

Partnering with New Communities Best Practices

Nevada Arts Council - Teaching Artists

Sarah's group:

- Start by approaching staff other than top leadership – e.g., secretary, librarian – who are responsive and can recommend the best person for you to talk with
- Demonstrate humility and avoid making assumptions
- Learn about and respect cultural differences
- Remain teachable
- Be clear in articulating goals and plans, benefits to potential students
- Be aware of the possible challenges related to the difficulty of sustaining consistent staff relationship in communities with high turnover

Vinny's group:

- Assess early on who is in the space, how you set up the space and make it comfortable for everyone
- Keeping track of all the key players who can help you. Gratitude goes a long way!
- Address issues or disruptors that come along the way
- Locate the allies or supporters who can lend a hand along the way
- The more folks you can involve actively, the better!
- Work creatively within the limitations of the particular space or community you're working with

Daniela's group:

- Use artist demonstrations as a way to connect with prospective students in advance of your program. Introduce yourself as an artist first
- Use games and icebreaker activities to establish a safe space for learning
- Make meaningful connections with organizational staff and make sure you have an open line of communication
- When met with opposition, make sure to clearly communicate the goals of your program and the difference it will make in the lives of the participants
- Always be ready to adapt

Clark's group:

- Do your research about the population, check your inherent biases, figure out how to best serve them, identify resources (in-person and online resources)
- Make it clear that you're here to offer something, not to take
- Janitors rock! They may have the hook-up to what you need!

- In the big picture, it's about who's running things and what kind of support they'll give you; sometimes it's more about your everyday points of contact that help the most
- Use of appropriate space is key - who can facilitate that?
- Identify who knows the logistical info
- Find out the diversity of the participants and adjust accordingly
- Tell personal stories about your challenges and growth as an artist to help participants overcome fears that you as the teaching artist do the art form "right" and that they will likely do it "wrong"
- Being consistent with what you're up to will accumulate trust
- Emphasize the process over the product; do your art form along with them
- Allowing for feedback among participants and by teaching artist - done constructively - can really help with establishing trust and encouraging vulnerability