NARST

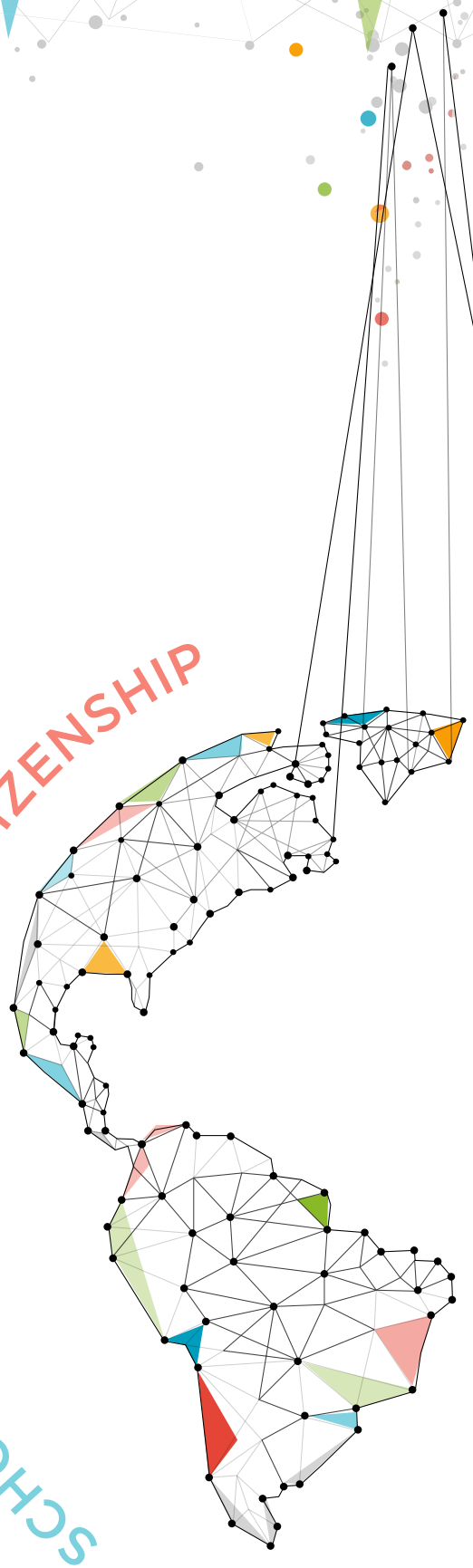
2020

ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

PORTLAND, OR, USA

MARCH 15–18

Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront



SCIENCE EDUCATION ACROSS PLACES AND CONTEXTS

SCHOOL · COMMUNITY · CITIZENSHIP

The Program Chair invites NARST members and others to participate in the 2020 NARST Annual International Conference and to contribute to the 2020 conference by submitting program proposals.

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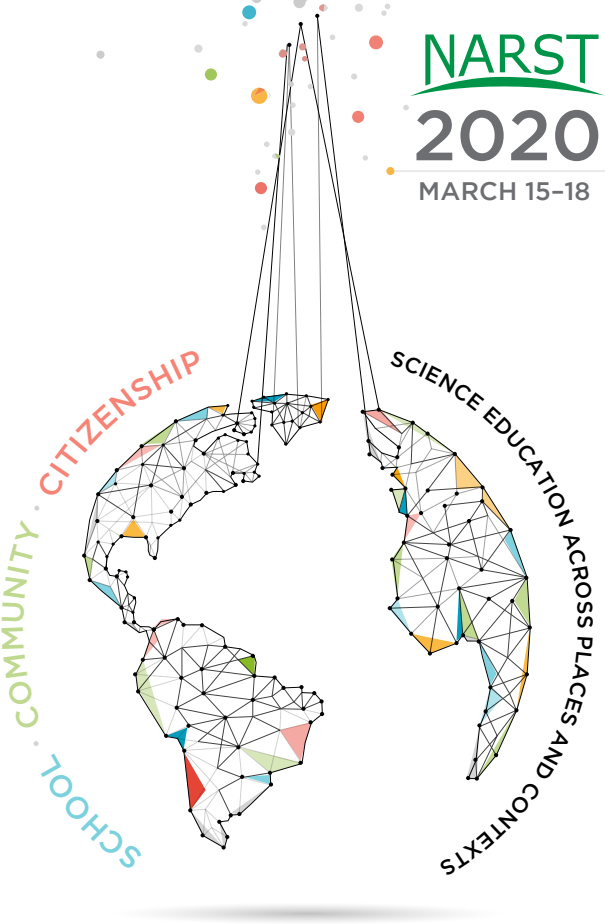
THEME

SCHOOL, COMMUNITY, CITIZENSHIP:

SCIENCE EDUCATION ACROSS PLACES AND CONTEXTS



People learn science in many environments. Initially, the home is where children have their first experiences with scientific phenomena when they notice hot water cooling, the vapor on the bathroom mirror, the sugar that disappears when added to hot water and toy cars that stop moving after they bang into each other. Outside, children see water flowing in a river or down the street, birds on the ground or in a tree, spiders on leaves and bees on flowers. The exchanges between adults and children about these phenomena constitute the premises of science education, and continue throughout people's lives with parents, siblings, friends, children and grandchildren. Schooling makes it possible to examine and grasp these real-life science experiences in formal laws, processes and theories.

School science education, in its various forms, has always attempted to connect students with science to spark students' interest and enthusiasm and to enable them to acquire a deep understanding of what science is and how science is done. Throughout the years, science education research has shown that teaching isolated science concepts and focusing on structures of disciplines distance students from science, whereas learning science in real life contexts about phenomena first rather than laws and theories enhances students' attitudes and dispositions toward science. In order for science to be more relevant to student life it has to be taught in real life contexts and involve the student community in large.

The idea of 'community' can be interpreted in different ways, all of which are relevant to science education. The community can be defined as the people around us who are breathing the same air, drinking the same water and who are exposed to the same environmental hazards that need to be studied before concerted action can be taken. Community institutions such as science centers, museums, public parks and zoos provide places and different contexts for learning science. Unlike schools, these institutions enable multi-generational interaction on and about science. Communities when defined as social contexts in which people act to reduce inequalities, support each other and be united, constitute a context for dealing with public health issues, and the affordances and dangers of technologies such as wind turbines, radiation, smart and clean transportation, etc.

Learning science, in different places and contexts aims at bridging between schools and out-of-school settings, and eliminating the boundaries between age groups since we learn with others at home, in and across communities. A child in rural Canada, Russia or China can watch the same TED lecture as a child in New York City, Beijing or London. Different communities across the world are struggling with the impact of pesticides on public health worldwide. Although in most countries concentrations do not exceed legislative thresholds "safe limits" may underestimate the real health risk as in the case of the simultaneous exposure to two or more chemical substances which occurs in real-life conditions. Do different communities have the same access to organic food? This is simply a small but telling instance of how science, agriculture and public health are related to social justice within and across communities.

To encourage the public to take an active part in setting the agenda for safe food, water, air and transportation; in order to be able to protect our children from dangerous diseases and safeguard the ecosystems that support human life on Earth, we need to involve people of all ages, backgrounds and geographical locations in science and the scientific endeavor. Citizens can take steps by becoming community activists, as members of NGOs, participants in science communication events, and as citizen scientists who are genuinely involved in doing science. All these forms of citizenship can promote science education for life, health and prosperity.

Looking forward to seeing you in Portland!

Conference Chair:

Tali Tal, NARST President

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: AUGUST 15, 2019

The Program Chair or designate **MUST** receive your program proposals for the 2020 Annual International Conference by **August 15, 2019**. This deadline allows sufficient time for processing, reviewing, and evaluating the many submitted proposals in a fair manner. By early July 2020, the call for program proposals will appear on the NARST website.

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