

SCERT: Chapter on Arts Education

“Art offers powerful opportunities to express our common humanity, challenge assumptions, spark conversation, connect diverse people, inspire wonder, imagine new solutions, and promote action for positive change. Music, dance, the visual arts, film, theater, and writing can also inspire empathy, which is why they have always played a role in social justice movements; art shifts the way people think about the world. Especially for youth, doing art can be a powerful way to give voice to their passions.”-
Jenny Friedman¹

1. Overarching Vision and Goals

- a. Alignment of art education with the broader objectives of education and sustainable development (a holistic approach)-as envisioned in NEP (2020)/SDGs (2015)

Conceptualizing an arts education curriculum can help us achieve many targets stipulated under National Education Policy 2020 like 'achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development'. Arts based learning pedagogy relates to point 1.2 of NEP 2020 which talks about 'flexible, multi-faceted, multi-level, play-based, activity-based, and inquiry-based learning'. It will also take us a step ahead on attaining Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which is 'to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030'.

Art Education has the potential to link with several other SDGs², such as SDG-5 and 10 that aim at encouraging gender equality and reducing inequalities, as arts provide the necessary landscape to challenge stereotypes and provide voices and spaces to the marginalized. Furthermore, it can help in creating sustainable and vibrant communities, promoting and integrating the rich cultural heritage of cities and engaging with communities, contributing to SDG-11 that strives towards building 'Sustainable Cities and Communities'. Art Education can nurture a generation of creative and conscious citizens. Through various creative endeavors

¹ Friedman, J. (n.d.). Executive Director of Doing Good Together. *Use Art to Learn Empathy and Create Social Change*. Doing Good Together Newsletter.

² United Nations. (2015, September 25). *Sustainable Development Goals*. United Nations. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

these citizens can promote social cohesion, dialogue, and understanding, contributing to peaceful and just societies, hence contributing to SDG-16 that focuses on building 'Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions'

Along with improving performance on universally accepted markers and indicators of effective education, an arts based education will make learning spaces vibrant, responsive as well as sensitive. Joyful learning experiences provide children with opportunities to explore their interest areas and growing capabilities³. It would help us get closer to the utopia of creating an educational system which focuses on holistic development of an individual.

b. Linkages with other curricular frameworks:

The Govt of NCT Delhi has rolled out many pathbreaking curricula in their schools. The Happiness Curriculum and Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum (EMC) for senior grade students are examples of looking inward and also outward, in terms of solutions. The Arts curriculum will be aligned to the SEL outcomes for the Happiness curriculum, similarly it will also tie to the outcomes of the EMC and offer career guidance on Art forms.

The Arts curriculum aligned with the Happiness Curriculum and EMC will cultivate a creative and adaptive mindset in students. It will encourage them to think outside the box. This alignment and integration encourages holistic development of children, where they are exposed to a combination of academic skills, SEL and practical skills. The students will be better prepared to embrace challenges, and develop resilience, which are essential qualities for personal well-being and success in an ever-changing world.

2. Content

a. Grade specific content on various art forms (visual/performing and media arts) detailing the key concepts, attitudes and skills

The NCF 2005⁴ had recommended that "the secondary stage is apt for refining aesthetic sensibilities and promoting social values through projects on conservation of the natural and cultural heritage and through opportunities for studying Indian culture, working with artists/artisans of the community, organizing festivals and celebrations of the community at large, display of physical environment and surrounding landscape and their exploration;

³ Shuey, E. and M. Kankaraš (2018), "The Power and Promise of Early Learning", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 186, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/f9b2e53f-en>.

⁴ National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). (2005). National Curriculum Framework. NCERT: New Delhi. <https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/nc-framework/nf2005-english.pdf>

projects to promote creative expression and exhibition of works in visual and verbal forms". In the senior grades, students will be exposed to the technical aspects of "creating", "performing/ presenting", "responding" and "connecting" through varied types of arts (visual and performing), thus building their skills and technical knowledge of the artforms.

b. Introduction and integration of Delhi's cultural and regional heritage, artistic traditions/institutions

In-person exposure to the art in the location where it was created can help children appreciate the nuances of the creation. The artwork can further be studied in detail in a setting after having seen the original. People associated with such art and art spaces can also be consulted to have conversations with children about the process of creation and the thought behind it. Some of the ways in which the cultural aspects can be integrated are listed below:

- *Music:* Delhi's rich music scenario includes Indian classical music and folk songs from various regions, sufi music, international music including western classical music, jazz, african music and much more. The influence of scholars such as Tansen, Ghalib, Amir Khusro and neighbouring states can be felt in the music in Delhi. Exposure to this music in spaces where it is performed can provide students with an immersive experience exposing them to more than just the music. Some spaces for music include Crafts museum where folk artists from all over the country perform, Qawwalis at Nizammudin, and a variety of music festivals which happen across the city, all year round. Institutions such as *Gandharv Mahavidyalaya* and Global Music Institute can also provide a conducive environment to be exposed to and learn more about the music in the city.
- *Dance:* Delhi doesn't have a dance of its own, but it has adopted dance forms from all over the country, such as *Kathak, Bharatnatyam, Odissi, Bhangra*, amongst others. There are dance institutions like *Triveni Kala Sangam, Sangeet Vidya Niketan, Natya Tarangini* and *Kathak Kendra* that teach various dance forms and may be open to collaboration with schools.
- *Craft:* Delhi has a rich tradition of Craftspersonship historically. From *Zari* embroidery, to *Meenakari* jewellery⁵ to ivory and lacquer work, to the making of *itr* (perfumes), to pottery, all reflect the influences of various

⁵ Traditional form of jewellery making that involves intricate enamel work on metal surfaces, creating vibrant and colorful designs

cultures that were readily infused into the art and craft in Delhi. These crafts are still practiced in their original forms and have also evolved over the years, incorporating new ideas and techniques. Institutions like *Delhi Haat*, State emporia and Crafts museum are great places to expose the children to the diverse crafts that exist in Delhi.

- *Theatre*: The city also offers a wide range of plays and theatre performances for audiences to relish, as well as opportunities to learn. Mandi House area forms a hub for theatre enthusiasts to convene and perform at *Sriram Centre for Performing Arts, National School of Drama (NSD), Kamani Auditorium, Little Theatre Group* among others like Blackbox, Okhla and Studio Safdar.

c. Exposure to traditional and contemporary art spaces

- *Heritage sites, museums and Art Galleries*: The city's numerous monuments, museums, art galleries and other heritage sites, provide an ideal setting for middle and higher grade students to begin appreciating art within the cultural context that they are learning in.
- *Monuments and heritage sites* like the Qutb Minar, Humayun's Tomb, Jama Masjid, Jantar Mantar serve as great sites to study art and architecture of Delhi in the local context. Understanding the rich history behind these monuments can help enhance the experience of the structure and further influence the students' creation of art.

d. Overview of the prominent Indian and Western art forms/techniques

Art and craft centers in Delhi include the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), National Museum, KNMA, Lalit Kala Academi, Delhi Art Gallery (DAG), private exhibition galleries and Sanskriti Kendra amongst others. The NGMA houses contemporary art providing a curation of work that can help children understand modern art in today's context. The Lalit Kala Academi, where Indian art is promoted, can provide contextual and localised exposure to students. There are also studios of artists, making this both a place of creation and display of art. The Sanskriti Kendra is essentially a home to craftspersons and artists who collaborate with each other to create. It also has a theatre and an art gallery for exhibitions. Other interesting exposure can include street art like that in Lodhi Street Art and other alternative art spaces like Odd Bird Theatre, National School of Drama (NSD) & and Studio Safdar for immersive experiences of theatre.

Artists from various parts of the city, country or even globally can be brought in to facilitate sessions for the children where creation of art is the focus. Art spaces in the city can also be used as a conducive setting for art-making, after which an exhibition of the work could be organised. Further, working with local art groups and larger scale groups such as *St+Art Foundation* can provide opportunities for children to collaboratively create art in the streets of Delhi. This process could involve ideation, planning, and the final creation of the artwork on streets/ walls / designated spaces in the city.

e. Defining multidisciplinary linkages between arts and other subjects like social science, science, literature, technology:

Students need to be encouraged to appreciate the interconnectedness of disciplines and knowledge. There are many ways in which art education complements the learning of subjects like history, geography, science, literature, technology to name a few. Interdisciplinary assignments will enable students to apply their creative thinking and problem solving skills to address the overarching goals of academic learning. For instance, students can create illustrations or visuals to support the poetry lessons of language classes. Lessons of history, like temple architecture can be combined with clay modeling. Children can create a comprehensive portfolio on the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Delhi, combining learnings from the disciplines of history, civics, geography, languages using technological tools and apps.

f. Introducing the ideas of sustainable art practices: This would involve introducing students to the environmental, social and ethical dimensions associated with creating and producing art. The content should focus on building awareness on climate and environmental concerns and how art as a medium can be used to amplify voices and perspectives in this regard. Students should be encouraged to take up community based projects, which promote the ideas of sustainability.

Students should also be guided about appropriate material selection, where they choose natural materials over synthetic ones, take up art activities that involve repurposing and upcycling and choose eco-friendly materials over synthetic ones, and in the long run reduce the negative impact on the environment. Examples of tradition/cultural art practices that align with the use of natural materials should be shared, which encourages children to take up such practices.

3. Pedagogy

a . Encouraging Teaching methodologies that promote:

- Opportunities for experimentation and honing art skills: Encouraging experimentation and artistic exploration in pedagogy involves creating an environment where students feel free to take risks, try new techniques, and explore unfamiliar art forms. The teachers can encourage this, by planning for lessons and assignments that first expose children to a variety of artforms, artists, eras, thereafter direct children to choose from a variety of topics, materials, tools and techniques, and organize classroom discussions where students actively contribute in their learning process. This will allow children to explore their own interests and artistic expression.

- Development of creative confidence and art appreciation skills: Development of creative confidence will require teachers to provide non-judgemental spaces to children, where their involvement and artistic expressions are valued. The pedagogical approaches should focus on encouraging the process, over the product. Constructive criticism should be offered to students, and mistakes should be viewed as opportunities to learn and grow from. Children should also be encouraged to provide constructive suggestions and feedback on each other's work.

- Opportunities to deliberate on context and perspectives in arts: Classroom experiences must provide children with diverse opportunities for exploring arts from the perspectives of varied cultures, contexts, time periods and how these shape the artworks of artists. Discussions and debates should be organized in classrooms, which builds articulation skills and confidence of children, but would also help children to make connections between the interplay of context and art forms.

b. Engagement and partnerships with Teaching Artists

Teaching artists are practicing, professional artists who have careers as educators. They come from artistic fields like music, theatre, dance, visual arts, writing etc. and operate in a variety of settings where they use knowledge of arts for educational or rehabilitation purposes. Teaching artists are committed to the idea of delivering art education for children as well as pursuing their own artistic ventures to inform their teaching. Teaching artists can provide a tangible link between creative process and arts- based learning.

c. Effective use of Art Labs

Art Labs can be set up as designated spaces for students - dedicated to the study, appreciation and experience of visual and performing arts. The infrastructure requires a studio setup, with a large open hall, mirror on one wall, comfortable flooring and adequate space for movement. It can also have art materials for children to experiment with. Art Labs can function as community spaces where children from the area, even those who are not enrolled in a particular school, can visit and practise the arts. Mobile art labs (a vehicle carrying art materials, technology, screen for film screening) is another model for art exposure to the community. It is worth exploring where a makeshift setup can be installed in schools on designated days and open to the community children. Teaching artists can be enrolled to teach in art labs.

d. More Concepts and Ideas to Improve Pedagogical Practices

Here are some concepts and ideas that encourage constructivist pedagogical practices:

- **Concept of Learning Walls/Boards:** Physical and digital displays on wall, where students can showcase their artworks, ideas and journeys, highlighting interdisciplinary learnings. This can be structured as a group activity, where students in different groups create 'learning walls/boards'.
- **Yearbooks, Repositories and Portfolios:** These can serve as a curated collection of children's artwork, which systematically and creatively showcases their learning experiences, while inspiring other younger students too.
- **Organization, participation and collaboration in developing the Art Clubs:** Participating and collaborating in art clubs can offer valuable lessons and learnings to children that move beyond the classroom and teacher led experiences. Students take ownership of their ideas, and how the ideas translate into practices, while taking in different perspectives.
- **Special discussions by artists/ art practitioners,** exposure visits to studios can help children understand the journey of artists themselves. Screening movies and documentaries on varied themes (lives of artists/ art for social change/ activism through arts) could be an added dimension.
- **Performing/ Presenting through exhibitions/choirs:** Children experience and develop creative confidence when their artwork is presented or performed in front of a live audience. It also helps them to understand the effort of setting up a stage or an exhibition in a professional manner. School Choirs can be initiated, as well as annual exhibitions, events and performances with community/ school involvement can be a useful way to showcase a culmination of all children's efforts.

5. Challenges and Criticism

a. Sensitization towards art education and art career options

There is a need to build awareness and sensitization towards art education among students and various stakeholders, such as parents, teachers, school authorities, officials and policy makers. Sensitization towards art education would mean addressing stereotypes, dealing with misconceptions and preconceived notions of the scope of arts education.

Often, art education has been conceived from a minimalist perspective, associating it with mainly non-academic or leisure time activity, with limited possibilities for full-fledged professional development. The case of art education is repeatedly expected to justify its professional existence based upon whether the exposure to arts can help to raise scores in math, reading, and other academic areas (Eisner, 1998).

Advocacy for arts education needs to be systematically addressed, as it not only enables every child to develop critical thinking, collaborative and creative skills but will also equip children to thrive in the everchanging diverse and global economies of today's world.

b. Creating a balance between theory and practice: While theoretical knowledge provides students with a deeper understanding of art history, artistic concepts, and cultural context; practical application enables students to develop essential technical skills in different art forms.

Hands-on experience allows students to experiment with various techniques, mediums, and materials, which are vital for their artistic growth. Balancing theory and practice allows students to meaningfully apply theoretical knowledge to their artistic creation. This will enable in fostering creativity and personal expression. Practical engagement enhances students' ability to communicate ideas and emotions through their artwork. A good example of integrating theory and practice would be to encourage students to create their own artworks inspired by the concepts/artists studied in class.

Organizing workshops and guest lectures, where artists are invited to discuss their art experiences, and various methods and techniques to produce the art, can encourage students to develop their skills, integrating theoretical knowledge and practical applications. Similarly, taking students out in the field, exploring art museums, art festivals and exhibitions will enable

students to make meaningful connections of art education, integrating theory and practice.

- c. **Adapting content/pedagogy/assessment to meet the needs of students with disabilities:** By adapting content, pedagogy, and assessment to meet the needs of students with disabilities, the art education curriculum can create a more inclusive and empowering learning environment. This will not only benefit the students with disabilities, but all other students as well, by showcasing first hand experiences of integrating diversity, inclusion and empathy in classrooms.

For content adaptation, it is important to apply the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)⁶ (Rose, Meyer & Hitchcock, 2005) in the classroom. The content should be available in a variety of learning formats. The use of technology can be extremely beneficial in this case, such as text-to-speech tools, read aloud tools and various other multimedia resources. Pedagogical adaptation too, can benefit from the use of technological tools. Wherever possible the teachers must create opportunities for peer support and learning. The **assessments** too, should be structured in a way that provides constructive feedback and encouragement to students to build on their skills and enhance their creative confidence. Assessments can also be encouraged in different formats such as art portfolios, multimedia projects, participation in group discussions/collaborative projects and oral presentations. These adaptations would foster a sense of belonging and will ensure equal learning opportunities for all children.

- d. **Preparation of teachers:** Preparation and continuous support for teachers is of paramount importance in effective delivery of the art education curriculum. This would involve a comprehensive approach of looking at teachers' capacity building, as a professional development activity. Teachers have to be prepared to build inclusive classrooms, integrate technology, adapt assessment and pedagogical styles to meet the learning needs of diverse students. They have the additional responsibility of advocating the importance of art education and continuously upgrading to the new and evolving art techniques and practices. This would include laying out a detailed plan for capacity development, highlighting the time, human resources and other resources required, as a continuous process. Collaboration with artists, art-based organizations and various other organizations in the non-governmental space, such as the 'Hobby Hubs' can

⁶ Rose D.H., Meyer, A.& Hitchcock,C. (2005). The Universally Designed Classroom, Accessible Curriculum, Digital Environment: Harvard Education Press: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED568861>

provide the necessary thrust and resources to creatively engage and develop the capacities of teachers. Professional development and support for teachers to enable effective pedagogical practices should be a key feature.

- e. **Limitations of resources (materials, equipment):** The limitations of resources, specifically materials and equipment, can significantly impact the quality and scope of art education in schools. These limitations may arise due to budget constraints, lack of availability, or inadequate infrastructure. Art supplies such as paints, brushes, canvas, clay, and other materials/mediums are essential for students to experiment with different art forms and techniques. Collaborating with artists/art based and art organizations and NGOs can provide a way to bridge the gap between the existing resources and the required ones. Students and teachers must also be encouraged to use resources judiciously. Recycling and creating art using used/wasted materials should also be encouraged, which not only expands creative horizons, but also provides them with an alternative perspective of problem solving, collaboration and creativity.