

# THE ARTSPARKS ANGLE



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2021-22

## Welcome Message

We are happy to present the latest edition of **'The ArtSparks Angle'**, Professional Learning Program Newsletter. In this issue, we discuss the ten lessons that the arts can teach us developed by Elliot Eisner. We also have Rhea from Bookworm Trust, a past EdSparks Collective participant, sharing her story of bringing transformative art education experiences to the children in Assagao, Goa.

## Ten Lessons the Arts Teach



*The late Dr. Elliot Eisner, distinguished Professor of Education at Stanford University, and a leading scholar of arts education identified ten lessons that capture the value of teaching the arts. He argued that artistic endeavor help children to develop skills such as problem-solving, flexible thinking, perseverance and more. In this article, let's take a look at the ten lessons as presented by Eisner.*

- The arts teach children to make **good judgements** about qualitative relationships. Unlike much of the curriculum in which correct answers and rules prevail, in the arts, it is judgment rather than rules that prevail.
- The arts teach children that problems can have **more than one** solution and that questions can have more than one answer.
- The **arts enable** us to have **experience** we can have from no other source and through such experience to **discover** the range and variety of what we are capable of **feeling**.
- The arts make **vivid** the fact that neither words in their literal form nor numbers exhaust what we can **know**. The limits of our language do not define the limits of our **cognition**.
- The arts teach children that in complex forms of problem solving purposes are seldom fixed, but change with circumstance and opportunity. Learning in the arts requires the **ability** and a **willingness** to surrender to the unanticipated possibilities of the work as it unfolds
- The arts teach students that **small differences** can have **large effects**. The arts traffic in subtleties.
- The arts teach students to think through and within a material. All art forms employ some means through which **images** become **real**.
- The arts help **children learn** to say what cannot be said. When children are invited to disclose what a work of art helps them **feel**, they must reach into their **poetic capacities** to find the words that will do the job.
- The arts celebrate multiple **perspectives**. One of their large lessons is that there are many ways to **see** and **interpret** the world.
- The arts' position in the school curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults **believe** is **important**.

## Spotlight: Story From the Field

*In this section, it gives us great pleasure to introduce Rhea D'Souza from Bookworm Trust. The excerpt captures Rhea's experience participating in ArtSparks Foundation's professional development program, EdSparks Collective, as she conducted her Action Learning Project (ALP). Through the ALP, our EdSparks participants get an opportunity to implement the learnings from the program into the field and broaden their own understandings of art education. The ALP also builds confidence and enables participants to conduct robust art-based interventions within their own spaces.*

I conducted the ALP with children of grade six and above, who were part of the NGO named, Live Happy. Most of the children's families have migrated to Goa from Nepal for better work opportunities. During the first couple of exploration sessions, children were trying their best to create neat representative images rather than exploring the possibilities with paper. But, after repeated encouragement by the facilitators, a few of them started to freely explore paper. The 3D exploration session was the most exciting with all the children focusing on how they could bend, twist and 'build' with paper. They were asking questions and we walked around the room ensuring that everyone understood the process—and mostly had fun!

During the last session of creating 3D futuristic community, the children were at ease. They delegated the work among themselves. For example in Group 1, child A (names have been kept anonymous), who is known for her neat and tidy work from the previous

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sessions was put in charge of finer details. S, the most vocal, was directing the planning the community and R was leading the ideation process. Similarly, in Group 2, M took on neater tasks, V though he was a new-comer on the second day assumed the role of being the 'planner' and N, though easily gets distracted took on the task of adding creative details. In Group 3, which was an all-boys group had the expertise of B, who though was very active in the previous sessions took up a more quieter role, and all the other boys equally contributed. P and T, both new-comers quickly caught up with others. Each group was proud of their own artworks and very enthusiastically shared about their futuristic community.

I learnt so much from children. Each child absorbs and creates art in their own unique way. I also learnt that you don't need to be an excellent so-called 'artist' to be a good art facilitator. Every session is different and every group and sessions have so much of learning embedded within it. Another big learning for me is the importance of planning and preparation for conducting art sessions. There is no such thing as being over-prepared. The ALP has been an enjoyable experience which has boosted my confidence to implement rich art-based interventions.



## Upcoming Event

### Second Half: 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.

Our EdSparks participants for this year are currently in the field executing the Action Learning Project (ALP), as part of the program. Through the ALP, the participants get an opportunity to implement the learnings from the first half of the program within their own spaces and also broaden their understandings around art education. The participants will be back in January—bearing their rich learnings and reflections from the field—to attend the remaining six sessions of the program.

**Dates:** Jan. 3 to 8, 2022

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

**Location:** Virtual (via. Zoom)

*"I celebrate teaching that enables transgressions - a movement against and beyond boundaries. It is that movement which makes education the practice of freedom."*

—Bell Hooks