

# 10 Lessons the Arts Teach

By Elliot Eisner, Art Education Researcher and Scholar

**1. The arts teach children to make good judgments 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.

**2. The arts teach children that problems can have more than one solution**

and that questions can have more than one answer.

**3. The arts celebrate multiple perspectives.**

One of their large lessons is that there are many ways to see and interpret the world.

**4. 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.

**5. 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.

**6. The arts teach students that small differences can have large effects.**

The arts traffic in subtleties.

**7. The arts teach students to think through and within a material.**

All art forms employ some means through which images become real.

**8. 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.

**9. 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.

**10. The arts' position in the school curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults believe is important.**

SOURCE: Eisner, E. (2002). *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*, In Chapter 4, What the Arts Teach and How It Shows. (pp. 70-92). Yale University Press. Available from NAEA Publications.

- See more at: <http://www.arteducators.org/advocacy/10-lessons-the-arts-teach#sthash.MwiKAmvy.dpuf>