

FROM THE EDITOR



Everybody loves a good story.

We all know the pure pleasure of listening to stories as children from our (mostly) grandparents. So, what is it about stories that has such fascination for every generation? We want to hear certain stories again and again and get thrilled, excited, sad, happy. We also want to go over what might have been, how we would have changed the ending or what the characters did or said and whether we agreed or not.

Children, particularly, love stories for the same reasons as adults do, but in storytelling, as in everything else to do with children, there is great commitment, involvement and participation. When children listen to a story, they listen with total absorption, sometimes tripping up the storyteller if they leave out or change a detail! And if the same story is retold another time, there are comments of 'But last time you said...'

This being the case, storytelling has become a very popular medium in schools today, in the pre-primary classes, firstly, as a means of organising the world for young children. Take the story of the thirsty crow, for instance. Crows are such a familiar sight in every part of the world that no description is required. So, the recounter can plunge into the story straightaway. At first, children wonder how a crow can be the main character of any story. But a thirsty crow? No one knew that birds felt thirsty. Lots of comments arise from this exciting fact- they fly so much; they must be getting thirsty like us. This crow can think as well - the water level being low, can be raised if heavy objects are systematically added to the receptacle: the crow finds stones and drops them in one by one. There are lots of mini-lessons in the whole process, but perhaps the most important ones are that patience pays and also that all living creatures are like us, we have to share our resources, and that (perhaps later) we have to share our planet with them. A teacher/

storyteller can bring out all this through discussion and participation.

This brings us to our theme - *Storytelling as a Pedagogical Approach*. It was chosen because stories and storytelling are too valuable a tool to be left out of the classroom. So much is taught and learned and there are so many interpretations of the same experiences that it is one of the most versatile mediums to teach other subjects, along with the skills of listening and reflecting -- talents required for lifelong learning.

We have in this issue articles that demonstrate how storytelling can be used to great success in subjects as diverse as maths, physics, social studies and inclusion in schools everywhere – urban or rural. Three articles show us how a single story can be used as a means of learning, others describe how a discussion can be skilfully used to arrive at some really important understanding of, for instance, maths – trying to discover great-grandmother's age is a case in point. And there is a wealth of stories in the Indian languages, waiting only for us to use them.

All this adds up to a channel of exchange that cuts across age groups and backgrounds and finds common ground in the magic world of stories. We hope you will enjoy this spread and find it useful in your classroom.

One final word to our readers, who might notice that the appearance of the issue has undergone a change, a decision taken after a lot of thought. However, the quality of the content remains the same, as does our commitment to engage. As always, we welcome your feedback at the email id given below.

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