



Meet. Share. Spark Innovation.

Dear Colleagues,

We offer the following resources to spark conversation and innovation in 15 minutes or less. These “sparks” can be used as food for thought or to encourage conversations among peers.

September’s Topic – The Importance Student Independence

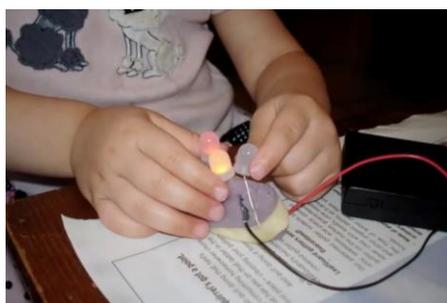
Our society often talks about the importance of being independent, yet many would argue that we have established conditions in schools that limit the independence of our students.

Videos:



Clip #1: [Improving Practice with Sarah Brown Wessling](#)

Looking for ways to improve your teaching practice? Learn about the Gradual Release of Responsibility method of teaching introduced by authors Doug Fisher and Nancy Frey. National Teacher of the Year Sarah Wessling brings you into her classroom as she explains the steps of the Gradual Release method. (4:45 minutes)



Clip #2: [Hands-On Science with Squishy Circuits:](#)

Learn about Squishy Circuits which anyone can learn about online for free. Dr. AnnMarie Thomas is a firm believer in the importance of whimsy in what has become known as “the Maker Movement.” Makers are often independent thinkers with an interest that may or may not have a practical application. She is a faculty member at the University of Saint Thomas in MN, and presented at the 2016 ISACS Annual Conference.(4:09 minutes)



Clip #3: [Mastering Self-Assessment: Deepening Independent Learning Through the Arts](#)

The goal of New Mexico School for the Arts is to create independent, self-sufficient, and lifelong learners. The methods used can have application far beyond the arts. The goal is to move students from being dependent learners to independent learners by building the ability to critically assess their own work. See how self-assessment can be broken into steps to help students be independent in evaluating their own work. (4:45 minutes)

Additional articles, videos, and book of interest:

- **Articles:**

- [3 Strategies to Promote Independent Thinking in Classrooms](#)
- [How Children Learn Bravery in an Age of Overprotection](#)
 - Lenora Skenazy, author of *Free Range Kids*, suggests it is dangerous to overprotect children. This is a short article in Psychology Today on how the loss of independence has come at a cost to our youth.

- **Additional Videos:**

- [The Force as Growth Mindset](#) - A growth mindset is often seen as a key skill in becoming more independent. See examples of the Force from Star Wars to demonstrate growth versus fixed mindsets. (6:18 minutes)
- [The Decline of Play](#) - Peter Gray notes that kids have more and more directed “play” controlled and led by adults. He concludes that the decline of free play has led to increased narcissism, less creativity, and increased depression in kids. (16:03 minutes)

- **Book:**

- [The End of Average](#) by Todd Rose

We hope these resources provide sparks for conversation!

Regards,

The ISACS Professional Services Committee & the ISACS Professional Development Team

PAST SPARKS

Please visit www.isacs.org/ISACSSpark to view all previous ISACS Sparks.

This email has been sent to heads of school, division heads, assistant/associate heads, deans of faculty, deans of studies, directors of professional development and ISACS teacher representatives.