

## FROM THE EDITOR



A kindergarten group in a Delhi school was looking at a globe. As children are wont to, they were squealing, asking questions and to have themselves heard, speaking over each other. The Teaching Assistant was having a hard time managing the class. So, when one child tugged at his shirt sleeve and asked him to show where Bengaluru was (her father had recently moved there), the TA reproached her, 'We are not talking about that now!'

The TA had brought the globe to class, which was great, but he had come with a set plan to 'show' and had expected a response from the children that was different from what he received. He was clearly not prepared for it, nor open. Where is joyful learning in this? Where is the nurturing of children's basic state of curiosity and wonder? How does it address their need to explore, to ask questions, learn through ways that they derive pleasure from?

The articles in this issue are broadly based on the two aspects of play in learning – the innumerable lessons that are learnt from play – teamwork, strategy, inclusion, respect, sharing, handling fights, settling arguments, addressing bullying, and second, how play can be used as pedagogy for circular learning; something as simple as counting, grouping and matching beads. There are structured activities, like watching an educational video and unstructured play activities, like pretend play. But the idea behind both is to nurture the free spirit with which a child must learn.

If this issue is received with even half the enthusiasm with which it has been written and put together, we

will have achieved much. The focus articles have delved deep to reveal how learning through play is the only way for most young children to learn and learn well, a fact that is backed by science, philosophy and psychology. Many of the articles are centred around the use of play for specific learning outcomes. And, of course, there are reflections by teachers and our field members with examples and case studies on how they have woven play into their classroom processes.

Truth be told, working with authors on this theme has been a moving experience. The lengths teachers go to in their effort to bring fun and excitement in the teaching of basic skills, like reading and maths, is truly inspiring. When one author wrote, 'Our responsibility to devote time to play at school becomes even greater if we accept the fact that it may not be a part of the child's home life for a variety of reasons', I remembered the 7- or 8-year-old selling ballpoint pens at a traffic junction who asked me if I would buy all the remaining pens so he would be free to play for the rest of the day. How many did he have and how much would I need to pay were quickly calculated by him.

Before you turn the page and get to the more rewarding pieces, a reminder that this is your magazine and we want to hear your voices here, so do keep sending us suggestions, especially regarding the themes that you would like us to feature. As always, your feedback is valuable to us.

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