

Visual Art, Adventures in Teaching in Learning



The Ithaca City School District believes art is important to learning. Students have access to art instruction taught by certified teachers throughout their grades K-12 experience. Elementary art teachers are often collaborators with general classroom teachers to reinforce learning in other subjects. Middle and high school art teachers can allow students to delve into areas of personal interest, enabling exploration of “voice” and identity. The following are examples of teachers’ varied approaches to teaching art.

Caitlin Chan, middle school teacher:

“In our choice-based classroom, students work to discover their own artistic voice. Students take risks, creating art at their own pace exploring ideas independently. I see my role as a teacher-mentor to introduce history, media, and techniques. We work together to develop a visual vocabulary to facilitate art appreciation and critique,” observes Caitlin.

Callie Bryant, elementary school teacher:

At the elementary school level artwork is based on themes/big ideas (nature, identity, community, dreams, literature etc.) while connecting these big ideas to what is being taught in the classroom. At the primary level (grades K-2) students explore big ideas and themes in a variety of mediums. The end result is artwork created based on one theme in at least two or three different ways. At upper elementary grades (3-5) a research component is added to the process. Students use peer critiques and personal reflection to track their progress and edit their work. The final result is multiple works of art based on the same theme that are completely different and personal to each artist who created it.

Gina Cacioppo, high school teacher:

At Ithaca High School, the classes themselves are reflective of a “choice-base.” Gina teaches a Fashion Illustration Studio Art class where students can delve deeply into art skills via fashion. This year a Fine Arts Booster Mini-Grant helped Gina bring various designers to class to discuss their visions.

Sarah Locke-Mountin, elementary school teacher:

Sarah will apply her wealth of curriculum ideas to English Language arts on a 2014-15 sabbatical project “Strengthening Student Thinking and Learning, A Visual Arts Approach.” Through research, field work and curriculum development, Sarah will use works of art to develop critical thinking skills and align NYS Art Standard Three (responding to and analyzing works of art) with the NYS Common Core ELA (English and Language Arts) Standards.

