



(L to R) Jessica Davis, Tara Nunimaker, and Jessica Bradley explain to classmates how to register for the 2008 NAEA conference.

Why Go

to the National Art Education Conference?

Jessica Bradley, Jessica Davis, Tara Nunimaker, and Erika Tsouras

If you've never been to the National Art Education Association (NAEA) conference, or if it's been a while since you've attended, you might be asking yourself, "Why should I go?" As pre-service educators, we have asked ourselves that question many times. Indeed, why should we—with our limited funds—take the time and make financial commitments to attend a national conference? Our

conclusion is undeniable and simple: Attending this event is important to our professional growth. What follows are a few reasons that explain our point of view.

NAEA Guidelines

The NAEA has a strategic plan that includes six core values. One of those values is "participating in art education conferences." Joining NAEA and participating in the

annual conference is a professional commitment.

Content

Workshops, lectures, and seminars at the NAEA conference are aimed at improving teaching practices in the visual arts. From "make and take" workshops to complex reports on research findings, a wide variety of presentations can be found. Presenters, akin to the workshops they

provide, also run the gamut. Teachers in the field, professors, artists, and even pre-service educators are on the presentation agenda. All have something important to share.

Networking

Fostering relationships with association members and officers, teachers, school district supervisors, artists, and other professionals provides untold benefits. For example, when

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you start your first job search, that supervisor you meet at the conference might be looking to hire someone with your credentials. Perhaps the teacher whose workshop you attend might become an online mentor. Quite possibly you'll make contact with a speaker who will encourage a new way of thinking about art, artists, or your students. Such networking is invaluable to your career and professional growth.

Inspiration

Seeing the work of others, listening to research outcomes, and honoring successes is inspirational. It's not unusual to hear seasoned art teachers say that the NAEA conference has motivated them to return to their schools with a fresh outlook. Similarly, it's not unusual for new art teachers or pre-professionals to say that the conference helps them to better understand the complexities of their chosen field. Simply being among thousands of art educators who share similar interests and concerns is inspirational itself.

Commercial Exhibits

Publications and resources to support high-quality art programs can be found in abundance in the commercial exhibits area of the national conference. A visit to the commercial exhibits offers opportunities to sample a vast array of art teaching products. From paint to clay to magazines and posters, you'll find the newest products to support art

teaching. Remember to get to know the vendors while you are thumbing through books, testing new products, getting on mailing lists, and receiving samples. Vendors spend many long hours in the exhibit area and your thanks or warm compliment is deeply appreciated.

Fun and a Sense of Renewal

Attending luncheons and receptions, touring museums, visiting commercial exhibits, and meeting new people and old friends is fun. Whether you are a pre-service teacher (like each of us), a K-12 art teacher, or a university instructor, the NAEA conference provides something for everyone. We all come away from the annual conference with a sense of renewal, ready to implement what we have learned; ready to be better teachers of art. ☺

Tara Nunimaker, Erika Tsouras, Jessica Bradley, and Jessica Davis are the officers of the Northern Arizona University Student Chapter of the NAEA.

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WEB LINK

naea-reston.org/pdf/naea_strat_plan_7-23.pdf