



We've Got Mail!

Being mischievous is okay!

I read Deepali Shukla's article 'Matti, sit down! Sit down Matti' in the 20th issue of *Pathshala*. I had taught this book to the children in my class. The ways in which I taught and the ways in which Deepali Shukla suggested teaching this book are considerably different. The truth is that our classes have many hyperactive children. They don't dance like Matti; instead, they talk to each other and engage in mischief to express their hyperactivity.

I gained two key insights from reading this article. First, it is natural and normal for children to exhibit mischievous behaviour in the classroom. As teachers, our role is to guide them and channel their hyperactivity into creativity. Second, storytelling provides immense opportunities for classroom engagement. This article has significantly transformed my approach to storytelling, making me more thoughtful and sensitive as a teacher.

Arvind Kumar Singh, Assistant Teacher, Primary School Bangla Poothri, District Bulandshahar, Uttar Pradesh

Towards creating a new culture

I liked the article 'Learning through constructive dispute' published in the 20th issue of *Pathshala*. The most valuable insight from this article by Amman Madan is the idea that we can learn a lot from constructive disputes. The ways to resolve disputes, as suggested by the author, also relate to my class and my calling. I too, at times, ignore the work and words of the children and impose my decisions on them. The article convinced me that mine was a faulty approach. Children too often form two groups in my class. For example, when one group says, 'Sir, let's play', the other says, 'No Sir, please teach'. I could not come up with a solution until now, and if I had not read this article, I would probably still not have thought about it. This article suggested a new approach of talking to both groups to find an amicable solution.

Charanjeet Singh, Assistant Teacher, Primary School Khurai, District Sagar, Madhya Pradesh

The need for patience and consistent work

The 21st issue of *Pathshala* carries an experience rich interview of Archana Arora. One can develop an understanding on the patience and consistent work required with children while going through this interview. Suman Patel, in the same issue, offers a thought-provoking article 'Hum nayin banaat roti'. It helps build an understanding that boys and girls or women and men are not different; we are all human beings, and are born of nature. Division of labour was done by us and our society. We should shun approaches that widen this gap. Heartfelt thanks to the entire team of *Pathshala* for publishing such an article and making it accessible.

Rajni Bai Devatwal, Teacher, Senior Secondary School Rampura Ooty, Sanganer Rural, District Jaipur, Rajasthan

An atmosphere of fear adversely affects young minds

I appreciate the article 'From the mind to the brain of children' published in the 21st issue of *Pathshala*. It highlights how teachers should explain a subject to students in a school environment. The article advocates for creating an environment where children can approach and comprehend subjects without fear and with confidence. The article rightly states that an atmosphere of fear adversely affects the young minds of children, ultimately affecting their learning process. The article explains it easily through the simple story of a man and a tree.

Satyavan Khalkho, Assistant Teacher, Government Primary School Harra Teentangar, District Gumla, Jharkhand

Bridging the gender gap will take time

The present scenario needs articles like 'Hum nayin banat roti' written by Suman Patel in Issue 21 of *Pathshala*. Gender discrimination continues to present countless challenges for women, not just in our society but globally. The article emphasises the importance of educating children about the irrationality of such discrimination from a young age, as this could lead to meaningful change in the future. We also come to understand that everyone discriminates. It happens in school, family, society, on the playground and cultural stage too. That is to say, women, as a result, face these biases in

almost every sphere of their lives. The gender gap is wide, and bridging this gap will take time. We need to work with children through conversations and activities to bridge this gap.

Anita Sharma, Teacher, Mahatma Gandhi School Pratap Nagar, District Jaipur, Rajasthan

Starting in the morning with renewed energy

I read an article by Anshika Sharma titled 'Morning assembly: The beginning of change' in Issue 21 of *Pathshala*. The writer has explained how she modified the morning assembly, starting it with renewed energy. The traditional morning assembly conducted in schools becomes a cumbersome process not only for the children but also for us teachers.

As mentioned in the article, the idea of sharing a death in the family of a child in the morning assembly was a unique effort in itself and points towards building deep relationships between the teachers and their pupils. This assembly became a platform for the children to share their thoughts. The teachers too diligently documented how many times each child shared her thoughts. Following this would help us to encourage children, who are hesitant to come forward in the morning assembly.

Pallavi Diwan, Chagorabhata Pre School, District Raipur, Chhattisgarh

The library is key to learning

I found the article 'Library in School: In the Context of Reading and Writing' in Issue 21 of *Pathshala* quite comprehensive. Dheeraj Patel has explained the creation of a library in the classroom and related activities point-by-point in a meaningful and systematic way. For instance, the author writes that the objective of the library is 'to connect school books with the habit of reading and teaching; to develop skills like reading, listening, storytelling and creating their own stories; to lead them towards independent expression and writing; etc.' He has enriched the article by linking the objectives with learning outcomes.

The oral and written activities associated with the library, as highlighted in the article, were quite engaging. Inspired by these, schools began incorporating oral storytelling into morning prayers. Such activities make the morning prayer more dynamic and interactive. The author structured the writing exercises in stages: in the initial phase, he made children rewrite a story they had read, subsequently, they were asked to create original stories. This is an effective method for teaching reading and writing. I can relate this to my own experience of teaching children to read and write using stories. Stories facilitate quicker learning as children can draw upon their rich experiences and enjoy the creative freedom to include anything they wish.

Suman Patel, Member, Azim Premji Foundation Rahatgarh, District Sagar, Madhya Pradesh

It is important for children to browse through books

I read Dheeraj Patel's article 'Library in School: In the Context of Reading and Writing' in the 21st issue of *Pathshala*. Although the 'Muskaan' library is present in all our schools, hardly 10 percent of the children use the library regularly for reading and writing. Teachers also rarely see the library as a means for inculcating reading and writing skills in their pupils.

It is important that children browse through the books in the library, looking at pictures, and talking to books. I really like the process of narrating the stories of the books in the morning prayer to generate interest in reading.

The article gives examples of taking children towards written and oral expression through the stories that they have read. Children narrating stories in the prayer assembly is one such example. When it started, some children narrated the story in a sequence; some tried to narrate the story by reading from the book; and some in their own words. I believe this approach successfully cultivated a love for reading among the children. I plan to implement this method in my school, as I am facing a similar challenge of motivating students to engage with books.

Sonal Tiwari, Chagorabhata Main School, District Raipur, Chhattisgarh

Nurturing children's interests and talents

I read the article 'In the name of Ferdinand: Discussion on the Confusion of Human Identity and Personality Development' published in Issue 21 of Pathshala. Penned by Anil Singh, the article uses the story of 'Ferdinand' to question the traditional methods and thinking of the present educated society, family, teachers and parents in developing the personality of children, and in polishing their talent whereas the National Education Policy 2020 speaks of giving importance to skills across all areas, treating them equally and strengthening individual skills.

Most societies link education and the criteria of being educated for the so-called 'prestigious' jobs even today. Family or parents pressurise children to achieve the set goals as per the expectations of society and the market. They show an urgency to achieve the goal within the stipulated time in the race to get ahead of each other. This relentless pursuit of success frequently leads to disappointment and heightened anxiety for both children and parents when outcomes fall short of expectations.

The article pulls out all the stops to point out the joint responsibility of the state and society in allowing children to develop their personal interests. We need to allow our children the opportunity to develop their talents, shape their personalities according to their interests, and create an environment for them to think, understand and grapple with challenges, find solutions, and become rational human beings.

Avnish Kumar Mishra, Resource Person, Azim Premji Foundation, District Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand

Reading fluently - what do experiences say?

The article 'Fluent Reading' by Ravishekhar Verma in the 21st issue of *Pathshala* is interesting and worth reading. It makes sense for the class to include such activities that help children to read widely across themes and with understanding. It also relates to my experience, which shows that children read the book and discuss the story that is read to them. At times, I think that children do speculate in the entire process and subsequently develop their understanding of the whole process. That the children get opportunities to read is, therefore, important.

My experience also shows that we can work on letter and diacritic recognition with the children who are learning to read by reading and understanding a story. Children enjoy this exercise as we pick letters to work on from the ongoing story itself. Children begin to pick up words that occur repeatedly while reading as soon as they see them. This helps them immensely in reading the text. I will include this in my teaching process.

Sujata Patel, Integrated Government Secondary School Korasa, Khurai, District Sagar, Madhya Pradesh

Translated from Hindi by Eklavya, Bhopal