

MMoFA
Madison Museum of Fine Art
10 Lessons the Visual Arts Teach*

- 1. How to make sound judgments about qualitative relationships.** Unlike some problem settings where single correct answers and rules prevail, the visual arts teach that in many important settings, qualitative judgment rather than rules prevail.
- 2. Problems often have more than one solution** and questions often have more than one answer.
- 3. Multiple perspectives provide valuable information to interpret the world.** The visual arts teach that diverse views identify creative opportunities and solve problems.
- 4. The ability to solve complex problems with dynamic and moving objectives.** The visual arts teach that some problem settings change with circumstance and require a willingness to surrender to unanticipated possibilities as the work unfolds.
- 5. Neither literal words nor numbers factually exhaust what we can know.** The visual arts teach that limits of our language never define the limits of our cognition.
- 6. Small differences and subtleties can have large effects.** The visual arts traffic subtleties.
- 7. The ability to imagine, visualize, and employ a material.** All art forms employ some means to make images real.
- 8. The ability to communicate what cannot be spoken.** In effectively describing and disclosing the feelings a work of art evokes, the viewer learns how to reach into, discover, and employ poetic capacities to effectively express meaning.
- 9. The sole source of discovering and expanding the range and experience of human feeling.**
- 10. Adults believe the above lessons are crucial to a prosperous and fulfilling life.**

*Eisner, Elliott. (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.

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