

Partnering with New Communities Best Practices

Phoenix Center for the Arts - Teaching Artists

Dane:

- “ First, I look for people like me, when entering a new community. I connect with who is in charge. I ask what is already in motion, what is already happening and I listen.....and I adapt my curriculum and approach to fit as best I can.”
- Establish agreements for the group, with the group. Respectful atmosphere, practicing non-judgement and active listening
- Assess who may need assistance or support
- Observe, even before the class begins. Who is engaged, who may need “ a boost.” Are there any cliques that may benefit from the company of someone less familiar?
- Remember: while we are there to teach an artistic practice and to work towards the culmination, we are also, each session, building the group and the group experience.

Antonia:

- Make an effort to get to know each other
- Look for allies
- Be genuine, forthright and vulnerable
- Let people know about your skills, abilities and style of working
- Listen to what partners have to say
- Be adaptable, be able to pivot plans according to needs or cultural practices
- Admit mistakes and apologize, be willing to change
- Be aware of your role and its limitations. Careful not to overstep
- Be understanding

Asma:

Our best practices included the importance of learning the language of the people you are working with, and that intersects with cultural practices and even learning new words reflective of your new communities life and times.

- Establish community agreements together with students and organization
- Don't be afraid to ask for the help you need, classroom prep, technical assistance etc.
- As you are learning the new “language” make sure you learn what the older adults like to be called. In some instances it may even be important to learn if and how they refer to “God”.
- Even though our efforts are about disrupting ageism, we also have to respect the cultural traditions of the community we enter.

Clark/Nathan:

- Being organized - and knowing what the partnership can do for you - clear communication. Planning is key
- Confidence in what you're doing as an artist
- Exercise self-awareness about your pre-judgments, try to set them aside
- Find out who's really active in the community, who's been there a long time
- Aligning yourself with like minds - networking!
- Ally with the community leaders, other teachers who work in the community
- Identified influencers in the community and built connections with them
- Consistency in your follow through - students recognize that you are on their side
- Prioritizing the learners - they see that you are there for them
- I established trust by being involved in many things that interested others within that community.
- Keep the invite open
- Be willing to say "I'm sorry"

Rhynna

- Certain ways can and not act like in certain communities. Entering with respect. Enter with intention.
- **Educate yourself on the cultural background of the community you are trying to service.**
- Being patient.
- **Be helpful** to the community engaging with, being able to be supportive.
- Entering new spaces, understanding the **language** you use and not making assumptions about our student's lives.
- Share who you are.
- Be vulnerable.
- Creating a safe space for students.
- Be quick with action to take in the classroom during an emergency. Jump in.
- Safety of materials used with older adults.
- Universal design. Creating a safe accessible space for students.