based on learners own experience, opinions or imagination.

2.1.9.4 Personalization

Personalization is a very basic aspect of task design in heterogeneous classes. Students have a vast range of different backgrounds, experiences, personalities, tasks and so on. Thus, it is important for teachers to give students the opportunities to express their ideas, feelings and experiences, though they may lack confidence or enough language knowledge. By personalizing the tasks, all students can participate voluntarily. Ur (2013) opines that teachers should ‘personalize’ activities to allow room for self-expression of different individual students. Knowing students’ personalities helps teachers to prepare and adapt materials easily in order to make them, which adds varieties to the classroom environment and establishes a positive atmosphere. Hence, teachers should know individual personalities of each student and treat them according to that.

2.1.9.5 Collaboration/Cooperation

Working together on completing a task encourages a collaborative peer teaching. Collaboration helps students learn from one another and are enabled to perform the tasks better as a result. Collaboration brings better results, regardless of their level. Brain-storming or memorizing activities are ideal for this. Focusing on collaboration, Ur (2013, p. 278) says, “Two or more students are likely to enable to think or remember more items than a single individual”. Similarly, Hess (2006, p. 10) mentions, “In large multilevel classes, collaboration is a must.” Collaboration fosters the group teaching and learning. Through collaboration, students can share and learn more varied ideas related to learning activities. Henceforth, teachers should encourage collaboration to take advantage of possibilities of peer-teaching and learning. They should encourage learners to work cooperatively and peer-teach to maintain engagement with the language material while they are unable to interact directly with every individual in the class. Collaboration helps learners develop

their learner autonomy and learn how to compromise, negotiate meaning and develop self-evaluation skills.

2.1.9.6 Open-ending/Choice and open-endless

In a heterogeneous mixed ability ELT classes, open-ended task is very important. Open-ended cues provide an opportunity for responses at various levels and allow students for expression of personal experience and opinion than the closed-ended ones. Hess (2006, p. 13) opines: “Open-ended exercises allow students many possibilities for choosing appropriate language item and gearing the exercise to their own level of competence. This is why they work so well in the large multi-level class”. She further stresses that open-ended exercises are truly a boon in the large mixed ability ELT classes, as they put everyone to work with the new language. Thus, open-ended tasks or questions (such as writing a letter, an ending of a story/book/film, or a response to a picture) have a variety of possible correct answers which allow each learner to perform at his/her own level. Open-ended tasks give students the chance to express themselves without trying to find the one and the only correct answer. Teacher should also invite the class to respond to stimulus tasks or questions through a range of possible answers rather than a single right solution.

2.1.9.7 Compulsory plus optional

Teachers of mixed ability ELT classes can manage their class by designing the compulsory ‘core’ task which is easy enough to be successfully completed by all members of the class and also an extra component which is longer and more challenging but clearly defined as optional. While there is enough extra content to keep the more advanced or faster-working students busy and challenged, then teaching and learning will be fostered greatly. Ur (1996, p. 306) states: “The strategy of compulsory plus optional tasks allows learners to decide the quantity of content and level of challenge to aim for”. Thus, teachers should add an extra task explicitly according to the classroom context.

2.1.9.8 Setting up routines

In mixed ability ELT classes, it is very important for teachers to manage the time for teaching and learning activities. Teachers have to set up the routines of taking attendance, presenting contents, checking assignments and conducting the classroom activities. Hess (2006) believes that, plan conventions and routines are used to guide us, not to blind us. Thus, teachers have to set up the proper routines of teaching and learning before they enter to the class.

2.1.9.9 Enlarging the circle

It is a duty of teachers to involve more students as much as possible in the classroom activities through various ways. In most of the cases, ‘high-fliers’ are greatly involved in the in-class activity whereas low-achievers seem quite passive and show behavioral problems. Thus, teachers should enlarge the circle by making a topic more interesting, conducting a pair and group work and making them involved in classroom activities in the mixed ability ELT classes.

Similarly, Harmer (2007, pp. 128-132) has presented the following ways of managing mixed ability classroom.

1. Working with different contents

Own way of working with students at different levels and with different needs is to provide them with different materials, tailoring what teachers give them to their individual needs so that they work at their own individual levels. Different content can be offered by allowing students to make choices about what material they are going to work with. For instance, teachers can offer them a range of possible grammar or vocabulary exercises and they can choose which ones they want to do. Teachers should encourage students to make their choice rather than having books chosen for them and giving students different content is an ideal way to differentiate between individuals.

2. Different students actions

In mixed ability ELT classes, most of the teachers face difficulty while offering students different materials. In such a situation, teachers can instead provide different activities regarding the content. Under this topic, Harmer has included five different sub-actions. They are:

i. Give students different tasks

Teachers can provide various tasks to the various students even they are teaching the same topic or lesson. Different tasks such as interpreting the information, answering the open-ended questions and responding to the multiple-choice questions can be provided to the students according to their needs and level.

ii. Give students different roles

Teachers can give different roles to the students while doing a same classroom task so that students find the classroom more interesting. Teachers can give a role-play where they have to play the different role of different position. For instance: students can play the role of police officer and explain about the witness in their own way.

iii. Reward early finishers

In mixed ability ELT classes, while students are doing the same tasks with the same content, some may well finish earlier than others. In such a case, teachers should offer such students extension tasks to reward their efforts and challenge them further. Thus, it is a good idea for teachers to make other spare activities so that first-finishing groups and pairs can be involved in. According to (Tomlinson 1995, as cited in Harmer 2007, p. 129), such tasks should be chosen with care, since asking them to do ‘the regular work, plus’ inevitably seems punitive to them.

iv. Encourage different student responses

Though teachers of mixed ability ELT classes work with the same materials and tasks, they can expect and accept different student responses.

Lindstromberg (2004, as cited in Harmer, 2007, p. 129), discusses the use of flexible tasks which make a virtue out of differences between students. A number of tasks like completion item, writing statement and others as well can be given to the students but teachers should not expect that all the students will complete all of them. Such activities are extremely appropriate when considering students of mixed ability. However, almost any time teachers should ask students to respond creatively to a stimulus, that they are allowing students for differences in such a response.

v. Identify student strengths (linguistic or non-linguistic)

As there are different students in mixed ability classes, there are also differences in their intelligences too. Some students may be very good in subject matter whereas others may be good in non-linguistic extra activities such as playing games, decorating, painting, acting and what not. Therefore, teachers should make a virtue of different student abilities including tasks which do not necessarily demand linguistic brilliance but instead allow students to show off other talents they have. Students who are good at art, for example, can lead the design of a poster or wall chart. If students have special knowledge of contemporary music, teachers can ask them to select pieces to be played while group work takes place. These examples are ways of giving individual students a chance to be 'best' at something, even where they might be weaker, linguistically than some of their colleagues. Thus, teachers should identify the student's linguistic or non-linguistic strengths.

3. Teacher's role in different student actions

In a mixed ability ELT class, teachers are whether working with the students of big group or the smaller groups, they should treat different students differently.

Students may possess different reactions even to the same learning task in the class. In such a case, teachers should treat the students differently respecting all of them. Harmer (2007) has mentioned three sub-techniques under this topic.

They are:

i. Responding to students

Teachers frequently have to respond to students, giving them feedback about how they are doing, or acting as a resource or tutor in the period of their classroom activities. In such circumstances, teachers have to tailor their multiple abilities. Some students are more sensitive than others, so that teachers should correct them with more care than their more robust colleagues. Teachers should help those students who are experiencing difficulty while clearing up some problems. Teachers should correct some language use, or help them to organize information logically. Thus, responding flexibly to students is one of the main aspects of differentiation. However, teachers shouldn't ignore or exclude any students while spending time with particular group.

ii. Being inclusive

In a mixed ability classroom, there is a great possibility of students' disengagement in the classroom activities. If the teacher spends a lot of time with the higher-level students in a class, then the less linguistically able students may feel that they are being ignored and become unmotivated as a result. On the other hand, if the teachers spend all the time with low-achievers, then the higher-level students may feel neglected and unchallenged so that they may quickly lose interest in the class. Thus, the skill of a mixed ability teacher is to draw all of the students into the lesson. Teachers should work at a level that all of the students are comfortable with. They should include and engage everyone in the class equally.

iii. Flexible grouping

Grouping the students in mixed ability ELT classes is one of the best ways of managing the class. Appropriate grouping arrangements really boost the learner's motivation and enthusiasm in the class. Teachers should group students flexibly for a number of tasks. Sometimes, teachers should put students in different groups so that each group can do different tasks. Teachers should group students so that different groups can read different texts. At other times, teachers should put students at different levels in the same group so that the weaker students will benefit from working with students at a higher linguistic level and higher-level students will gain insights about the language.

4. Realistic mixed-ability teaching

Teachers of mixed ability ELT classes should be realistic while dealing with the students in the class. Planning for significant differentiation in mixed ability ELT classes is more daunting prospect. Teachers can differentiate between individuals on the basis of physical situation in which their learning takes place. Teaching in overcrowded classrooms creates difficulty while setting up different corners in the room where different students can go to perform different tasks. Likewise, school with well-stocked self-access centre can provide individual learning programs. Teachers should recognize the need for differentiation being a realistic about how they can achieve it and how much differentiation they can achieve. For instance, it is much easier, logistically for teachers to gauge their response to individual based on their ability because responding differently demands great sensitivity to the class.

These all different classroom strategies help teachers to bring variety in the class. Therefore, the chance of being out of track in the class will decrease.

2.2 Review of Empirical Literature

There are several studies that have been carried out in the field of mixed ability ELT classes and I have gone through some of them. An attempt has been made here to review some of the following related previous studies.

Bhandari (2015) in his research on “Large Mixed ELT Classes and the Challenges Faced by Teachers” aimed to identify the existing situation of large mixed ELT classes and the challenges faced by the teachers in managing those classes’ interms of physical and pedagogical aspect. The research tools he used were questionnaire and checklist to the teachers. He used twelve secondary level English teachers of Nawalparasi district. He found that, majority of the teachers did not have better physical infrastructures. However, they were good at taking responsibility in their duties. There seemed some kind of superiority and inferiority nature among the experienced and novice teachers.

Similarly, Adhikari (2015) in his research on ‘Preferred Teaching Learning Activities of Mixed Ability Students in Large ELT Classroom’ aimed to find out the preferences of mixed ability students on teaching learning activities in ELT classroom and to suggest some pedagogical implications based on the findings of study. He used forty secondary level grade ten students of the Kathmandu. He used questionnaire and checklist as a tool of data collection. Purposive non-random sampling procedure was used in order to select the sample of the study. He concluded that, majority of the students preferred to get an opportunity to speak with teacher in the classroom and correction of the errors.

Joshi (2013) carried out a research on “Perceptions and challenges of English Language Teachers in Mixed Ability Classroom”. The main objectives of the study were to identify English language teachers perceptions towards mixed ability classroom and to explore the challenges faced by EFL teachers in mixed ability classroom along with some pedagogical implications based on the findings of the study. He used forty secondary level English language teachers

of Kanchanpur district. He used questionnaire as a tool of data collection. He concluded that, activate all the students in mixed ability classroom was challenging to teachers and mixed ability classrooms were complex as well as time consuming.

Humaidi and Shammakhu (2015) carried out a study on “Challenges Facing EFL Teachers in Mixed Ability Classes and Strategies used to overcome” in Oman, with the objectives of investigating the challenges faced by teachers in grade five mixed ability classes, strategies that the teachers use in order to alleviate and overcome those challenges. Altogether 180 teachers were sampled for the study using questionnaire as a major tool for the data collection. The findings showed that, both male and female teachers faced the similar challenges and there was no significant difference between them in applying different strategies such as need analysis, teaching and learning, classroom management, materials and evaluation. It also indicated that, in order to cope with the challenges, teachers tried to follow different strategies; most of them are in moderate and low level use by EFL teachers.

Merc and Subasl (2015) carried out a research on “Classroom Management Problems and Coping Strategies of Turkish Student EFL Teachers”. The samples of this study were 4th year students studying at Anadolu University ‘Faculty of Education English Language Teaching Department’ who were enrolled in the “Teaching Practicum” course as part of their graduation requirement. The objectives of this study were to find out the classroom management problems that EFL students experience throughout their teaching experience and to document the sources of the classroom management strategies they use to deal with these problems with the help of students’ own reflections on their experiences. The results of the study revealed that students in the school practicum lessons were faced with various problematic behaviors of the students such as uninterested, lazy, noisy, naughty, hyperactive students and students’ quarreling with each other, talking without permission and walking around the class. The result also showed that there were three sources

of coping strategies, namely the methodology sources, cooperating teachers and previous teachers of the participants for effective classroom management.

Another study conducted by Svard (2006) studied on “The Challenge of Mixed-ability Classes: How Should Upper Secondary English Teachers Work in order to Help the Weaker Students”. The objective of this study was to find out how upper secondary English teachers should work in order to reach the weaker students. She used three upper secondary English teachers as a sample of the study and interview was used as a tool of data collection. According to the findings from the interviews, the best way of working with weaker students was through ability grouping. The most important factors according to the teachers were: a good atmosphere, clear instructions, structure and setting routines.

These all aforementioned review of empirical literature has a great contribution to accomplish this research study.

2.3 Implications of the Review for the Study

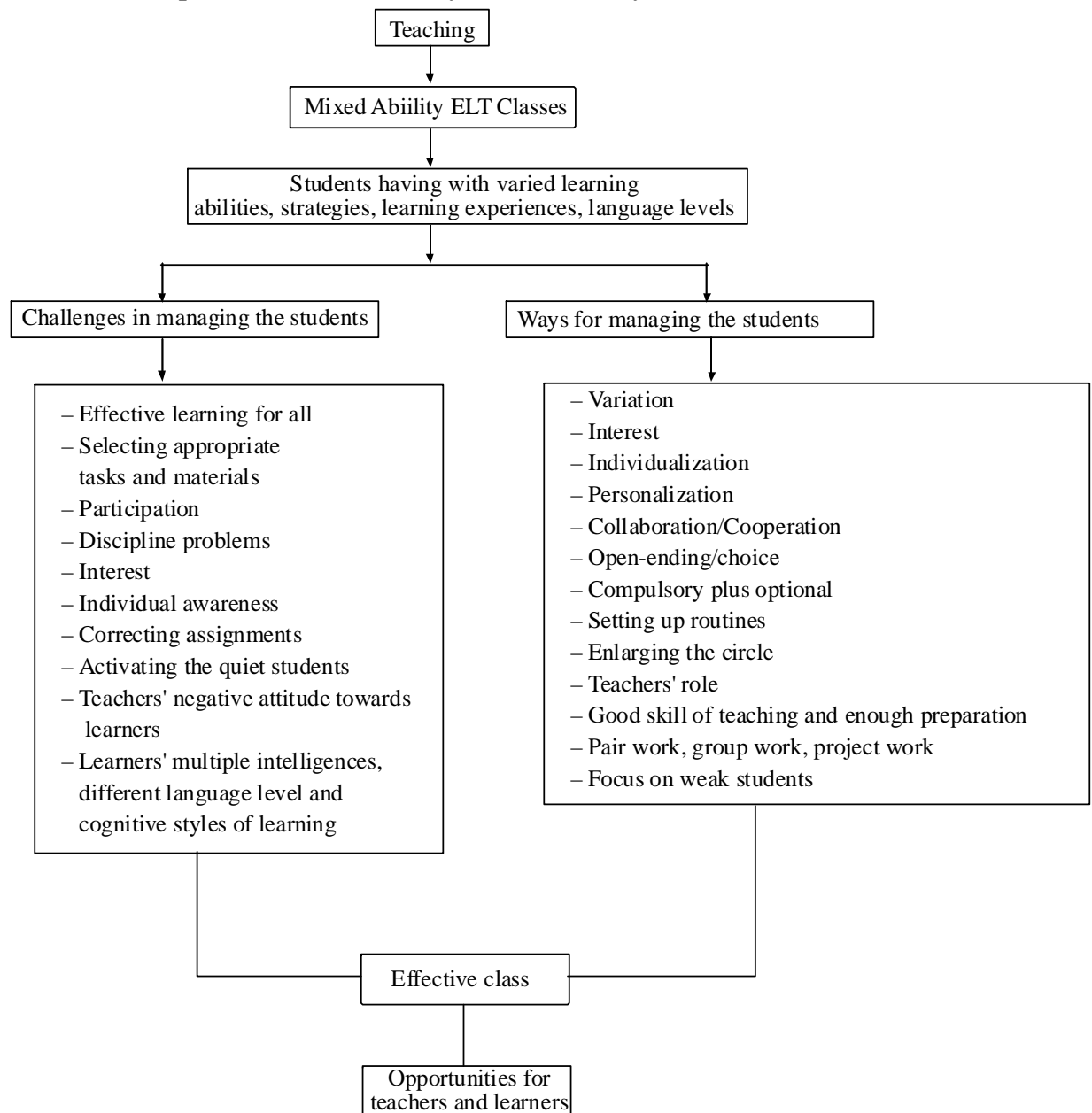
The literature that I have reviewed has been carried out with different objectives, methodology and research questions. The reviewed literature helped me to update myself with research process and methodological tools which are very beneficial to my research study. The literature which has been reviewed in my study provided me a theoretical grounding on mixed ability ELT classes. From (Ur, 1996, 2013), Hess (2001, 2006), Ainslie (1994) and Valentic (2005), I knew about the mixed ability ELT classes. The major challenges mentioned by Ur (1996) and Hess (2001, 2006) such as ensure effective learning for all, make the classroom interesting, correction of written assignments, selection of appropriate tasks and materials, ensure participation of all learners, provide individual learning style, activate the quiet student and discipline related problems provided me a necessary information and efforts to tackle with such challenges. Similarly, the research study conducted by Svard (2006), Humaidi and Shammakhu (2015), Merc and Subasl (2015), also provided me precious

information on classroom management problems along with the coping strategies.

All the reviewed previous research studies provided me the concept of management, management function, classroom management, mixed ability ELT classes, its challenges along with the various coping strategies. The researchers of these reviewed studies have used questionnaire, checklist and interview as a data collection tool. In this research study also, I used questionnaire to teachers for data collection. Thus, the review of related literature has a direct implication to my research work.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of my research study was as follows:



CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

The methods and procedures of my research study were mentioned below:

3.1 Design and method of the Study

Research design is a detailed outline of how an investigation will take place. A research design should include how data is to be collected, what instruments will be employed, how these are used and intended means for analyzing collected data. Thus, the research design of my study was survey research design. It is one of the most commonly used methods of investigation in educational researches which may range from small scale to large scale investigation. Kerlinger (1978, cited in Kumar, 1999, p. 11) defines, “The survey research is a kind of research which studies large and small population or universe by selecting and studying sample chosen from the population to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelationship of social and psychological variables.” Similarly, Richards and Lockhart (2010, p. 10) state: “Surveys and questionnaire are useful ways of gathering information about affective dimensions of teaching and learning such as beliefs, attitudes, motivation, and preferences, and enable a teacher to collect a large amount of information relatively quickly.” Thus, Surveys are very useful to collect large data in a short period of time.” Nunan (2010, p. 140) mentions that, the main purpose of a “survey is to obtain a snapshot of conditions, attitudes, and events at a single point of time.” Survey research helps to obtain a wide range of information.

Therefore, I had gone through the following steps of conducting surveys mentioned by Nunan (2010, p. 141)

-) Step 1: Define objectives
-) Step 2: Identifying target population

-) Step 3:Literature review
-) Step 4:Determine sample
-) Step 5:Identifying survey instruments
-) Step 6:Design survey procedures
-) Step 7:Identify analytical procedures
-) Step 8:Determine reporting procedure

Furthermore, survey is one of the best methods used in educational research studies. It is mainly carried out to find out people's attitudes, opinions and the specified behaviour on certain issues, phenomena, events and situations. I applied survey research by building a good rapport with the school administrations and ELT teachers of selected schools to obtain the objectives of my research study.

3.2 Population, Sample and Sampling Strategy

The population of this research study was all the secondary level ELT teachers of Lalitpur district. The sample of the study was thirty secondary level ELT teachers working in private schools of Lalitpur district. I applied non- random purposive sampling procedure in this research study to fulfill the objectives of the study with comfortability of access to teachers for collecting data.

3.3 Study Area/Field

The research area of this study was Lalitpur district and secondary level ELT teachers working in private schools. The field of the study was related to challenges in managing mixed ability students in ELT classes. I selected thirty secondary level ELT teachers working in private schools of Lalitpur district using non-random purposive sampling procedure.

3.4 Data Collection Tools and Techniques

I used questionnaire as a tool for collecting data in this research study. I administered five point likert scale and open-ended questions to my samples. In

the likert scale, there were statements regarding on the challenges and ways of managing mixed ability students in ELT classes where respondents were required to put their responses such as ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘undecided’, ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’. Similarly, the open-ended questions were related to the challenges and ways of managing mixed ability students in ELT classes where respondents had to put their own views according to the questions provided to them. These tools were useful for the researcher to meet the objectives of the study.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

There are several steps to be done for collecting data and I followed certain procedures in this research study. So, at first, I visited the selected schools of Lalitpur district. After that, I explained the purpose of visit; asked for permission to carry out the research to the authority. After getting permission, I consulted the ELT teachers of selected schools and explained the purpose of the research study. Then, I administered two sets of questionnaire (five point likert scale and open-ended questions) and requested respondents to complete it. After collecting the data, I thanked the concerned school authorities and respondents for their great support and co-operation to accomplish this research study.

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedures

After collecting data, I analyzed the qualitative data in a narrative way with descriptions and quantitative data were interpreted with the help of simple statistical tools like table in order to find out the conclusion.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Analysis of Data and Interpretation of Results

This part of research study presents analysis and interpretation of the data. The data collected from the 30 secondary level English language teachers were presented, analyzed and interpreted in order to find out the results. In this study, respondents were selected using non- random purposive sampling procedure to fulfill the objectives of the study. Questionnaire was used as a tool of collecting data in this research study.

4.1.1 Analysis of Data Collected through Likert Scale Questionnaire

A set of questionnaire was distributed to the selected secondary level English language teachers in order to find out the challenges and ways of managing mixed ability students in ELT classes. The questionnaire was based on the five point likert scale. Likert scale consisted statements regarding on the challenges and ways of managing mixed ability students in ELT classes where respondents were required to put their responses like ‘strongly agree’, ‘agree’, ‘undecided’, ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’. The collected data were analyzed and interpreted. The following section consists of the analysis of the data found in the study.

i. Challenges in Managing Mixed Ability Students in ELT Classes

This part of questionnaire consisted of a set of statements related to the challenges of managing mixed ability students in ELT classes faced by the selected secondary level English language teachers. The data obtained from the teachers are analyzed and interpreted separately below:

4.1.1.1 Teaching in Mixed Ability ELT Classes as a Difficult and Demanding Task

In response to the statement '*Teaching in mixed ability ELT classes is a very difficult and demanding task*', I got the following different data from the secondary level English teachers which are given in the table 1.

Table 1
Teaching in Mixed Ability ELT Classes as a Difficult and Demanding Task

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Strongly Agree | 9 | 30% |
| Agree | 12 | 40% |
| Undecided | – | – |
| Disagree | 3 | 10% |
| Strongly Disagree | 6 | 20% |

The above table shows that out of 30 secondary level English language teachers, almost half of the teachers (i.e.40%) *agreed* to the statement that *teaching in mixed ability ELT classes is a very difficult and demanding task*. Similarly, only some of the teachers (i.e.30%) *strongly agreed* and a few teachers (i.e.10%) *disagreed*, to this statement. These responses indicate that teaching in mixed ability classes is difficult and demanding task.

4.1.1.2 Difficulty in Devising Various Tasks, Materials and Techniques

In response to the statement '*It is very difficult to devise different techniques, appropriate tasks and materials for the learners in mixed ability ELT classes*', I got the following different data from the teachers which are given in table 2.

Table 2

Difficulty in Devising Various Tasks, Materials and Techniques

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 12 | 40% |
| Agree | 15 | 50% |
| Undecided | – | – |
| Disagree | 3 | 10% |
| Strongly Disagree | – | – |

The table above shows that out of the total respondents, half of the teachers (i.e. 50%) *agreed* to the statement that *it is very difficult to devise different techniques, appropriate tasks and materials for the learners in mixed ability ELT classes*. Likewise, almost half of the teachers (i.e. 40%) *strongly agreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 10%) *disagreed* to this statement. These responses indicate that devising various tasks, materials and techniques is difficult in mixed ability ELT classes.

4.1.1.3 Teacher’s Negative Attitudes towards Learners and their Unawareness of Adopting New Approach

Regarding the statement, ‘*Teacher’s negative attitude towards learners as well as their unawareness of the need for adopting new approach is a major problem in mixed ability classes*’, I got the following different data from the teachers which are presented in the table below:

Table 3

Teacher’s Negative Attitudes towards Learners and their Unawareness of Adopting New Approach

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 18 | 60% |
| Agree | 3 | 10% |
| Undecided | 3 | 10% |
| Disagree | 6 | 20% |
| Strongly Disagree | – | – |

From the table above, it is clear that among the total respondents, the majority of the teachers (i.e. 60 %) *strongly agreed* to the statement that *teacher's negative attitudes towards learners as well as their unawareness of adopting new approach is a major problem in mixed ability classes*. Similarly, only some of the teachers (i.e. 20%) *disagreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 10%) were *undecided* to this statement. These responses indicate that teacher's negative attitudes towards learners as well as their unawareness of adopting new approach creates a problem in mixed ability ELT classes.

4.1.1.4 Difficulty in Making Students' Participation

Regarding the statement, '*It is difficult to make all the students' participation in mixed ability in ELT classes*', I got the following different data from the respondents which are given in the table 4.

Table 4
Difficulty in making students' participation

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 6 | 20% |
| Agree | 12 | 40% |
| Undecided | 4 | 13.33% |
| Disagree | 3 | 10% |
| Strongly Disagree | 5 | 16.67% |

The table above clearly shows that among the total respondents, almost half of the teachers (i.e. 40%) *agreed* to the statement that *making all the students' participation in mixed ability ELT classes is difficult*. Likewise, only some of the teachers (i.e. 20%) *strongly agreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 10 %) *disagreed* to this statement. These responses indicate that teachers face difficulty in making all the students' participation in mixed ability ELT classes.

4.1.1.5 Learners' Disinterest and Discipline Problem in the Class

In response to the statement, '*Learners in my class are not interested towards learning activities and showed disciplined problems*', I got the following data which are presented in table 5.

Table 5
Learners' Disinterest and Discipline Problems in the Class

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | – | – |
| Agree | 9 | 30% |
| Undecided | – | – |
| Disagree | 17 | 56.67% |
| Strongly Disagree | 4 | 13.33% |

The above table shows that out of total respondents, majority of the teachers (i.e. 56.67%) *disagreed* to the statement that *learners in their classes were not interested towards learning activities and showed disciplined problems*.

Similarly, only some of the teachers (i.e. 30%) *agreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 13.33%) *strongly disagreed* to this statement. These responses indicate that majority of the teachers make their ELT classes interesting so that students are interested towards learning activities.

4.1.1.6 Correcting Assignment as a problem

In response to the statement '*It is difficult to correct daily assignments of students because of the time constraints in mixed ability ELT classes*', I got the following different data from the secondary level ELT teachers which are given in table 6.

Table 6
Correcting Assignment as a Problem

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 3 | 10% |
| Agree | 18 | 60% |
| Undecided | 4 | 13.33% |
| Disagree | 5 | 16.67% |
| Strongly Disagree | – | – |

The above table clearly shows that among the total respondents, majority of the teachers (i.e. 60%) to the statement that *they were facing difficulty in correcting daily assignments of students because of the time constraints in mixed ability ELT classes*. Similarly, only some of the teachers (i.e. 16.67%) *disagreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 10%) *strongly agreed* to this statement. From this discussion, it becomes clear that majority of the teachers take correcting assignment as a problem in mixed ability ELT classes.

4.1.1.7 Difficulty in Paying Equal Attention and Ensuring Effective Learning for All

Regarding the statement, *‘I feel difficulty in paying equal attention to each individual and also ensuring effective learning for all,’* I got the following data from the ELT teachers which are given in table 7.

Table 7
Difficulty in Paying Equal Attention and Ensuring Effective Learning for All

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 3 | 10% |
| Agree | 19 | 63.33% |
| Undecided | – | – |
| Disagree | 8 | 26.67% |
| Strongly Disagree | – | – |

From the table above, it is clear that among the total respondents, the majority of the teachers (i.e. 63.33%) *agreed* to the statement that *they are facing difficulty in paying equal attention to each individual and also ensuring effective learning for all*. In the same way, only some of the teachers (i.e. 26.67%) *disagreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 10%) *strongly agreed* to this statement. It indicates that majority of the teachers face difficulty in paying equal attention to each individual and also ensuring effective learning for all the students in the class.

4.1.1.8 Learner’s Multiple Intelligences, Language Levels and Cognitive Styles of Learning as a Problem

In response to the statement, ‘*Learner’s multiple intelligences, different language levels and cognitive styles of learning create a big problem in mixed ability ELT classes*’, I got the following data from the teachers which are presented in table 8.

Table 8
Learner’s Multiple Intelligences, Language Levels and Cognitive Styles of Learning as a Problem

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 14 | 46.67% |
| Agree | 4 | 13.33% |
| Undecided | 3 | 10% |
| Disagree | 6 | 20% |
| Strongly Disagree | 3 | 10% |

The above table clearly shows that among the total respondents, almost half of the teachers (i.e. 46.67%) *strongly agreed* to the statement that *learner’s multiple intelligences, different language levels and cognitive styles of learning create a big problem in mixed ability ELT classes*. Likewise, only some of the teachers (i.e. 20%) *disagreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 10%) were *undecided* to this statement. These responses indicate that almost half of the teachers take

learner's multiple intelligences, different language levels and cognitive styles of learning as a big problem in mixed ability ELT classes.

4.1.1.9 Difficulty in Dealing with quiet and weak students

In response to the statement '*It is very difficult to deal with the quiet and weak students in the class*', I got the following different data from the secondary level ELT teachers which are presented in table 9.

Table 9
Difficulty in Dealing with Quiet and Weak Students

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 8 | 26.67% |
| Agree | 16 | 53.33% |
| Undecided | – | – |
| Disagree | 6 | 20% |
| Strongly Disagree | – | – |

The above table shows that among the total respondents, majority of the teachers (i.e. 53.33%) *agreed* to the statement *that they are facing difficulty in dealing with the quiet and weak students in the class*. Similarly, only some of the teachers (i.e. 26.67%) *strongly agreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 20%) *disagreed* to this statement. These responses indicate that majority of the teachers face difficulty in dealing with the quiet and weak students in the class.

4.1.1.10 Facing Problems while Managing the Class

In response to the statement, '*I do not feel any problems while managing mixed ability ELT classes*', I got the following different data from the respondents which are presented in table 10.

Table 10
Facing Problems while Managing the Class

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | – | – |
| Agree | 6 | 20% |
| Undecided | 3 | 10% |
| Disagree | 7 | 23.33% |
| Strongly Disagree | 14 | 46.67% |

From the table above, it becomes clear that among the total respondents, almost half of the teachers (i.e. 46.67%) *strongly disagreed* to the statement that *they are not facing any problems while managing mixed ability ELT classes*. In the same way, only some of the teachers (i.e. 23.33%) *disagreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 10%) were *undecided* to this statement. It indicates that almost half of the teachers face problems while managing mixed ability ELT classes.

4.1.1.11 Mixed Ability as an Opportunity for Teachers

In response to the statement, ‘*Mixed ability is not a problem or burden for teachers but also an opportunity to explore*’, I got the following data from the secondary level ELT teachers which are presented in table 11.

Table 11
Mixed Ability as an Opportunity for Teachers

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 10 | 33.33% |
| Agree | 15 | 50% |
| Undecided | 5 | 16.67% |
| Disagree | – | – |
| Strongly Disagree | – | – |

The above table clearly shows that among the total respondents, half of the teachers (i.e. 50%) *agreed* to the statement that *mixed ability is not a problem or burden for teachers but also an opportunity to explore*. Likewise, only some

of the teachers (i.e. 33.33%) *strongly agreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 16.67%) were *undecided* to this statement. These responses indicate that mixed ability is not a problem or burden for teachers but also an opportunity to explore.

ii. Ways of Managing Mixed Ability Students in ELT classes

This part of questionnaire consisted of a set of statements related to the ways of managing mixed ability students in ELT classes followed by the selected secondary level ELT teachers in their classes. The data obtained from the teachers are analyzed and interpreted separately below:

4.1.1.12 Teachers' Good Skill of Teaching and Enough Preparation for the Well Management of the students

Regarding the statement, '*The teacher should have the good skill of teaching and enough preparation for the well management of students in mixed ability classes*', I got the following different data from the secondary level ELT teachers which are given in table 12.

Table 12

Teachers' Good Skill of Teaching and Enough Preparation for the Well Management of the Students

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 27 | 90% |
| Agree | 2 | 6.67% |
| Undecided | – | – |
| Disagree | 1 | 3.33% |
| Strongly Disagree | – | – |

The above table shows that out of total respondents, almost all teachers (i.e. 90%) *strongly agreed* to the statement that *teachers should have the good skill of teaching and enough preparation for the well management of students in mixed ability classes*. Similarly, a few teachers (i.e. 6.67%) *agreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 3.33%) *disagreed* to this statement. It indicates that teachers

should have the good skill of teaching and enough preparation for the well management of students in the class.

4.1.1.13 Pair Work and Group Work in Mixed Ability ELT Classes

In response to the statement, '*Pair work and group work is a very good way to manage ELT classes with mixed abilities*', I got the following different data from the teachers which are given in table 13.

Table 13
Pair Work and Group Work in Mixed Ability ELT Classes

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 3 | 10% |
| Agree | 25 | 83.33% |
| Undecided | – | – |
| Disagree | 2 | 6.67% |
| Strongly Disagree | – | – |

The above table clearly shows that among the total respondents, most of the teachers (i.e. 83.33%) *agreed* to the statement that *pair work and group work is a very good way to manage ELT classes with mixed abilities*. Likewise, a few teachers (i.e. 10%) *strongly agreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 6.67%) *disagreed* to this statement. These responses indicate that most of the teachers take pair work and group work as a very good way to manage ELT classes with mixed abilities.

4.1.1.14 Devising Various Techniques, Tasks and Materials as a Best Way of Managing the Class

In response to the statement, '*A best way of managing mixed ability ELT classes is to devise various techniques, tasks and materials to the learners for the same content*', I got the following data from the teachers which are given in table 14.

Table14
**Devising Various Techniques, Tasks and Materials as a Best Way of
Managing the Class**

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 11 | 36.67% |
| Agree | 16 | 53.33% |
| Undecided | – | – |
| Disagree | 3 | 10% |
| Strongly Disagree | – | – |

The table above clearly shows that out of total respondents, majority of the teachers (i.e. 53.33%) *agreed* to the statement that *devising various techniques, tasks and materials to the learners for the same content is a best way of managing mixed ability ELT classes*. Similarly, only some of the teachers (i.e. 36.67%) *strongly agreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 10%) *disagreed* to this statement. It indicates that devising various techniques, tasks and materials to the learners for the same content is a best way of managing mixed ability ELT classes.

4.1.1.15 Giving more Focus on Weak Students

Regarding the statement, ‘*I give more focus on weak students than the brighter ones in my mixed ability ELT classes*’, I got the following different data which are given in table 15.

Table15
Giving more Focus on Weak Students

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 9 | 30% |
| Agree | 20 | 66.67% |
| Undecided | – | – |
| Disagree | 1 | 3.33% |
| Strongly Disagree | – | – |

The above table shows that out of total respondents, majority of the teachers (i.e. 66.67%) *agreed* to the statement that *they are giving more focus on weak students than the brighter ones in their mixed ability ELT classes*. Likewise, only some of the teachers (i.e. 30%) *strongly agreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 3.33%) *disagreed* to this statement. These responses indicate that majority of the teachers give more focus on weak students than the brighter ones in their ELT classes.

4.1.1.16 Teaching through Project Work and Collaboration

In response to the statement, ‘*Teaching through project work and collaboration helps teachers to manage the mixed ability students in ELT classes*’, I got the following different data from the respondents which are given in table 16.

Table 16
Teaching through Project Work and Collaboration

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 10 | 33.33% |
| Agree | 18 | 60% |
| Undecided | – | – |
| Disagree | 2 | 6.67% |
| Strongly Disagree | – | – |

The above table shows that out of total respondents, majority of the teachers (i.e. 60%) *agreed* to the statement that *project work and collaboration help teachers to manage the mixed ability students in ELT classes*. Similarly, only some of the teachers (i.e. 33.33%) *strongly agreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 6.67%) *disagreed* to this statement. It indicates that project work and collaboration help teachers to manage the mixed ability students in ELT classes.

4.1.1.17 Textbook as a Best Tool to Deal the Students

In response to the statement, '*Textbook is a best tool to deal the mixed ability ELT classes with mixed abilities*', I got the following data from the respondents which are presented in table 17.

Table 17
Textbook as a Best Tool to Deal the Students

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | – | – |
| Agree | 3 | 10% |
| Undecided | 9 | 30% |
| Disagree | 14 | 46.67% |
| Strongly Disagree | 4 | 13.33% |

The above table shows that out of total respondents, almost half of the teachers (i.e. 46.67%) *disagreed* to the statement that *textbook is a best tool to deal the mixed ability ELT classes with mixed abilities*. Likewise, only some of the teachers (i.e. 30%) were *undecided* and a few teachers (i.e. 10%) agreed to this statement. These responses indicate that textbook is not a best tool to deal the mixed ability ELT classes with mixed abilities.

4.1.1.18 Making the Classroom Interesting and Enlarging the Circle

In response to the statement, '*A best way of managing the mixed ability ELT classes is to make the classroom more interesting as well as enlarge the circle as much as possible*', I got the following different data from the respondents which are presented in table 18.

Table18

Making the Classroom Interesting and Enlarging the Circle

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 8 | 26.67% |
| Agree | 18 | 60% |
| Undecided | 3 | 10% |
| Disagree | 1 | 3.33% |
| Strongly Disagree | – | – |

The above table clearly shows that among the total respondents, majority of the teachers (i.e. 60%) *agreed* to the statement that *making the classroom more interesting as well as enlarging the circle as much as possible is a best way of managing the mixed ability ELT classes*. In the same way, only some of the teachers (i.e. 26.67%) *strongly agreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 3.33%) *disagreed* to this statement. These responses indicate that making the classroom more interesting as well as enlarging the circle is a best way of managing the mixed ability ELT classes.

4.1.1.19 Awareness of Teachers about the Students and their Individual Personalities

In response to the statement, '*Teachers of mixed ability ELT classes should be individually aware about the students and they should know their students' individual personalities*', I got the following data from the respondents which are presented in table 19.

Table 19

Awareness of Teachers about the Students and their Individual Personalities

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 15 | 50% |
| Agree | 14 | 46.67% |
| Undecided | – | – |
| Disagree | 1 | 3.33% |
| Strongly Disagree | – | – |

The above table shows that among the total respondents, half of the teachers (i.e. 50%) *strongly agreed* to the statement that *teachers should be individually aware about the students and they should know their students' individual personalities*. Similarly, almost half of the teachers (i.e. 46.67%) *agreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 3.33%) *disagreed* to this statement. These responses indicate that teachers should be individually aware about the students and they should know their students' individual personalities in the class.

4.1.1.20 Providing Compulsory and Extra Task for the Students

In response to the statement, '*Providing compulsory as well as an extra task is a best way to deal with the students in mixed ability classes*', I got the following different data from the respondents which are given in table 20.

Table 20
Providing Compulsory and Extra Task for the Students

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 3 | 10% |
| Agree | 10 | 33.33% |
| Undecided | 14 | 46.67% |
| Disagree | 3 | 10% |
| Strongly Disagree | – | – |

The above table shows that out of total respondents, almost half of the teachers (i.e. 46.67%) were *undecided* to the statement that *providing compulsory as well as an extra task is a best way to deal the students in mixed ability classes*. Similarly, only some of the teachers (i.e. 33.33%) *agreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 10%) *disagreed* to this statement. It indicates that almost half of the teachers do not know that providing compulsory as well as an extra task is a best way to deal with the students in mixed ability classes.

4.1.1.21 Providing Open-ended Exercises to the Students

In response to the statement, '*Teachers should provide an open-ended exercises to the students so that each learner can perform at his\her own level*', I got the following data from the respondents which are given in table 21.

Table 21
Providing Open-ended Exercises to the Students

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 8 | 26.67% |
| Agree | 14 | 46.67% |
| Undecided | 5 | 16.66% |
| Disagree | 3 | 10% |
| Strongly Disagree | – | – |

From the table above, it is clear that among the total respondents; almost half of the teachers (i.e. 46.67%) *agreed* to the statement that *teachers should provide open- ended exercises to the students*. Likewise, only some of the teachers (i.e. 26.67%) *strongly agreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 10%) *disagreed* to this statement. These responses indicate that teachers should provide open-ended exercises to the students in mixed ability ELT classes.

4.1.1.22 Setting up Routines in Mixed Ability ELT Classes

In response to the statement, '*Setting up routines for effective teaching and learning activities helps teachers to manage their mixed ability ELT classes*', I got the following data from the respondents which are given in table 22.

Table 22
Setting up Routines in Mixed Ability ELT Classes

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 11 | 36.67% |
| Agree | 18 | 60% |
| Undecided | 1 | 3.33% |
| Disagree | – | – |
| Strongly Disagree | – | – |

The above table clearly shows that out of total respondents, majority of the teachers (i.e. 60%) *agreed* to the statement that *setting up routines for effective teaching and learning activities helps teachers to manage their mixed ability ELT classes*. In the same way, only some of the teachers (i.e. 36.67%) *strongly agreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 3.33%) were *undecided* to this statement. These responses indicate that setting up routines for effective teaching and learning activities helps teachers to manage their mixed ability ELT classes.

4.1.1.23 Treating Students Differently and Engaging Everyone

In response to the statement, ‘*I treat different students differently and engage everyone in the class equally*’, I got the following different data from the selected secondary level ELT teachers which are given in table 23.

Table 23
Treating Students Differently and Engaging Everyone

| Responses | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly Agree | 10 | 33.33% |
| Agree | 14 | 46.67% |
| Undecided | 1 | 3.33% |
| Disagree | 5 | 16.66 |
| Strongly Disagree | – | – |

The above table shows that out of total respondents, almost half of the teachers (i.e. 46.67%) *agreed* to the statement that *they are treating different students differently and engaging everyone in the class equally*. Similarly, only some of the teachers (i.e. 33.33%) *strongly agreed* and a few teachers (i.e. 3.33%) were *undecided* to this statement. These responses indicate that almost half of the teachers treat different students differently and engage everyone in the class equally.

4.1.2 Analysis of Data Collected through Open-ended Questionnaire

A set of questionnaire was intervened to the selected secondary level ELT teachers in order to find out their views on mixed ability classes as well as challenges and ways of managing mixed ability students in ELT classes. The collected data were analyzed and interpreted descriptively and narratively in order to find out the conclusion. The collected data are analyzed in terms of the following criteria:

4.1.2.1 Students' Different Abilities and Levels in English Classes

I intervened the first question about the students' different abilities and levels in English to find out whether teachers take their students' different abilities and levels as a problem or not. The actual question used was '*Do you think that students in general in English classes are at many different abilities and levels? Is it a problem? Why? Why not?*' Regarding this question, it was found that all the selected secondary level ELT teachers agreed that students in general in English classes are at many different abilities and levels. However, majority of the teachers (i.e. 60%) took students' different abilities and levels in English classes as a problem because in such classes, they faced difficulty in controlling the class; dealing with the weak students; continuing the course according to the students' high and low learning level; handling the lesson according to the need of the learners; devising various teaching methods, teaching techniques and materials to the students; students' different linguistic backgrounds; students' hesitation to talk in English in the class; students' different understanding levels and interest; difficulty in achieving the objective of the lesson and less participation of the poor students on different ability in the class.

Whereas, almost half of the teachers (i.e. 40%) did not take students' different abilities and levels in English classes as a problem because of the following reasons:

-) Different abilities and levels is a basic nature of human being.
-) It is natural to have different abilities and levels of students in the class.
-) Students' different abilities and levels help teachers to create new technique to tackle with the obstruction in the class.
-) These classes provide an opportunity for teachers to know the human talents and individual differences.

It shows that out of 30 secondary level ELT teachers, majority of the teachers (i.e. 60%) took students' different abilities and levels as a problem in the class.

4.1.2.2 Problems and Challenges in Managing Mixed Ability Students in ELT Classes

The second question that was intervened to the selected respondents was about the problems and challenges faced by the respondents while managing their mixed ability students in ELT classes. The actual question used was '*What are the problems and challenges that you faced in your ELT classroom while dealing with mixed ability students?*' In this regard, the respondents presented the following challenges and problems that they have faced in their mixed ability ELT classes while dealing with mixed abilities:

-) Providing different methods and tasks to students for the same content was difficult.
-) Encouraging less motivated students and dealing with homework was difficult.
-) It was difficult to deal different levels of students in the class because the same expression can be simple for the bright and complex for the weak.
-) Weak students were not worked as fast as the bright students. Bright students learned quickly than the weaker ones.
-) It was difficult to control students' different behaviour.

-) Making lesson plans in according to the differences in classroom was really difficult for teachers.
-) It was difficult to draw attention of students who are of special need.
-) The bright students started to make a side-talk and noise because they finished their class work very quickly.
-) Students were not sincere and dedicated towards learning.
-) Students did not respond to the teachers and did not like to expose.
-) Students wanted to have the easier way of learning and they tried to escape from the difficult way.
-) It was difficult to deal with the weak and less motivated students in the class.
-) Making students interesting was difficult.
-) Passiveness of poor students in the class.
-) Interference of mother tongue in the class.
-) Lack of sufficient teaching materials and facilities for the students in the class.
-) Effect of students' different economical, educational, geographical, religious, social backgrounds and different levels of learning on the classroom activities.
-) Lack of students' awareness towards learning activities.
-) Poor comprehensive skill of students and poor interaction of students with the teachers.
-) Effect of the national policy of the ELT in the learning activities.
-) Cultural and linguistic diversity.
-) Over crowd classes.
-) Harassment created by other friends.
-) Irregularity of the students and problem of language.

According to these aforementioned different responses from the teachers, it was found that most of the teachers faced the challenges like overcrowded classes with mixed abilities; dealing with the weak students and homework; controlling students' different behaviour; passiveness of poor students in the class; learners' uninterest and discipline problems; correcting daily assignments; paying equal attention to each individual; mother tongue interference in the class; devising different techniques, tasks and materials for the learners; teachers' negative attitudes towards learners and their unawareness of adopting new approach in the class; students' different language levels, backgrounds, intelligences and cognitive styles of learning in their mixed ability ELT classes.

4.1.2.3 Different Ways and Strategies of Managing Mixed Ability Students in ELT Classes

Similarly, I administered the question regarding the ways of managing mixed ability students in ELT classes. The respondents were asked to write about the different ways and strategies that they followed while managing mixed ability students in ELT classes. In this regard, I found the following strategies were used by the teachers in their classes:

-) Conducting group work, pair work and team work tasks and activities.
-) Giving more time and priority to poor and weak students.
-) Ability grouping of the students and teaching according to the level of the students.
-) Teaching using available materials.
-) Creating English speaking environment.
-) Making contact with the parents to overcome from the students' problem in the class.
-) Providing time for the students to have free conversations.
-) Teaching through audio-visual materials.

-) Thinking about vision and acoustics.
-) Providing daily class work, home work and project work.
-) Making regular supervision towards needy children.
-) Using charts, pictures and diagrams in the class to make students to expose.
-) Using worksheets, chorus reaction and group leaders in the class.
-) Making students aware towards learning activities.
-) Using extempore method, TPR method and magic bag method to manage the students in the class.
-) Using discussion method and problem solving method.
-) Giving tasks to the students according to their ability and capacity.
-) Maintaining proper seating arrangement.

By analyzing the responses obtained from the teachers, it was found that majority of the teachers used group work, pair work and team work tasks to the students; gave more time and priority to the weak and poor students; taught through project work and collaboration; set up routines; ability grouping of the students; gave tasks to the students according to their ability; provided open-ended exercises to the students; made the classroom interesting; enlarged the circle and encouraged bright students to help the weak students in the class.

4.1.2.4 Mixed Ability ELT Classes as an Opportunity

The last question that was intervened to the selected secondary level ELT teachers was about the opportunities found by them in mixed ability ELT classes. The question tried to identify whether teachers took their English classes as an opportunity or not. The actual question used was ‘*Do you think mixed ability ELT classes are full of opportunities? If yes, what opportunities do you find?*’ Regarding this question, it was found that almost all the teachers (i.e. 90%) took mixed ability ELT classes as an opportunity and they presented the following opportunities found in their classes:

-) Mixed ability classes helped teachers to know about the thoughts, ideas and capabilities of the students.
-) Teachers learned the attitudes of the mixed ability students.
-) Teachers and students learned more ideas and experiences in the class.
-) Teachers learned to use suitable methods teaching techniques and skills for the students.
-) Students got chance to learn from their friends.
-) Mixed ability ELT classes made teachers strong to face the challenges in the class.
-) Teachers learned more and grew as a teacher.
-) Teachers got chance to know their students' level and improved ways of teaching.
-) Teachers learned to apply various ways of dealing with mixed abilities so that learning became fruitful.
-) Mixed ability classes made teachers conscious and aware about teaching and learning so they go in depth to discover the subject matter.
-) Teachers developed their professional skill.
-) Mixed ability ELT classes made teachers better, dynamic, more creative, more knowledgeable and more constructive.
-) Students' difficulty and problem in learning were understood.
-) Mixed ability ELT classes helped teachers to know the society and enhance skills to deal with various difficulties.

However, a few teachers (i.e. 10%) did not take their mixed ability ELT classes as an opportunity because they thought that mixed ability ELT classes became great challenge and issue for teachers which created difficulty in using various teaching methods and dealing with the different students in the class.

4.2 Summary/Discussion of Findings

This study was delimited to the 30 secondary level ELT teachers working in private schools of Lalitpur district. The samples were selected using non-random purposive sampling procedure. The objectives of this study were to identify the challenges faced by the secondary level ELT teachers while managing the mixed ability students and to explore the ways of managing mixed ability students in ELT classes followed by secondary level ELT teachers. Questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection in this study. By analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, I came up with the following findings:

4.2.1 Major Findings

- i. Secondary level ELT teachers faced the major challenges like dealing with the weak students and homework; controlling students' different behaviour; passiveness of poor students in the class; learners' disinterest and discipline problems; correcting daily assignments; paying equal attention to each individual; mother tongue interference in the class; devising different techniques, tasks and materials for the learners; teachers' negative attitudes towards learners and their unawareness of adopting new approach in the class; students' different language levels, backgrounds, intelligences and cognitive styles of learning in their mixed ability ELT classes.
- ii. The majority of the teachers (i.e. 60%) took students' different abilities and levels as a problem.
- iii. Conducting pair work and group work; giving more focus on weak students; teaching through project work and collaboration; setting up routines; grouping students according to their ability; providing open-ended exercises to the students; making the classroom interesting; enlarging the circle and encouraging bright to help the weak students in the class were found as the good ways of managing mixed ability students in ELT classes.

- iv. Textbook was not found as a best tool to deal the mixed ability students in ELT classes.
- v. Almost half of the teachers (i.e. 47%) did not know that providing compulsory as well as an extra task to the students is a best way to deal with the students in mixed ability classes.
- vi. Almost all the teachers (i.e. 90%) teachers took their mixed ability ELT classes as an opportunity

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This part of research study includes the conclusions and findings of the study drawn from the close analysis of the collected data and its recommendations on the different levels.

5.1 Conclusions

The world and human beings are not homogeneous in nature. Thus, mixed ability of learners is universal and we find mixed ability students in almost all classes. However, many language teachers are experiencing a handful of challenges in such mixed ability classes because of the diverse proficiency level of students. Therefore, I carried out the present study entitled ‘challenges in managing mixed ability students in ELT classes’ to identify the challenges of managing mixed ability students in ELT classes faced by secondary level ELT teachers and to explore the ways of managing mixed ability students in ELT classes. Therefore, after the analysis and interpretation of the collected data, I came up with the findings that secondary level ELT teachers faced the major challenges like dealing with the weak students and homework; controlling students’ different behaviour; learners’ disinterest and discipline problems; correcting daily assignments; devising different techniques, tasks and materials for the learners; teachers’ negative attitudes towards learners; students’ different language levels, backgrounds and intelligences while managing mixed ability students in ELT classes. Similarly, the majority of the teachers (i.e. 60%) took students’ different abilities and levels as a problem in the class. Likewise, Conducting pair work and group work; giving more focus on weak students; teaching through project work and collaboration; providing open-ended exercises to the students; making the classroom interesting; encouraging bright to help the weak in the class were found as the good ways of managing mixed ability students in ELT classes. In the same way, textbook was not found

as a best tool to deal the mixed ability students in ELT classes and almost all the teachers (i.e. 90%) took their mixed ability classes as an opportunity.

After the close analysis of primary and secondary data, I came up with the conclusions that mixed ability classes are common in schools and universities throughout the world. Mixed ability ELT classes are full of opportunities for both teachers and students though it has become a challenge for many language teachers. Thus, mixed ability classes are not a problem itself. If the teachers deal mixed ability classes properly, then there will be a fruitful learning in the class. Therefore, teachers should welcome and respect learner differences in the classroom.

5.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the analysis of the data and the findings of the study, I have provided the following recommendations to policy level, practice level and further research.

5.2.1 Policy Related

I have provided the following policy related recommendation in this study:

-) The secondary level English language teachers should be made clear by the concerned authority that different abilities and levels is a basic nature of human being. Therefore, it is natural to have different abilities and levels of students in the class. Considering this fact, teachers should respect all the students and treat them equally.
-) The government should conduct different trainings and workshops to the secondary level ELT teachers regarding on the mixed ability ELT classes. Therefore, teachers can expand their knowledge and gain more ideas so that it will be easy for them to deal with mixed ability students in the class.

-) Beside textbook, other supplementary teaching materials should be provided for the teachers to teach the mixed ability students by the concerned authorities.

5.2.2 Practice-Related

I have provided the following practice-related recommendation based on the findings of the study:

-) It was found that passiveness of poor students occurred in the mixed ability ELT classes. Therefore, teachers need to encourage weak and poor students by giving suitable task according to their ability, making the classroom more interesting and giving more priority to them in the class.
-) It was found that the bright students started to make a side-talk and noise because they finished their class work very quickly. Thus, extra complex task should be given to them so that they will be engaged in doing the tasks.
-) Teachers' negative attitudes towards learners and their unawareness of the need for adopting new approach effect teaching and learning in the class greatly. Thus, teachers should have the positive attitudes towards their learners. They should equally behave to all the students in the class instead of discriminating between the weak and less motivated students.
-) Teachers should have the good skill of teaching and enough preparation for the well management of the mixed ability students in the class.
-) Teachers need to recognize their learners' particular gifts and talents for the successful learning.

5.2.3 Further Research Related

I have provided the following further research related recommendations in this study:

-) The present research study will be very helpful for those who want to carry out further research in the related areas. They will get a valuable secondary data from this study.
-) The further researchers can investigate the effect and impact of students' different educational, cultural, religious, economical and social factors in language learning in the class.
-) The researchers can also work on the activities used by the teachers to address the multiple intelligent students in ELT classes.

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APPENDIX- I

Questionnaire for the Teachers

Dear Sir/Madam,

This questionnaire is a part of my research study entitled “**Challenges in Managing Mixed Ability Students in ELT Classes**” under the supervision of **Mr. Bhesh Raj Pokhrel**, Lecturer of the Department of English Education, T.U. Kirtipur, Kathmandu. This study tries to identify the challenges that the secondary level ELT teachers faced while managing their mixed ability students in ELT classes along with various possible ways of managing such mixed ability ELT classes. Your cooperation in completion of the questionnaire through authentic information will be a great value to me. Please feel free to put your responses required by the questionnaire. I assume you that the responses made by you will be exclusively and confidently used only for the purpose of present study.

Researcher:

Sarita Lama

Tribhuvan University

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

.....

Respondent

.....

Researcher

Thank you for your kind response!

Personal Profile

Name:

Date:

Address:

Teaching Experience:

Name of the School:

Qualification:

School (please tick one that suits you)

- i. Government-aided
- ii. Private

Direction: On the space in front of each item, please rank the number from 1-5 where,

- 1 (indicates strongly agree)
- 2 (indicates agree)
- 3 (indicates undecided)
- 4 (indicates disagree)
- 5 (indicates strongly disagree)

Challenges in managing mixed ability students in ELT classes

_____ Teaching in mixed ability ELT classes is a very difficult and demanding task.

_____ It is very difficult to devise different techniques, appropriate tasks and materials for the learners in mixed ability ELT classes.

_____ Teacher's negative attitude towards learners as well as their unawareness of the need for adopting new approach is a major problem in mixed ability classes.

_____ It is difficult to make all the students' participation in mixed ability ELT classes.

- _____Learners in my class are not interested towards learning activities and showed discipline problems.
- _____It is difficult to correct daily assignments of students because of the time constraints in mixed ability ELT classes.
- _____I feel difficulty in paying equal attention to each individual and also ensuring effective learning for all.
- _____Learner's multiple intelligences, different language levels and cognitive styles of learning create a big problem in mixed ability ELT classes.
- _____It is very difficult to deal with the quiet and weak students in the class.
- _____I do not feel any problems while managing mixed ability ELT classes.
- _____Mixed ability is not a problem or burden for teachers but also an opportunity to explore.

Ways of managing mixed ability Students in ELT classes

- _____The teacher should have the good skill of teaching and enough preparation for the well management of students in mixed ability classes.
- _____Pair and group work is a very good way to manage ELT classes with mixed abilities.
- _____A best way of managing mixed ability ELT classes is to devise various techniques, tasks and materials to the learners for the same content.
- _____I give more focus on weak students than the brighter ones in my mixed ability ELT classes.
- _____Teaching through project work and collaboration helps teachers to manage the mixed ability students in ELT classes.
- _____Textbook is a best tool to deal the mixed ability ELT classes with mixed abilities.

- _____ A best way of managing mixed ability ELT classes is to make the classroom more interesting as well as enlarge the circle as much as possible.
- _____ Teachers of mixed ability ELT classes should be individually aware about the students and they should know their student's individual personalities.
- _____ Providing compulsory as well as an extra task is a best way to deal with the students in mixed ability classes.
- _____ Teachers should provide an open-ended exercises to the students so that each learner can perform at his/her own level.
- _____ Setting up routines for effective teaching and learning activities helps teachers to manage their mixed ability ELT classes.
- _____ I treat different students differently and engage everyone in the class equally.

Please kindly answer the following questions.

1. Do you think that students in general in English classes are at many different abilities and levels? Is it a problem? Why/Why not?

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2. What are the problems and challenges that you faced in your ELT classroom while dealing with mixed ability students?

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3. What are the different ways and strategies that you followed to manage your mixed ability students in ELT classroom?

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4. Do you think mixed ability ELT classes are full of opportunities? If yes, what opportunities do you find?

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Thank you for your kind response!

