

# INTRODUCING THE M.A. PROGRAM IN INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTS INFUSION AT TOWSON UNIVERSITY

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Towson University's MA program in Interdisciplinary Arts Infusion started two years ago in Fall 2014 and saw its first graduating class this May. Growing out of the Post-Bac Certificate in Arts Integration that Towson began offering in 2007, the creators of the MAIAI program decided to look even broader when they designed the program. The AI efforts at Towson have always embraced integration with all of the various art forms and focused on connections between them so maintaining an interdisciplinary focus was an obvious choice. While arts integration in schools continues to be a major focus for MAIAI, we chose to name the program arts *infusion* because we recognize that the arts can be meaningfully infused into many sectors of society beyond schools. This includes communities, health care and corrections settings, corporate and civic realms, and with marginalized and vulnerable populations. Given that, we wanted our students to be able to explore all of those rich possibilities. Consequently, we are designed to address the interests of dedicated teachers, teaching artists, and school administrators who want to deepen their arts integration

knowledge and skills, but we also welcome those with an entrepreneurial spirit who seek to stretch themselves in new directions. The result is that the MAIAI program attracts a wonderfully diverse range of students.

The program is 36 credits and it is designed for working professionals. All courses are offered in the evening and students can take just one or two courses each semester, depending on their needs. Arts infusion practices are very hands-on so most of our courses are on campus and taught in our beautifully appointed Center for the Arts. Where possible, to accommodate busy schedules and long commutes, we have been adapting some of our courses to become blended online courses that meet in-person, perhaps only four or five times each semester. Classes are taught by Towson faculty as well as guest faculty who are experts in the specialized areas we explore. Our programming includes a wonderful array of guest artists and speakers, attendance at arts events on and off campus, site visits, panel discussions, conferences and more. For summer 2018, students will now have the option of a study abroad program to Berlin, Germany to explore the ways in which artists, arts organizations, and schools are employing the arts in innovative ways to support and engage refugees. We have also just made it possible for students to be admitted for Fall, Spring, or Summer semesters.

There are many exciting things happening with the MAIAI program. In fact, we thought it would be helpful for readers to hear directly from some MAIAI students. Here's what they have to say:

**WHY DID YOU JOIN THE MAIAI PROGRAM?**

I decided to join the MAIAI program because I was at that point in my career as a teacher, that I needed to go back to school and get my master's degree to keep my certification. I was currently at a great new school, my friend who was already in the program told me about this arts integration masters and it was intriguing to me since I was at an Arts Integration based school and felt this could provide me more knowledge about this type of teaching, pedagogy and be a resource in my school for other colleagues. If I was ever to leave the teaching profession I could have a broad understanding of how art can be used in other venues in other fields. – Laura, Art Teacher, Baltimore Lab School, Baltimore City

The MAIAI program offers a unique graduate experience that both meets my needs as a current visual arts educator and also opens the door for new career opportunities and connections. I initially was interested in Arts Integration programs, but when I saw course listings for the MAIAI program, I knew it was the perfect match. – Kristen, Elementary Art Teacher, Harford County Public Schools

**WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST ENJOYABLE PART OF BEING IN MAIAI AND/OR WHAT ASPECTS HAVE LED TO THE MOST SIGNIFICANT LEARNING SO FAR?**

One of my favorite parts of the MAIAI program is the camaraderie. My peers are also my professional colleagues, so we have a lot in common. We are always bouncing ideas off each other.

Also, the instructors have been great. They are knowledgeable and have diverse experiences in their fields. – Erin, Art Teacher, Baltimore County Public Schools

I have become a more well-rounded arts teacher, and have learned that you don't have to be a master of all art forms, you just need to be able to understand and speak the language. – Lando, 11th grade English and Theatre Arts teacher, Anne Arundel County Public Schools.

**FOR VISUAL ART TEACHERS, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO OTHER VISUAL ART TEACHERS ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF THE MAIAI PROGRAM?**

I've taken away new teaching strategies and ideas for projects I want to try with my students.

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I am always inspired to try new things in my classroom. – Erin, Art Teacher, Baltimore County Public Schools

The MAIAI program has allowed me to expand my teaching practice and incorporate arts integration and interdisciplinary work into my curriculum. I love having the unique opportunity to work side by side with a wide variety of teachers from different grade levels and subjects. Working with a variety of teachers, all with a passion for the arts gives me the skills and confidence to collaborate with classroom teachers at my school. – Kristen, Elementary Art Teacher, Harford County Public Schools

The MAIAI program will only make you a stronger teacher. It will provide strategies that you may not have thought of or done. It opens up a new way of engaging your students that works in and out of the art room. The strategies bring other subject areas into the art room. It's cross-curricular. – Barry, Art Teacher, Baltimore County

If you would like to learn more about MAIAI, visit our website at [towson.edu/maiai](http://towson.edu/maiai) and look for us on Facebook.



**Current MAIAI student Leshe Anderson with Program Director Kate Collins.**  
*Photo by Kanji Takeno*