

THE ARTSPARKS ANGLE



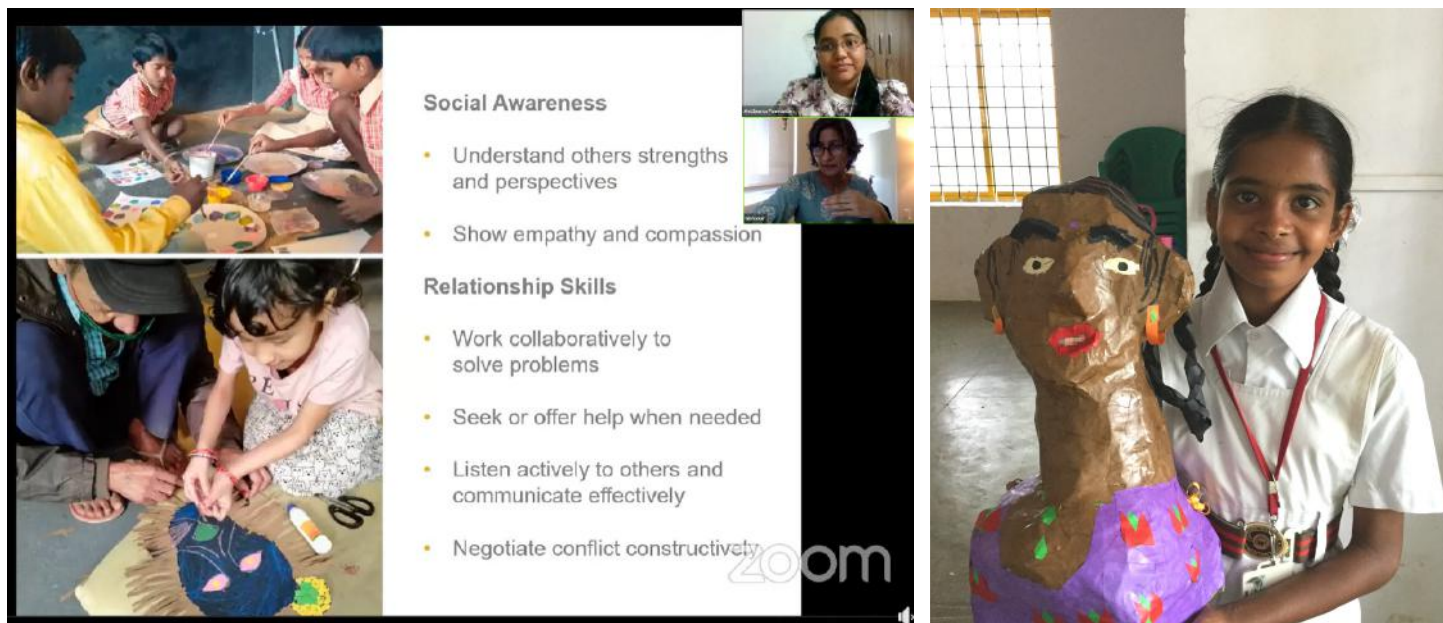
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Welcome Message

We are happy to present the latest edition of '**The ArtSparks Angle**', Professional Learning Program Newsletter. In this issue, we share glimpses of our last month's ArtSparks session on Fostering Social-Emotional Learning through Art. We also have Ridhi Pathak from Swatantra Talim, one of our EdSparks Collective cohort members, sharing her experiences of bringing transformative art education experiences to the children of Ramdwari village in Uttar Pradesh.

Art & Social-Emotional Learning



The July session of ArtSpeaks, focused on exploring the intersections between Art Education & Social-Emotional Learning. According to Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), SEL is defined as *the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions*. Especially during these changing and challenging times due to the pandemic, our children are going through a lot of emotional distress. So, it is important that we look at SEL with renewed vigor to help children to cope with this difficult period. SEL is a life-long process and like any other skill, SEL skills can be learned and practiced. Our discussion focused on how we see the connections between the processes of art-making and SEL competencies.

Highlights of the session

- Art is an ideal space to foster SEL skills because there is no right or wrong answer in the art. And, art embraces multiple perspectives. Therefore, it creates a safe environment for children to freely express their thoughts and feelings.
- The SEL competencies of Self-Management and Responsible Decision-Making are developed through the process of investigation in art-making.

- Through investigation, children learn that if something is not working, they can always try new ways to make it work for them. We encourage children to be comfortable with not knowing, or that things needn't look perfect. Children learn to manage their urges and control impulses.
- The SEL competencies of Self-Awareness and Responsible Decision-Making are fostered through the process of ideation.
- During ideation, children are encouraged to think beyond what they see around or what's possible and come up with creative solutions for the problems that already exist.
- Children are allowed to make their own choices and decisions of how their artwork should look like and what they want to represent through art.
- The SEL competencies of Social Awareness and Relationship Skills are developed through the process of collaboration.
- When children work together to create art, it provides them opportunities to understand others perspectives, listen to and respect others feelings and thoughts, and develop empathy.

To watch the entire session recording, please visit our Facebook page.

Spotlight: Story From the Field

It gives us great pleasure to showcase Ridhi Pathak, Co-founder of Swatantra Talim, our past EdSparks Collective (2020-21) participant, in this section. This excerpt is pulled from Ridhi's Action Learning Project (ALP) case study submitted as part of her participation in EdSparks.

I conducted my ALP with 20 children in the age group between 10-12 years belonging to Ramdwari village, Sitapur district of Uttar Pradesh. The experience was truly insightful and challenging as well. Initially, children faced a lot of difficulties around making non-representative art and open-ended paper exploration as they were new to this approach. They were not exploring the possibilities with paper, but sticking to making representational figures like houses, trees, etc. But, as the project moved forward there was a greater degree of confidence and enthusiasm with respect to open-ended exploration. We encouraged them to push themselves and purely explore paper without making anything that they have seen around.

While children were ideating about their futuristic community, they first came up with the different problems that they are facing such as inequality, religion and gender. I was curious to see the solutions that they would come up with for these problems and a bit skeptical about how they would represent it through collage. One of the groups had come up with idea of making similar houses for the whole community so that there is no difference in people on the basis of wealth. Another group came up with the idea of community kitchen for the community so that all the members can cook and eat together. These instances made us reflect on how children can even find out very simple solutions to complex problems.

"The questions raised by the children as well as the self-reflection during and after the sessions has made this entire experience worth living."

Throughout the process, children challenged their own beliefs, pushed themselves harder, collaborated and brainstormed ideas, and persevered through all the challenges to create their futuristic community collage.

As a facilitator, this whole experience has been extremely enriching and reflective. Some of the reflections after doing the sessions were thought provoking and eye-opening. One of the interesting things was the whole understanding around 'representation'. From early years, we condition children to the notions of how things should look like or be represented in a single form, that it restricts them from thinking beyond. The word 'exploration' got demystified for the children and facilitators during the art-making process. The questions raised by the children as well as the self-reflection during and after the session has made this entire experience worth living.

After EdSparks Collective, I got so many ideas to foster thinking in children such as participatory demonstration, scaffolded lessons and the focus on process rather than product. I got to learn more about the role of a teacher, which is to create a space that becomes a co-learning environment with peers contributing and children having ownership of their own learning.



Upcoming Events

#1: EdSparks Collective 2021-22



EdSparks Collective 2021-22, is a **12-session annual professional development program** offered by **ArtSparks Foundation**, for all those eager to explore the full potential of visual arts in enriching children's learning, growth, and development. EdSparks Collective is supported by Wipro Foundation.

Each session is carefully designed to gradually build participants capacity to design and implement enriching educational interventions that use visual arts to foster 21st century learning and life skills in children.

Our past participants have included all those involved in raising and educating children, namely, Educators, Founders of early-stage NGOs, Executive Directors, Curriculum and Content Developers, Project Managers, Visual Artists, Parents, and so on.

Register for **EdSparks Collective**, explore the educational value of the art and be part of a community of reflective practitioners with a shared purpose!

Dates: Oct. 4 to Oct. 9, 2021 & Jan. 3 to 8, 2022

Timings: 9:30 am to 12:30 pm & 2:00 pm to 5:30 pm

Location: Virtual (via. Zoom)

Last date for registration: Sept. 8, 2021

More details regarding the program, including the registration form, can be accessed by clicking here:

<http://www.art-sparks.org/edsparks-collective.html>

#2: ArtSpeaks Session



Who Am I?

Discovering Self through Art

28th August 2021

10:00 am - 12:30 pm (IST)

In our previous ArtSpeaks session, we discussed the intersections between art education & SEL. Next, join us for an interactive and hands-on session, where you get an opportunity to experience and explore the SEL competency of Self-Awareness through the process of art-making.

To register for the session, please click here: <https://forms.gle/qK6hmEbALPtsCL429>

"Our task is to educate their (our students) whole being so they can face the future. We may not see the future, but they will and our job is to help them make something of it."

—Sir Ken Robinson