



Arts Education Conference: Contexts, Concepts and Practices in Schools

Sessions

The Map of the Conference might suggest that the Conference sessions would be compartmentalized into Contexts, Concepts, and Practices. However, the topics for discussion are necessarily interlinked and cannot meaningfully be dealt with if they are treated as mutually exclusive. Each session will include some aspects of the contexts, the concepts, and the practices of arts education in schools, to allow for a more holistic and integrated understanding.

Day One: 11th December 2009, Friday

1. Keynote Address

Time: 9:00am – 10:00am

2. Panel I – The Current Legislative Scenario and Arts Education

Time: 10:00am – 11:30am

As key stakeholders in education teachers, parents, principals, arts practitioners and children need to gain a shared understanding of the rights-based legislative environment we live in, and the position of Arts Education within this environment.

The Panel will present key features of The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill which was passed by the Indian parliament on 4th August 2009 and its implications on Arts Education. While the Bill is momentous in that it aims to provide education for all, taking into special consideration the underprivileged and children with special needs, it has been criticized for failing to articulate an equitable standard of quality for all schools. What is this “standard of quality” and what is the meaning and role of the arts towards a broad-based quality education?

Further, with The Indian Council of Secondary Education (ICSE) Board making their curricula up to the eight standard less rigid, and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) introducing a system by which students may opt not to be examined at the Standard X stage, there is a very conducive ambience for the arts to play a more integral role in education.

Coffee Break: 11:30am – 11:45am

3. Panel II – Arts Education in the Ecological Age

Time: 11:45am – 1:15pm

Environment Education is larger than imparting information and knowledge on environmental issues. It is the building of a person's environmental behaviour which defines how one understands oneself, one's relationship with other humans and natural life, and how one can consciously belong to both a natural and a social environment. Therefore Environment Education is intrinsically connected to culture and art.

The session will explore perspectives and strategies to cement the ties and strengthen the synergies between Arts Education and Environment Education. What role do the arts play in constructing healthy individuals, communities and societies? How do we look ahead to a century in which the arts and the environment become increasingly inseparable?

Lunch: 1:15pm – 2:00pm

4. Breakout Groups I, II, and III (to be announced)

Time: 2:00pm – 3:30pm

Coffee Break: 3:30pm – 3:45pm

5. Panel III – Arts Education and I

Time: 3:45pm – 5:15pm

While the macrocosm of the legislative context affects children's education, the microcosms of their own worlds – views of parents, teachers, principals, and society – affect their individual aspirations and decisions.

What does Arts Education mean to the student, parent, teacher and principal? The panel will consist of spokespersons from these constituencies who will share hopes, experiences and ideas on the meaning and role of Arts Education.

6. Closing Address

Time: 5:15pm – 5:30pm

1. Panel IV – The Structures of Arts Education

Time: 10:00am – 11:30am

Arts Education and its importance on the overall development of a student has found mention in various policy documents of the government since independence. The meaning and role of Arts Education has changed from time to time. In 1952-53, the report of the Education Commission saw Arts Education as being a “release of creative energy among students so that they may be able to appreciate cultural heritage and cultivate rich interests, which they can pursue in their leisure, and later in life.” They also recommended that each student learn a craft which could benefit him/her economically, as well as teach them the dignity of labour. From this early post-Independence policy document, through the Kothari Commission Report of 1964-66, and the National Curriculum Frameworks (NCFs) of 1975, 1988, and 2000 Arts Education has seen a paradigm shift from viewing the objective of arts education as the dignity of labour in the crafts sector to the development of aesthetic sensibility and free expression.

The National Curriculum Framework of 2005 prescribes that Art be made a subject like any other in schools, with evaluation and grading. With the NCF as the background the panel will present and discuss the educational frameworks and scaffolding India needs to energise Arts Education at various levels, and in various regions and contexts.

Coffee Break: 11:30am – 11:45am

2. Panel V – Arts and Early Childhood Education

Time: 11:45am – 1:15pm

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2009 focuses on children between the age group of six and fourteen, thus crucially leaving out the 157.86 million¹ children in India between the ages of zero and six. Globally, research has noted that neglect during the early years of a child’s life can often result in irreversible reduction in a child’s holistic development. Quality early childhood care and development programming have led to the improvement in children’s health, cognitive ability and performance at school.

In this larger context of Early Childhood Education, the panel will focus on Arts Education in the lives of children between the ages of zero and eight. Art has traditionally been an important part of early childhood programs and kindergarten and pre-school teachers consistently use arts in their teaching. Still, is art only a tool for education and development at this age, or can the very young appreciate art, develop aesthetic sensibilities, and even become proficient in an art form?

¹ As per Census of India, 2001.

Lunch: 1:15pm – 2:00pm

3. Breakout Groups I, II, and III (To be announced)

Time: 2:00pm – 3:30pm

Coffee Break: 3:30pm – 3:45pm

4. Panel VI – Home and the World

Time: 3:45pm – 5:15pm

Arts Education comes with a seemingly paradoxical vision in which universal aspirations are expressed, but which can find realization and implementation only within particular and local contexts. How does Arts Education navigate the dialectic of the global and the local? How is Arts Education viewed through the lenses of the local and individual as well as the perspectives of the community, society, nation and the world? Do these lenses reveal paradoxes or opportunities, roadblocks or catalysts?

5. Closing Address

Time: 5:15pm – 6:00pm