

THE ARTSPARKS ANGLE



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Welcome Message

We are excited to present the first edition of ArtSparks Professional Learning Program newsletter: **The ArtSparks Angle**. Through this newsletter, we intend to bring to you relevant and timely information from the field of art education, and highlight ArtSparks' professional development offerings. We hope you enjoy this issue!



Remotely Engaging Children in the Arts

Covid-19 has undoubtedly brought with it an unprecedented set of challenges. For organisations working with children, it has brought up critical questions about how to engage students remotely and effectively during these uncertain times.

ArtSparks Foundation has re-strategized its program delivery model to provide joyful learning opportunities targeted towards children's psycho-social, emotional, and cognitive development using the power of arts.

We conducted a webinar in July—intended to share some of these strategies that ArtSparks has adopted and also on considerations to make while designing art lessons for remote engagement.

Webinar Highlights:

- Participants shared their current efforts to engage students remotely and the challenges encountered. Some shared their experiences applying learnings from EdSparks Collective to conduct art workshops, and observed value in helping cope with these difficult times
- Some considerations for designing and implementing art lessons for remote engagement that were discussed, included:



- Set clear goals and objectives (i) focus on the process of children's learning, rather than the finished art product; (ii) uphold multiple styles of children's representation, enabling all children to feel a sense of accomplishment; (iii) focus on student emotional wellbeing; (iv) enhance development of 21st century learning & life skills (e.g. problem solving, investigation, perseverance, etc.); (v) enhance awareness of society, culture, family, environment; (vi) build connections to and support other subject learning.
- Choosing relevant and familiar themes to make lessons accessible to children—themes based on children's lives and experiences (e.g. myself; my family; my pet; etc.) and themes that invite imagination (imaginary animal; futuristic vehicle; etc.
- Choosing easily accessible materials that children can find around them, and use as a substitute to traditional art materials (e.g. materials from nature; found objects; recyclables; utensils; etc.)
- Embedding opportunities to assess children's learning remotely by gathering data in the form of children's artworks (sent as images), and providing feedback via phone & text.
- Providing learning supports through resource images, instructional videos, and voice notes sent via WhatsApp; prompts sent via SMS; phone calls and other channels such as radio

Spotlight: Story from the Field

We come across many inspiring stories from our EdSparks collective cohort members. This section highlights some of these stories.

This story is by Neeraj Naidu, co-founder of Shiksharth, Sukma district, Chhattisgarh. The excerpt is part of the Action Learning Project at EdSparks Collective Program.

I have been working with children for the past 6 years. In these many years of work, I have juggled with mathematics, language, science and arts and taught children from age 6 to 16. Out of all the subjects that I mentioned above, teaching arts was incredibly tough. I struggled for years thinking how can I take arts to classrooms where children can learn and grow in it and not reduce it to just drawing and painting.

Edsparks was a fantastically inspiring program. Two things very boldly stayed me from the workshop. First is the power of exploration. Like an infant or a toddler explores the world around and learns, exploration of the medium plays a key role before jumping to create an art. Secondly, one doesn't have to be an artist to become an art educator.

After doing the sessions I was hyper excited to take it to my children. The sessions were long but the children were totally explosive. They were not

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bored, angry or confused but were super active and were highly interested. Some even came back during lunch breaks to do more. I was always available in the school with jholas full of art materials..

I also had my share of struggles. But small things like I go to class expecting that a child would easily cut a circle out of collage paper but in actuality she could not. But I don't see this as a problem but an opportunity to learn. Perhaps the problem was with my expectation that this child or that child should create such and such kind of art. Going to Edsparks completely shattered such limited ideas in my mind (something conditioned by my schooling) that art should seem pretty or appear in only one particular way.

As the classes progressed, I could see a growing sense of confidence in children. Children waited and counted days for the next art class. They truly loved making art.



Upcoming Events

Event #1 & 2: ArtSpeaks Webinars



Fostering Imagination through Art

15th Aug. 2020

2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

"No imagination means no development, no development means no progress, no progress and the result will be a dying culture"

- Elliot Eisner

At ArtSparks Foundation, we believe in the power of imagination. Especially during the times of wars and strife, or a global pandemic that the world is facing today, we need people to think beyond the crisis and come up with creative solutions for the future. Art instils our capacity to imagine beyond possibilities beyond the here and now. In this session, we will explore a robust method approach to developing creativity and imaginative skills in children through art.

For more details and to register, mail to:
ramesh.artsparks@gmail.com



Nurturing Curiosity through Investigation

29th Aug. 2020

2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

"The arts, it has been said, cannot change the world, but they may change human beings who might change the world"

- Maxine Greene

Children are curious by default- it is what drives most of their early behaviour. But as they enter the school system, they give up questioning and stop exploring the world on their own. The education system compels the children to 'fit into the norms' and thereby they just become replicas of one another. In this session, we will be exploring the use of art to harness children's natural curiosity.

For more details and to register, mail to:
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Event #3: EdSparks Collective 2020-21



It's with great excitement that we announce **EdSparks Collective 2020-21—ArtSparks' professional development program** for all those eager to explore the full potential of the arts in enriching children's learning, growth, and development.

EdSparks is a 12-session virtual hands-on training program offered by **ArtSparks Foundation**. The program consists of thoughtfully designed 12-session virtual program with elements of asynchronous learning, all guaranteed to inform and inspire.

Dates: Oct. 5 to Oct. 10, 2020 & Jan. 4 to 9, 2021

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

Location: Virtually (via. Zoom)

Last date for registration: Sept. 10, 2020

More details regarding the program, including the registration form, can be accessed at this link:

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

"Give the pupils something to do, not something to learn, and when the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking, learning naturally results."

- John Dewey