

Partnering with New Communities Best Practices

Connecticut Office of the Arts - Teaching Artists 2024

Vinny's Group:

- Don't assume ability/inability
- Be patient and adaptable. Roll with changes in the moment
- Expect the unexpected and be ready to adapt
- Be prepared to change expectations/outcomes
- Flexibility/adaptability and improv skills!
- Know that you are entering a space that can be variable and filled with the unexpected
- Exercise empathy and patience

Jade's Group:

- When approaching a new community, try not to be too formal. Be open!
- It's important to get to know the director and the person who invited you, but note that it is also very important to know the rest of the staff. They can be very helpful when it comes to the actual running of the class
- Not only do we have to get to know our participants, but teaching artists can also ally with them. We can learn a lot from the participants - such as what the community is like, folks' preferences, culture of the center etc.
- Building trust is important - come to your participants' levels and understand their needs, respect/honor their autonomy as they may share things that are personal. Let them introduce themselves
- Flexibility is crucial. Always good to have a class plan but be flexible to adjust
- Learn from mistakes/experiences. Be mindful of pronunciation/preferences

Asma's Group:

- Appreciate your students, your organization, and the various staff that help make the teaching artist's work possible.
- Have a toolkit available of options so you can pivot to meet the needs of your new community
- Make sure to integrate the family and social group of folks you are working with to help hype the experience
- When entering a new classroom, try to make allies with the most "obnoxious" person, or the person who rubs you the wrong way. That could be the one who is constantly changing the course of your class. Make that person your ally, give them activities to run etc.
- Have fun!