

Advocacy and Arts Education

The term *Advocacy* is defined as public support for a particular cause, and a cause near and dear to many of us is **Arts Education**. So, while this *Tip* isn't necessarily about accessibility, it is about gaining a greater understanding of what the arts can do for students, and what information we could share about the power of the arts.

Delaware Division of the Arts recently went through a strategic planning process, and the status of arts education (and life long learning) in Delaware was raised during many focus groups and planning meetings. If you are passionate about *arts for all*, take a moment and determine how you might have a role in advocating for Arts Education. A place to start is with the [Delaware Arts Alliance](#), an arts advocacy organization with a commitment to keeping the arts in Delaware education curriculums.

Arts Education facts to share...

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. NAEA grants reprint permission for this excerpt from Ten Lessons with proper acknowledgment of its source and NAEA.