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.**