

Partnering with New Communities Best Practices

Indiana Arts Commission - Teaching Artists

Daniela's group:

- Allow space for conversation about the social and emotional needs of your students when possible.
- Enter a new community with the attitude of “how may I be of support?” to the program/facility?
- Stay flexible with students and administrators.
- Make the effort and take the time to connect with students one-on-one about their class experience.
- Be aware that in a new community there may be participants who know each other for a long time and very well, there may be “cliques”. Do your best to create new connections among your students.
- Set clear expectations and boundaries within your classroom from the beginning.

Clark's group:

- Be prepared to pivot how you approach teaching your art form to your plan and your audience.
- Be aware of your body language and your facial expressions.
- Be sincere, open-minded, and curious.
- Stay flexible, be welcoming, and have fun!
- Don't take yourself (or others) too seriously.
- Enjoy the process.
- Use a breath mint.

Annie's group:

- Listen and observe the new community to get to know them.
- Identify folks who seem to be positive and supportive of the programs - who might be your ally?
- Seek out the program manager or a person who is in a position to make decisions, and make contact with that person.
- Get to know the people that work there - all the people you can - Who are they? What are they interested in? How can you get to know them better?
- Propose a curriculum.
- Come in with a flexible plan.
- Take the burden off of the host organization/center by showing them that you are there to give a service to their patrons that they will enjoy.
- Give presentations or demonstrations of the work.

Dane's group:

- Get to know the culture and understand how protocols work within it.
- Be transparent about your own learning curve and adaptations of your curriculum and teaching style.
- Get to know the person who hired you, and/or the activities director and see what their vision is for the program.
- Assess and make adjustments according to the people in the room.
- In a way, YOU are the person you need to get to know. Adapt to the personalities of the group, learning styles can differ.
- Sometimes we have to slow down our curriculum, or adapt in front of our students.

Lynda's group:

- Connect with the admin and introduce yourself. Connect about your program and explain what it provides to the organization to build trust; know who is in charge.
- Try a demo class to connect with staff, administrators, and the influencers to understand what is important, interesting, and possible in the space and with the participants.
- Communicate clearly with staff, admin, and participants.
- If possible, share the work and the successes of your daily work with those who are in charge.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities, and have a back up plan for this.
- Watch your assumptions about your participants; understand who your participants might be and what their needs are.
- Create a budget that is reasonable for quality programming that supports you and the materials and the culminating event.
- Understand funding sources and expectations for programming.