

EDITORIAL

Teacher as Researcher

As teachers, you raise questions related to your profession; you identify problems and try to find answers to these questions or problems. For example, why are some students irregular? Why is attendance low in some schools? Rithika has good mathematical ability, but she cannot read her textbooks. Why is her performance in language poor? Can I use her mathematical ability to teach language? asked a teacher. Another teacher from an MCD school, Delhi said that there are four students in her class who are not progressing well and all her strategies are failing. What can be done about these students is her anxious query. To find answers to these questions, teachers try to understand their own practices and the impact of these on students' learning. A teacher of MCD school analysed the student work to examine her own teaching. She used assessment data to understand why students responded in a particular way and what produced these responses. She then realised that students are committing the same error that she had inadvertently made while writing on the blackboard.

Geeta Devi Meena, a teacher in a primary school at Rajasthan observed that some children were not regular in school. She believes that parents and guardians should ensure the regular attendance of their wards. She tried an innovative method of enhancing the participation and commitment of parents in the education of children. She started giving her first graders 'Card of the Day' at the end of each day. On one side of the card, the child's name and date is written while on the other side what the child had learnt on that day. Children share this card with their parents at home. Parents collect these cards and share with teacher in monthly parent- teacher meet. This helped in enhancing the participation of parents in the schooling process. Through this activity, she also verified her belief that parents' interest and participation in children's education can improve attendance. You may think of several such interventions. Try out these in your school and see what works in your school with your children.

Similarly, whenever a new curriculum, evaluation procedure or policy decision is given to you for implementation, you may like to examine its effectiveness in your context. Some of these changes may contradict your existing beliefs. You look for evidence to accept or reject these changes. Should we have CCE or examinations, rote learning or learning for understanding, activity-based learning or chalk and talk method? While implementing CCE in her class, a teacher said it is difficult to pay attention

to each child. We teach them as a group. However, Shashi Prabha used children's responses to make their existing concepts explicit. Her paper in this issue describes how she recorded each child's response and how children negotiated knowledge and developed their own ideas. This process gave her insight into students' learning. Tullika Day used folk songs to teach Environmental Studies. The teacher and students developed songs on notes and rhythm of folk songs. She found that use of folk songs enhances pupil participation and motivates them to learn. This issue has several such papers from practitioners. This method develops students' creative abilities.

All these teachers are researchers. A teacher-researcher attempts to understand her own practice, tries new strategies and studies the impact of these on student learning. Teacher researchers raise questions about the schooling practices and what they think about these. When teachers become researchers, description of traditional research changes. Teachers are subjective insiders and classroom or school is a lab for them. Teacher researchers can conduct experiments in different classes using different teaching-learning strategies, and can then measure the results to see what works best in their schools. They can also experiment as to which type of assessment procedures works in their class. Teacher researches can help in bringing about the desired changes in the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and other practices.

Dear researchers, take active part in all schooling processes, conduct researches, collect evidence and share with fellow teachers and authorities. This will go a long way in improving the school practices and contributing to renewal of the curriculum.

—Academic Editor