

## From the Editorial Desk

---

In today's fast changing world, things are moving so rapidly that established notions are constantly being challenged and reconstructed. At such a juncture, Critical Pedagogy assumes importance as it raises awareness and inculcates in students a spirit of enquiry by which they can question established notions, thus emancipating them from the clichés of traditional thought that had been the norm until just a few years ago. Today, students have to be digitally literate, and also alert to what is happening around them, so that they can critically challenge concepts that lead to further social, political and economic inequity. Education has always been considered a vehicle for social change and emancipation. Language and literature classrooms therefore, become critical sites wherein these changes can be facilitated and put into practice. We are happy to bring to you the 36th issue of *Fortell*, which is dedicated to the understanding of Critical Pedagogy in education, with articles ranging from theory to praxis. Our conversation with Professor Raj Kumar goes a long way towards understanding the changing scenario of social emancipation in India and its inclusiveness in the polity. According to him, although discursive spaces are bringing about change, there is a lot that needs to be done, both in academia and in the lived reality.

The issue opens with a historiography of theoretical perspectives by Sunita Mishra in her paper, "Critical Pedagogy and English Language Teaching in India". She elucidates concepts and surveys the multifarious debates on critical pedagogy while locating them in the teaching-learning scenario, educational policies and framing of the syllabi with a special focus on Indian education. Furthermore, an interesting perspective from the Middle-East on curriculum design, is presented by Meenalochana Inguva, who traces the opportunities for developing critical thinking in various areas of English language at the Foundation Program of the Centre for Preparatory Studies, Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat.

Sanjukta Sivakumar posits that critical pedagogy in classrooms empowers teachers to frame tasks based on the framework of Multiple Intelligences and Revised Bloom's Taxonomy in a 'Content and Language Integrated Learning Context' which leads them to identify individual differences and learner needs. Furthermore, Kandharaja's paper, "Language Classroom and Democracy: Practicing Critical Pedagogy in Indian Schools" argues that deliberations and regular discussions in the classrooms are a means of developing critical societal consciousness in which students and teachers can be equal partners in building a progressive democratic culture in India. Vennela Rayavarapu offers a different perspective to pedagogy through her theoretical model "Critical Reflexive Approach", for socially and critically inclusive bilingual teaching in India. Prachi Kalra on the other hand, in her article "Critical Pedagogy Through Stories", suggests that critical thinking can be inculcated and meanings negotiated through stories at the formative stage in students as literature makes students move away from mechanistic and skill-based learning to make sense of their lived realities.

This issue not only brings forth various approaches to critical thinking, but also suggests several pedagogical strategies to nurture and encourage it. According to Arunabha Bose, when a discursive text like Bama's *Karukku* is used in the classroom, resistant histories of the struggles of the subaltern students get narrated, endless complex possibilities are offered, interrogated and new meanings negotiated and reformulated. Likewise, through his insightful observations of undergraduate Science students, M. Raja Vishwanathan corroborates that the "banking system of education" can be replaced by making the students negotiate the meaning of the poem "Daffodils" through the narratives of their own experiences when it is taught in a "not so conventional" manner. Maitri Baruah foregrounds how drama helps in creating new linguistic and cultural conceptualizations, and a new literary vocabulary of the Asomiya language is forged by the dynamics between Asomiya and the less dominant linguistic groups and tribal communities.

In addition to the vibrant and dynamic debates on critical thinking and pedagogy, this issue also brings with it the regular features of Book Reviews and Language Activities. In keeping with the core theme of the issue, Parul Batra reviews *On Critical Pedagogy* by Henry A. Giroux (2011), which will help teachers and researchers clarify their concepts and question the conventional pedagogical practices that rest on memorization and rote learning. Moving away from theory to practice, Catherine Baker reviews *Framework*, in which Richard Harrison uses critical thinking to develop writing skills in learners. Finally, R.W. Desai reviews *Professing English on Two Continents* by Brijraj Singh, in which the author brings to the fore his teaching experiences at the two ends of the globe. The language activities curated here cater to different levels, and are bound to keep the students enthusiastic and motivated to learn more.

Finally, classrooms need to be vibrant spaces where students have the freedom to challenge norms, question issues and reformulate concepts. We hope that this special issue on Critical Pedagogy helps in making classrooms more interactive and inclusive and your engagement with students more meaningful.

### ***Gitanjali & Aarati***

*Dr. Gitanjali Chawla is Associate Professor of English at Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. Her research interests are folklore, popular culture, cultural studies and innovative pedagogies in the virtual mode.*  
*gitschawla@gmail.com*

*Dr. Aarati Mujumdar is Assistant Professor and Assistant Head, Department of General Education, Modern College of Business and Science, Muscat. Her research interests are developing critical thinking through innovative methodologies, psycholinguistics and action research.*  
*mujumdar6@gmail.com*