



THE FACULTY CORNER

The Arts and Cross-Disciplinary Teaching at Anacapa:

The numerous forms of art in the world enrich our lives in countless ways and are arguably some of humankind's greatest achievements. Anacapa takes pride in emphasizing the importance of this essential element of education. In this month's Faculty Corner, six teachers who teach different art forms at Anacapa share their thoughts about how the arts support other disciplines as well as the important personal life skills which our students gain by studying art.

Music—Hugo Macario

The curriculum of Anacapa's Music of the World class overlaps with many other subjects. One obvious example is when students learn where different kinds of music come from and how people live there (Geography). We also look up the origins of a particular music being studied and discuss how that music has been influenced by the interactions of people moving around the globe (History). Music is tied closely to celebrations, ceremonies, and dance, and each culture has its own particularities (Performing Arts, World Religions, Global Culture). Through music, people express feelings and thoughts that are linked to poetry, literature, and folk tales (Language). And last but not least, the students of Music of the World have the opportunity to play an instrument and learn how to read music and interpret new symbols (Math). Being aware of the world's diversity of music, cultural traditions, and customs offers students the opportunity to appreciate diversity in a different way and pushes them to go beyond tolerance to develop an open mind toward the world and its peoples.

Photography—Alison Strellich

It's always fun in Photography to watch the "lights go on" as students make connections between what we are studying and what they have learned in other classes. When we studied the work of Henri Cartier Bresson as part of our study of principles of design and composition, the students pulled from their lessons in History in order to understand the context of much of the work. Cartier Bresson covered the Spanish Civil War, post WWII Europe, the Chinese Revolution, the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi and its aftermath in India, and much, much more. As well, Cartier Bresson's work offers endless examples of the use of design and composition principles. Students love connecting these principles with what they have learned in Studio Art, as when they were recently given an assignment to shoot portraits using *chiaroscuro*. Math ties in as the students learn equivalent exposure formulas in mastering the juggling act of aperture, shutter speed and ISO/ASA. They need to be able to understand these measurements of the capture of light, and how, in a mathematical way, they differ from each other. With our recent trips to see photography work at the Natural History Museum, the Santa Barbara Art Museum, and Santi Visalli's photographs at Cal State University Channel Islands, the well-rounded education of the Anacapa student was evident. It is such a pleasure to work with these students!

Studio Art and Art of the World—Suzie Sichi

Studio Art and Art of the World are classes that work to build connections as well as personal confidence and skills. These classes relate to many ideas from other disciplines, linking concepts and information which augments comprehension. For instance, a timeline of history, which might be bewildering at first, becomes understandable when the styles of artists like Leonardo da Vinci (Renaissance-1500) and Hoch (Dada-1920's to 1930's) are connected to their particular eras.

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While many disciplines focus on learning what somebody else did or how something else works, students in these classes have the opportunity to actually make something original themselves, which enhances fine motor skills, develops creativity, and builds confidence. Studying world cultures and traditions helps students appreciate the vast diversity of visual expression on our planet, from the deep earth colors and patterned forms of Aboriginal bark paintings to the flamboyant, brilliantly colored Carnevale masks of Venice. Critical thinking skills are also developed by analyzing why a particular piece might impress viewers to such a degree that it becomes nearly universally recognizable, such as Munch's "The Scream."

Ceramics—Paula Campanelli

Life is a process. There are ups and downs, joy and sadness, success and disappointments. Pottery, much like life, is a process too, and by doing ceramics students learn patience and persistence in a very tangible and transferable way. The difficult part in learning pottery is how to turn a lump of clay into a successful bowl, or plate, or sculpture. At first it can be frustrating, but by becoming patient and persistent, students can take that lump of clay as far as they want and gain the satisfaction of creating an amazingly wonderful piece of art. This process of trial and error, as well as the outcome of achieving something good at the end of it, helps students learn to understand and love the learning process itself and can be applied to other disciplines.

Documentary Film—Emily de Moor

Students in the Documentary Film class have chosen to produce a piece on mental illness in the homeless population, and they have been working very hard to analyze and synthesize the information they gather. They have conducted six interviews so far with local organizations involved with the issue, and they have two more interviews to go before beginning the editing process. The students are learning a great deal about mental wellness while researching, conducting interviews, and using cameras as they work to uncover the personal, social, economic, and political drivers of homelessness. The students hope to help unravel the stigma surrounding the issue with their film. This project also ties in nicely with Anacapa's goal of completing 35 service projects by the opening of school next September, and the class contributed to that goal specifically when we helped serve dinner at the Santa Barbara Rescue Mission several weeks ago.

Performing Arts—Dillon Yuhasz

So much of what students do in Anacapa's Performing Arts class applies to other areas of their lives. When acting is brought up, the obvious assumption is that acting helps make people better public speakers, yet what we learn in theater is so much more than becoming just an effective public speaker. It's about understanding the vast range of human motivation and emotions, and then learning to feel comfortable expressing yourself in front of others. This is a skill that becomes invaluable, not just in other classes at school, but also in life.

The arts thrive at Anacapa. By providing our students with ample opportunity to experience art in numerous forms, we help them experience uncountable cross-discipline benefits, make connections, discover yet another way to find context and meaning, and become stronger, more capable individuals.