

INNER-CITY ARTS
**PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**
INSTITUTE

THE BIG IDEAS

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At Inner-City Arts, our goal is to provide opportunities for creative exploration and expression in a safe and supportive environment. These Big Ideas serve as touchstones as we explore the value and process of this work. We explore them together so that you are empowered to provide these same opportunities in your own environments.

1 Validate the Creative Impulse

- In a student-centered learning environment, each student is validated for his or her creative impulse, even if it is not what was initially described or requested.
- Students are guided to expand their thinking and explorations from where they began to where they are inspired to go, not only to where we are trying to take them.

2 Transforming Our Language Transforms Learning

- By letting go of judgment and a right/wrong perspective when speaking to students, we can transform the language that we use.
- When positive, nonjudgmental language is used, students are inspired to believe in their potential.
- When the language of “choice” is employed, individuals experience the cumulative effect of their decisions – in creative practices and in every situation.

3 A Creative Classroom Community Empowers Students

- Creating together in the arts provides opportunities for students to share their ideas and perspectives.
- Being honored for one’s ideas and perspectives contributes to feeling empowered in a community.
- Being empowered in a classroom community contributes to students becoming active, engaged, empowered citizens.

4 Engagement is the Key to Learning

- Engagement feeds emotion, emotion creates memory and memory facilitates learning.
- The arts deeply engage a broad spectrum of learners so, through the arts, all learners are provided with enhanced opportunities for learning.

5 Responsive Relationships are the Key to Thriving Schools

- Responsive relationships are when individuals respond to each other with open minds and hearts, rather than reacting from assumptions, preconceptions or judgments.
- In responsive relationships, people feel seen, heard and valued, so confidence and sense of self can grow, social-emotional learning can thrive, traumas and stressors can be supported mindfully and restorative practices can succeed.
- When all members of a school community are engaged in responsive relationships, schools can thrive.

6 Students are Resources to Tap into, Not Just Behaviors to Manage

- Behaviors that seem “out of bounds” or “off-task” are often indicators of a student’s strengths, natural inclinations for ways of learning, unexpressed feelings or unmet needs.
- Tapping into these inclinations or expressions often provides a new idea, direction, perspective or path of accessibility for the individual learners in a group or for the entire group itself.

7 Name What You’ve Done vs. Do What You’ve Named

- If children FIRST experience creative exploration and THEN describe and connect their experiences, the learning is more relevant to their lives.

8 Inner Self-Esteem + Outer Self-Esteem = High Self-Esteem

- The experience of creating (“inner” experience) combined with a reflective process (“outer” experience) leads to high self-esteem, contributing to a greater potential for believing in one’s ability to learn.

9 It’s All About the Connections

- Creative process and exposure to art expands a child’s view of the world and his/her connection to it.
- Connections between the arts and other content areas facilitate deeper engagement and enriched learning.
- Connections between students and between students, teachers and administrators contribute to a strong sense of self and sense of place, laying the foundation for academic, personal and creative success.

10 The Creative Process Naturally Meets Educators’ Goals

- Increases focus and concentration while developing problem solving and critical thinking skills
- Integrates curricular areas and meets Academic Standards
- Stimulates and develops all of the Multiple Intelligences
- Makes learning and teaching fun!