

THE ARTSPARKS ANGLE



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Welcome Message

We are happy to present the fourth edition of **'The ArtSparks Angle'**, Professional Learning Program Newsletter. In this edition, catch a glimpse of the first half of the ArtSparks Foundation's professional development program, EdSparks Collective 2020-21: program overview, a few of the participants' reflections and artworks. We also have Vedika Thimmaiah, one of our EdSparks Collective cohort members, reflecting on her experiences conducting art-based interventions with children.

EdSparks Collective 2020-21 Report



"Experience in the arts develops initiative and creativity, stimulates the imagination, fosters pride in craft, develops planning skills, and helps the young learn how to work together"

- Elliot Eisner, Stanford University

Art can add tremendous value to children's learning, growth and development. Significant research points to this. EdSparks Collective is a one-of-a-kind, 12-session, professional development program for all those interested in exploring the full potential of the visual arts to transform student learning. Each interactive, hands-on workshop session is carefully designed to gradually build participants' understandings of, and capacity to design and implement, enriching educational interventions that utilize the visual arts to foster the development of 21st century learning and life skills in children.

The first half of the EdSparks Collective was conducted from Oct. 5th to Oct. 10th, 2020. Due to the current Covid-19 situation, this year the program was conducted virtually via. Zoom.

We had a vibrant and diverse group of educators and social sector players from across India. The cohort comprised Founders of early stage NGOs, Executive Directors, Curriculum and Content Developers, Project Managers, Academic Advisors; to name a few. Participants came from the following organizations:

- Adhvan Foundation, Maharashtra
- Bookworm, Goa
- Chale Chalo, Orissa
- Fourth Wave Foundation, Karnataka
- I-Saksham Education and Learning Foundation, Bihar
- Kanavu, Tamil Nadu
- Kshamtalaya Foundation, Rajasthan
- Let's Educate Children In Need, Uttar Pradesh
- Makkala Jagriti, Karnataka
- Nature Conservation Foundation, Karnataka
- Patang, Orissa
- Simple Education Foundation, New Delhi
- Swatantra Talim Foundation, Uttar Pradesh
- Unnati Institute for Social and Educational Change, Maharashtra

We engaged the participants in different sessions including robust teaching methodology in arts, stages of artistic development and exploring different art mediums such as oil pastels, collage, painting etc. The participants had an opportunity to experience every session through hands-on activities and understand how the unit is strategically designed to trigger the development of eight core 21st century learning and life skills in upper primary and secondary aged children, namely: problem solving; flexible thinking; investigation; creative risk-taking; close observation; perseverance; collaboration; communication. Through this hands-on experience, participants were given an overview of how a well-structured and carefully designed curriculum unravels gradually leading to deep and meaningful learning outcomes.

At the end of every session, the participants shared their reflections. Some of the responses included:

"In Indian education context, we consider Art as an extra-curricular subject, but after experiencing all these sessions by myself, I realized that art should be placed along with other subjects in the school curriculum. It will help in developing some critical learning and life skills in children like any other main subjects"

"I kind of believed in the idea of giving kids a blank sheet of paper and let them explore their creativity. but now I understand how a scaffolded approach can be so much more helpful to let them explore and try different ideas. I didn't actively think about this earlier but now when I think about it, I myself am reminded of times when I went completely blank when without any support, I was told to produce something magical"

"For me participatory demo was a new concept. Generally when we see a demo, it's always a one sided activity and so I was against it. But, the participatory demo involves learner into the process"

"Scaffolded learning was a very important concept for me - I'm a big believer in 'free' learning, but it's also important to give guidelines and suggestions for students to build on. Also, prioritising learning aspects in the classroom - for example giving children time to create over spending time helping with clean up. Also, being less attached to the final product and the process of material exploration is so powerful!"



Spotlight: Story from the Field

It gives us great pleasure to showcase Vedika Thimmaiah, past EdSparks Collective (2019-20) participant, in this section. This excerpt is pulled from Vedika's Action Learning Project (ALP) case study submitted as part of her participation in EdSparks Collective.

I have no prior experience in the education sector, which is why I was a little nervous of doing this project. I decided to work with a group of students who belonged to the Indiranagar Government Primary School.

During the first session of 2D exploration, all the students were very excited. Since this was the first time they were working with art materials, they were curious and engrossed. During the second session of 3D exploration, some of the students needed a little nudge to explore different sizes and structures. I felt that most of them were stuck with one size. I would approach them and try to show more ways in which they could add to their explorations. I felt that some students were naturally exploring and experimenting different things; while others needed more guidance. Most of the children were very fully engaged in the activity but there was one child, in particular, who refused to sit with all of us. Every time he used to walk away from the class. But one day, I gave him few papers and simply asked him to explore it. He was so excited to tear, cut and manipulate the paper in different ways. From then

"During the interventions, I realized that the skills we were trying to inculcate amongst the children are also the skills that I needed for facilitation, especially; Problem Solving, Flexible Thinking, Perseverance (a very necessary skill), Close Observation and Communication skills"

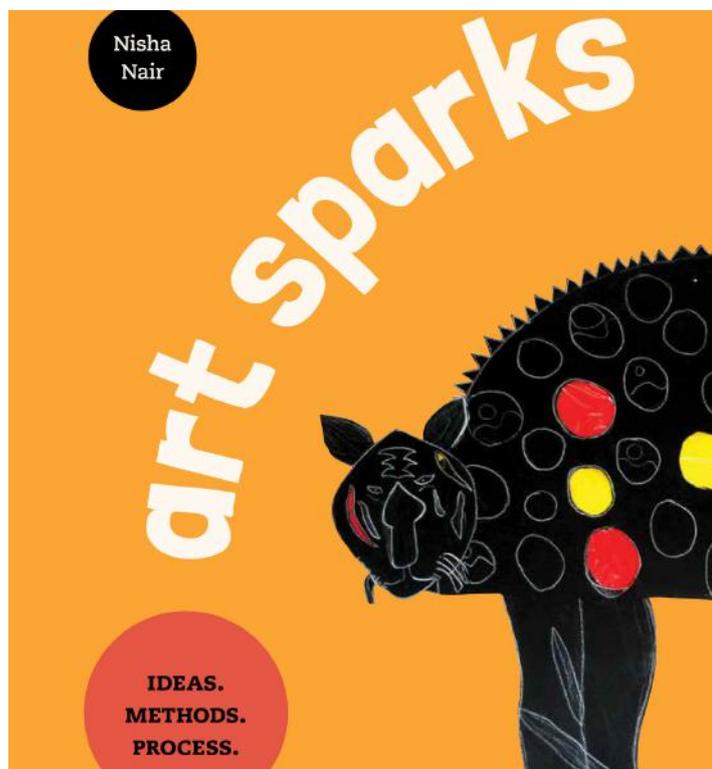
onwards, he started to actively participate in all the following sessions. Whenever children were restless after completing an activity, I used to tell them to walk around; see what others are doing and if they wish they can incorporate it into their work. Initially, children were not comfortable sharing the scissors with others but as days passed by, they soon started sharing glue and scissors effortlessly.

The enthusiasm of the children was something that kept me going throughout the project. The scaffolds provided during EdSparks Collective helped me to facilitate the sessions with confidence and pay attention to finer details and actions. Another important thing I learnt from the program, was the importance and power of giving constructive feedback. During the interventions, I realized that the skills we were trying to inculcate amongst the children are also the skills that I needed for facilitation, especially; Problem Solving, Flexible Thinking, Perseverance (a very necessary skill), Close Observation and Communication skills.



Monthly Events

#1 : ArtSpeaks Session



A Book Talk

Art Sparks: Ideas. Methods. Process.

8th Nov. 2020

5:00 pm - 6:30 pm IST

What do children learn through art, and what is the value of what they're learning? Exploring these questions seriously for the first time in the Indian educational context, this book guides the interested adult through an engaging and uniquely successful process of art-making with children.

Join us for an interactive discussion about this book!!

Speakers of the Event:

Nisha Nair - Author & Founder/Executive Director, ASF

V. Geetha - Editorial Director, Tara Books

The event is live streamed on ASF Facebook page.

Please check out the book here:

<https://tarabooks.com/shop/art-sparks/>

#2 : ArtSpeaks Session



Learning In and Through Art

28th Nov. 2020

10:00 am - 12:30 pm IST

A classroom environment where learning is seen as a dynamic and interactive process, encourages children to explore, think, ask questions of their own, come up with their own solutions and ideas for the problems, embrace diverse points of view and develop deep understanding of themselves and their surroundings. The art classroom provides a wonderful space within which such valuable learning can be promoted.

Join us for an interactive and hands-on session on exploring ways to create dynamic and reflective learning experiences through visual arts.

To register for the session, please click here:

<https://forms.gle/9kuuHe9SVEkCQVSi8>

Our children and teachers are encouraged to follow routine algorithms rather than to excite that power of imagination and curiosity.

- Sir Ken Robinson