

AUTHENTIC AND MEANINGFUL LEARNING THROUGH INTEGRATION OF ARTS

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Integrating art and bringing it into the mainstream is the focal point for educators. The twin purpose of honing one's skills and comprehending the subjects with a varied perspective has got a meaningful direction. The collaborative approach has enhanced the soft skills and competencies among students to a wide extent. Also abiding by **NEP 2020**, an environment for art-integrated learning can enhance experiential practices, thereby giving a rationale to skill-based learning systems also. The article highlights the need to bridge the gaps and create a culture of inclusivity where art can be amalgamated in every subject significantly and creatively.

Redefining Education in Relation to Art:- Art brings in a feeling of solace and fulfillment to the whole system of teaching and learning. In the past art was taken up as an 'untouchable' field only for the ones who could never dream of something big in life. It was almost like a backbencher student who would hide his or her face on the arrival of an authority - not exactly complaining but being happy in isolation. But soon the tables turned as expertise and finesse go hand in hand and the great men realized that they could no longer have bridges built by men, rather the society needed men and women who would mend the bridges and keep the fences intact. Thus the important aspect of '*Redefining Education in Relation to Art*' started doing the rounds. In this context, I would like to throw light on art integration as a cross-curricular pedagogy that not only focuses on joyful learning but also gives thrust to linkages between teaching and connecting with Indian ethos and culture.

Striking Chords with Art:- Art has been a medium of communication and expression of feelings of every home for ages. A mother singing a lullaby for her baby is a form of art. Decorating our houses with rangoli, diyas, and flowers at festivals is also an art. Be it a recital of mantras or a tiny tot scribbling on the walls or a young girl pouring her heart out in poetry or a young boy making designs on his bicycle, all are creative ways of bringing forth our thoughts through unspoken words.

"You use a glass mirror to see your face, you use works of art to see your soul"

Truly abiding by the opinion of George Bernard Shaw, we are fortunate enough to reside in a land with vibrant cultural heritage and diversity. The soul of our nation lies in the resilient bond with our traditional legacy since time immemorial. When every material object vanished with time, cave paintings, seals, crafted tools, ornaments, and metal statues spoke volumes of the connection of the people of different ages with art to communicate to the society and cross the barriers of language. Inclusivity of art in education can have multifarious outcomes only when the curriculum planning moves beyond classrooms to draw connections with real-life situations and encourage integral collaboration.

Art-integrated Education- An Analogy of Learning and Experiences:- After going through numerous phases of transformation, education has reached an exclusive pedestal where the participation of the pupils is no more passive. The traditional teacher-driven classroom has taken a back seat and the whole pedagogical approach revolves around the students who are exposed to abundant skill sets to explore their potential. The lecture-oriented approach is stale and holds no meaning for the students of the present generation who want to experiment with what all comes their way.

Moving with the times, experiential learning has become a prominent way of education. A chapter of Social Science might be assimilated with theatre education or a concept of metallurgy might do wonders for a student when explained through a poem. Thus, cross-curricular teaching focuses upon applying knowledge in a diverse arena and collaborating subjects with art in its multiple forms thereby promoting joyful learning through experimentation for an ongoing impact.

Art-integrated Curriculum- A Paradigm Shift from Segregation to Integration:- It is indeed essential to accept the amalgamation of scholastic and co-scholastic initiatives for the wholesome growth of the students. The momentous stature of art in education has multi-faceted benefits catering to cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learning.

- ❑ *Inculcation of Life Skills:-* Integrating art in education gives promising prospects for enhancing skills related to problem-solving, decision-making, and critical thinking. It promotes inquiry-based learning and encourages experimentation and exploration thus motivating students to draw conclusions based on their experiences.
- ❑ *Persistent Engagement:-* Moving beyond classrooms breaks the monotonous schedules of sticking to the books. A modification in learning methodology attracts the learners and supports purposeful engagement in fun-filled projects resulting in regular study routines. It also involves those students who might not be interested in studying the age-old necessary subjects.
- ❑ *Impressive Input-output Graph:-* Art-integrated education enhances the understanding of concepts in a joyful manner. The inclusion of art in various disciplines results in improved academic performance as the pupils are confident and prepared to take up challenging tasks also.
- ❑ *Diverse Career Options:-* Involvement in art also opens doors for wider career options for students who want to move away from traditional career options. In this world of technology, students with an artistic bent of mind are taking big strides in the field of web designing, e-portals, doodling, expressions through caricatures, etc.
- ❑ *Augmented Collaborations:-* Working together on any project makes the student feel important and responsible for their contribution. Moreover, they develop team-spirit, a willingness to collaborate with all for achieving common goals and accept the gravity of their role. They develop social and emotional skills. This imbues in them a habit of accountability for their inputs.
- ❑ *Proximity to Cultural Heritage:-* Art education gives exposure to learn about diverse cultures in relation to the socio-economic environment of the time. The students not only limit themselves to the understanding of traditions and customs of their own country but also broaden their horizon and develop their perspectives about the cultures of other countries as well.

- ☐ *Empathy*:- Art education develops acquaintance with emotions, struggles, and realities of people in our circle of influence. The students develop empathy for people from all walks of life, perceive virtues like tolerance, compassion and appreciation. They grow into considerate and conscientious human beings.

To conclude, we need to understand that art integration is not talking about replacing art as a subject but revolves around inclusion of art in all subjects. Art has the power to educate, to enthuse, to enlighten, to engulf and to evolve. Albert Einstein has rightly said,

“It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.”

Work Cited -The article is purely based on my observations and strategies adopted in my school with my teachers and students. It is an outcome of my constant experimentation and innovation in classroom teaching-learning pedagogies.