



NEP 2020 and Art Integrated Education

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Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 designates Art-Integrated Education (AIL) as a primary, cross-curricular pedagogical tool. Rather than treating arts as separate subjects, the policy mandates weaving local arts, music, dance, and drama into mainstream subjects like Math, Science, and Social Studies to ensure joyful, experiential, and culturally grounded learning. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 makes Art-Integrated Education a core pedagogical approach rather than an optional extracurricular activity. It uses art, craft, music, dance, and theater as tools to teach mainstream subjects, ensuring joyful, experiential, and culturally rooted learning across all stages of education. Art-integration is a cross-curricular pedagogical approach that utilizes various aspects and forms of art and culture as the basis for learning of concepts across subjects. As a part of the thrust on experiential learning, art-integrated education will be embedded in classroom transactions not only for creating joyful classrooms but also for imbibing the Indian ethos through the integration of Indian art and culture in the teaching and learning process at every level. This art-integrated approach will strengthen the linkages between education and culture.

Understanding Art-Integrated Education: Art-integrated education means using art forms as a primary medium for learning various subjects. Instead of treating art as a separate subject, it is woven into the teaching and learning process of subjects like science, mathematics, social studies, and languages. This approach involves activities like drawing, painting, drama, music, dance, and sculpture to help students understand and explore concepts.

What is Art-Integrated learning?: In simple terms, Art Integrated Learning means using art to teach subjects like Maths, Science, or Languages. It is not an extra drawing period. It is about using a paintbrush to understand symmetry, or using a folk dance to learn about the seasons. It makes learning feel less like a task and more like a game. In fact, it is one of the

most effective ways to bring joyful learning into a child's daily routine. When a child enjoys what they are doing, they don't resist it. They lean in. Art-integrated learning is an inventive and constructivist learning approach through which students illustrate, experiment & demonstrate the concept through various art forms. Art integration into the curriculum implies exploring academic contents (facts, ideas, concepts, processes, methods) and skill sets to be acquired by a student through the spectacles of various forms of art. Instead of teaching art as a separate subject, teachers are using dance, drama, music, visual arts, etc to teach a variety of academic subjects more engagingly. A 360-degree holistic learning is possible in classrooms by integrating various academic concepts with arts. Cognitive domains along with socio-emotional, behavioural, and psychomotor domain development could be targeted using this.

Why is art integration essential for the classrooms of today?: Integrating arts into the subjects not only brings JOY but also makes the learners ACTIVE which eventually leads to the development of 21st-century skills. Creativity and innovation utilized in the artistic process compel children to think creatively & help these skills come more naturally in real life or in the future workplace. Teaching Learning Materials, Lesson plans, School excellence kits, etc., promote art-integrated learning in LEAD powered schools.

Why Art Integration Matters in NEP 2020: The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is probably the most honest conversation we have had about education in a long time. It admits that memorising facts and vomiting them onto an exam paper isn't working. It asks us to focus on understanding, not just memory. The NEP recommends Art Integrated Learning because it brings subjects to life. It connects education to the real world. It also connects children to their own culture. A child learning about Bihar in Social Studies might create a Madhubani painting to better understand the region. They are not just reading about a place. They are touching its art, its colours, and its stories. By embedding the arts into daily classroom transactions, the policy targets several holistic developmental goals:

Experiential Learning: Students move beyond rote memorization by connecting abstract concepts (like math or science) to tangible, hands-on artistic expressions.

Cross-Curricular Approach: Concepts are explored across multiple disciplines simultaneously. For instance, a social studies lesson on a specific state can be paired with exploring its local folk art.

Cultural Preservation: It emphasizes passing down local arts, traditions, and the broader Indian ethos to the next generation.

Inclusive Education: Arts-based pedagogy provides an equitable way for special-needs children to learn and express themselves, fostering emotional intelligence and empathy.

Objectives of Art Integrated Learning?

To help children understand concepts by experiencing them, not just reading about them.

To make the classroom a place where children feel safe to express themselves.

To introduce students to India's artistic traditions in a way that feels natural and fun.

To build confidence in children who may not shine in traditional tests but have other strengths.

Advantages of art-integrated classrooms.

Deeper Understanding & Longer Retention: Learners who participate in art-integrated classes demonstrate longer retention and articulate deeper meaning in the concepts taught in the classroom.

Provides Authentic and Personally Meaningful Learning: When the learners are involved in art-integrated projects they tend to become personal to the learners, making it more respectful, creative & meaningful work.

Builds Cooperation, Collaboration, and Confidence: Art integration builds an environment of Cooperation, Collaboration, and Confidence which fosters a true 'one class...one team' feeling among students. Students cooperate better with one another and recognize the strengths of their peers by working with one another.

Creates Self-awareness: The arts-integrated lessons create a room for self-expression & self-awareness. Learners get a chance to imagine, create, and move while taking lessons.

Create a Sense of Ownership: During the art-integrated classes, learners can express what they have learned in various subjects through different art forms, whether it is theatre/role play or studying a painting, or writing a poem, art-integrations truly give students a sense of ownership of their work and love for what they have created.

Art Integrated Learning vs Traditional Teaching Methods: Most of us grew up in a system where the teacher talked, and we listened. We sat in rows. We copied notes. We memorised answers. It worked, kind of. But how much of it do we actually remember? The difference with AIL is that it respects how children actually learn. A child is not an empty vessel to be filled. They are a small person with questions, energy, and creativity. If we want to know how to engage students in learning, the answer is simple: let them do things. Let them make things. Let them mess up and try again.

Conclusion:

We live in a time where information is everywhere. A child can Google anything. So, the role of a school is no longer just to deliver facts. It is to teach children how to think, how to feel, and how to express themselves. Art Integrated Learning does exactly that. The importance of

the performing arts in creating a comprehensive and well-rounded educational system is being emphasized in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 (Kumar, Prakash, & Singh, 2021). The NEP recognizes the importance of performing arts in helping students build 21st-century skills and competencies, with the promotion of multimodal learning, creativity, and critical thinking as its key values. To give pupils a well-rounded education that extends beyond academic disciplines, NEP 2020 seeks to incorporate the arts and culture into the curriculum. In order to accomplish this, the performing arts- which include dance, music, theatre, and visual arts—are essential. The NEP acknowledges the enormous potential of creative discipline in promoting students' creativity, inventiveness, and self-expression by integrating performing arts within the curriculum.

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