

THE ARTSPARKS ANGLE



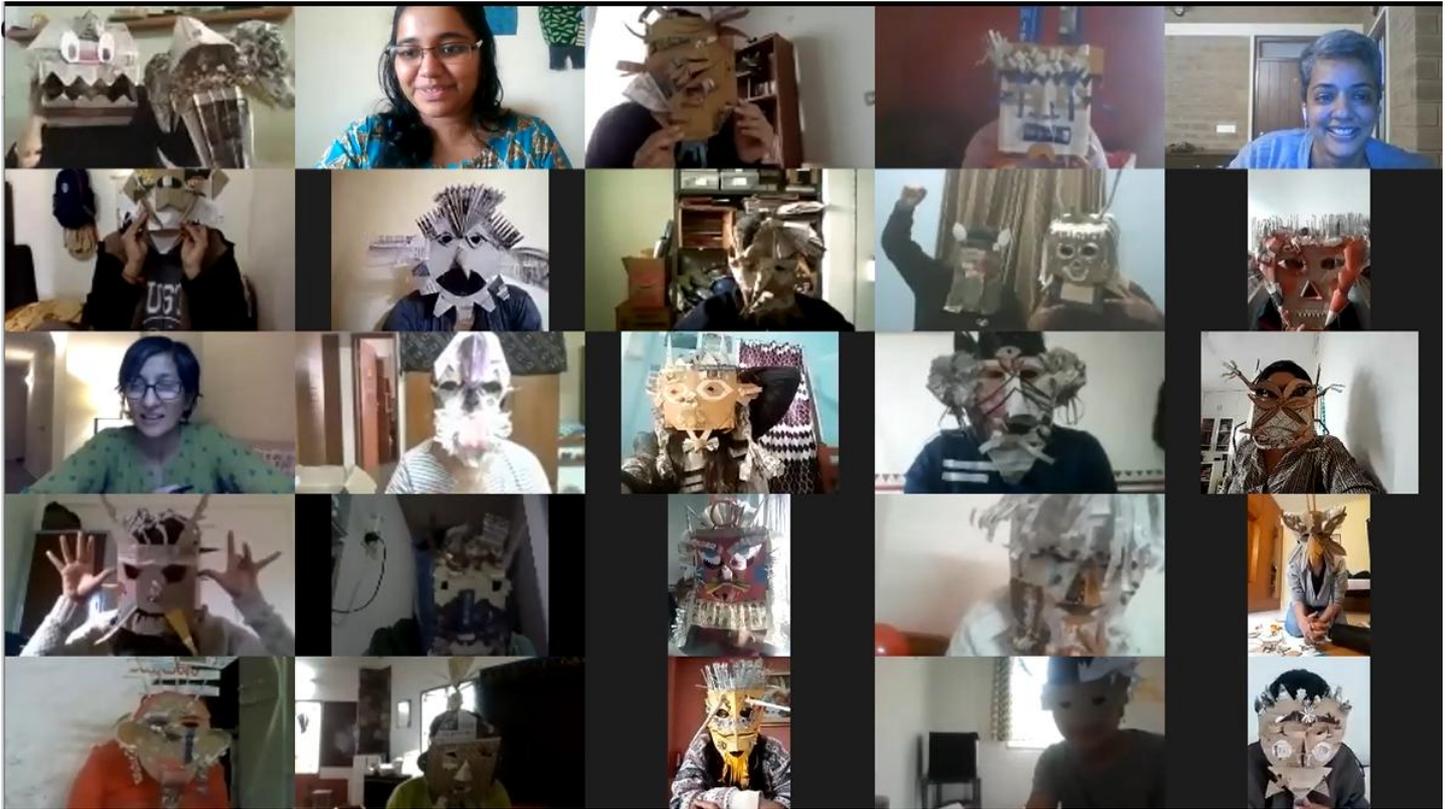
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Welcome Message

Dear Readers, wishing you all a very Happy New Year!! We are happy to present the latest edition of **'The ArtSparks Angle'**, Professional Learning Program Newsletter. In this edition, we cover the highlights of the second half of EdSparks Collective 2020-21 program. We also have Roshni Ravi, one of our EdSparks Collective cohort members, reflecting on her experiences on conducting art-based interventions with the children.

EdSparks Collective 2020-21



The second half of EdSparks Collective 2020-21, ArtSparks Foundation's Professional Development Program, was conducted from Jan. 4th to 9th, 2021. 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.

Similar to the first half, the second half of EdSparks Collective was also conducted virtually via Zoom. In the first half of the program, the participants had an opportunity to experience and explore different art mediums through hands-on activities and understand how these art-based interventions can stimulate 21st century learning and life skills in children.

After the first half of the program, the participants were required to conduct Action Learning Projects (ALP) in the field, back at their own organizations. For the ALP, the participants were provided with a

7-session visual arts-based curriculum and art materials required to implement the program with children in either Early Childhood, Lower Primary or Upper Primary categories. Participants were encouraged to use their learnings from the first six sessions while implementing the ALP. After concluding their ALPs, each participant had to submit an Action Learning Project report to ArtSparks Foundation's team, and present their experiences and learnings with the entire group.

All the participants gained rich learning experiences through the ALP. Even for those who faced challenges, the ability to overcome the challenges on their own was empowering. It helped to establish and strengthen, in the participants' minds, the notion that armed with the right tools and understandings, they were extremely capable of executing a robust and educationally meaningful arts program with the children they serve. The participants also reflected on their role as facilitators in facilitating children's learning. There was a general understanding that if a 7-session program could have such an impact, continued arts programming would be transformative for their children.

In the second half of the program, we focused more on deepening their knowledge around arts education through exposure to curriculum development, assessment etc. The participants designed their own arts-integrated curriculum at the end of the program.

Here are a few excerpts of participant reflections from the Action Learning Project (ALP):

"Some of the reflections after doing the ALP sessions were thought provoking and eye-opening. There were two clear mindset shifts that has happened to me particularly after the ALP. The first mindset shift happened around the fixed vis-a-vis exploratory nature of art work. The art as it seemed to us initially was to bring out a product. But through ALP, the open ended exploration in art opened so many windows of observation, investigation which are far more enriching than just focusing on the final product. The second reflection is the power of participatory demo. Having demo done effectively, it made the process clear to many more students who were disinterested earlier."

"Experiencing the robust art education approach through ALP was truly revolutionary. It changed my entire notion about Art education. Now, I have started to realize the power of Arts as a standalone medium and not just a medium to support learning. Based on my experience during the program and the growth in children through ALP, I am convinced that the 21st century learning and life skills can be developed much more effectively in children through the arts"

Some of the participants shared their experience of engaging with the Arts and Arts Education over the two weeks:

"What an experience it has been! So much learning and unlearning happened. I am taking away so much more by just being part of this dedicated and diverse community of people who want to make the world a better place"

"Thank you ArtSparks Foundation team for so thoughtfully setting this up and getting it to us despite the pandemic. We have had a lot of learnings from this experience and looking forward to taking robust art learning approach to more children"

"After EdSparks Collective, I am constantly thinking of starting a project related to art integration at my organization. I am also reflecting a lot on how much learning opportunities our children are missing without arts in their curriculum in this education system. I am also dreaming big that one day we will get there!! A lot of gratitude to all the participants for bringing in such diverse dimensions to the sessions through reflections"

We are excited to welcome this passionate group of learners and educators into the larger EdSparks Collective Cohort and we look forward to engaging them in the workshops and learning circles as part of the ongoing EdSparks Extended Program.



Spotlight: Story from the Field

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

During my time as a middle school language and social science teacher I always depended heavily on the visual arts to support and enrich my teaching-learning in the classroom. I was also acutely aware of the potential the arts held for social-emotional learning-the EdSparks Collective provided a wonderful forum to discuss many of these ideas and questions about Arts Education.

The Action Learning Project as part of the EdSparks Collective was a great way to experience the power of the arts firsthand. Each of our sessions with primary school students at a government school in Bengaluru was at least an hour long. Initially, I was apprehensive of how this would work in a typical school setting. Would students get bored or restless? Would teachers give us their precious class time? What kind of results would we see at the end of this engagement?

When we began this work we noticed students spent very little time making their drawings. One of the initial reactions when they saw the animal photos was, "hard hoga!" [it will be difficult]. Gradually, with adequate scaffolding in the form of demonstrations, check for understanding and step-by-step processes, their work seemed much more conscious and deliberate. They also took time to revisit their work, observed what others were doing, asked their classmates for help

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and changed and added elements to their artwork.

We noticed that students began taking more creative risks, tried new colour combinations, new ways of manipulating the paper, cutting it to different sizes, using their hands instead of scissors to tear paper and began to explore new techniques in their collages-overlapping, layering and rolling. It was fascinating to watch the students respond to these regular and pedagogically consistent sessions.

After a few sessions, the class teacher of the group we worked with said, "I can see they are learning manners, they are beginning to respect each other."

The biggest change I see in my understanding of arts based interventions is a deep appreciation for need of robust processes and dedicated time for Arts Education in our learning spaces. It is essential to share with and convince educators and schools of the benefits, both explicit and implicit of this kind of robust arts engagement.

Arts Education offers so much; allowing each child the opportunity for unique expression and meaning-making while celebrating the joy of big-little discoveries- from learning how to cut circles to rolling paper to make a curly tail to finding ways to share scarce resources!



Upcoming Event

ArtSpeaks Session



Early Childhood: Learning Through Visual Arts

29th Jan. 2021

5:30 pm - 7:00 pm (IST)

Traditionally, the arts are viewed in early childhood education (ECE) simply as brief opportunities for children's creative expression or to engage them in fun activities. But, robust arts education interventions can provide opportunities for children to foster key skills such as imagination, perseverance, problem-solving, flexible thinking etc. and empower children to communicate, represent, and express their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. Arts provide a rich and unique platform for young children through which they can understand and prepare for the world around them.

Join us for an interactive discussion, where we will explore ways to provide purposeful learning experiences for young children through visual arts.

To register for the session, please click here: <https://forms.gle/uJExupdGVURQoHnQ6>

"For me, the child is a veritable image of becoming, of possibility, poised to reach towards what is not yet, towards a growing that cannot be predetermined or prescribed. I see her and I fill the space with others like her, risking, straining, wanting to find out, to ask their own questions, to experience a world that is shared"

—Maxine Greene