

Partnering with New Communities Best Practices

Utah Division of Arts & Museums - Teaching Artists & Librarians

Vinny's group:

- Talk to the staff to inform yourself about the population you will serve
- Prepare - know the students and facility and be prepared with your materials
- Choose an art form that is accessible and keeps the class barrier-free
- Being clear about your schedule. Know how you will use your time within the class.
Make sure you have done the project before yourself so you know how to better time out the instruction
- Leave room for the unexpected
- Sense of humor
- Flexibility

Lynda's group:

- Connect with the leaders (ie presidents etc) of the senior serving community you are working with. This will help you establish and share your value to the community and eventually support your work going forward
- Build trust through respect, connection, relationships with staff, maintenance
- Become aware and consider the “politics of place” in the community
- Have a plan, be organized, create program parameters and guidelines for your own use and to support your students’ learning and clarity with the staff
- Leave the facility better than the way you found it. Clean up after yourself – replace tables, chairs, clean up areas you have used. This makes everyone happier as staff is often overburdened
- Listen, be approachable, understand other expectations and clarify your own
- Watch assumptions of all – your own, the communities and the organizations. Clarify
- Visit before you teach so you know the rules, layout and what your teaching space will look like. Plan how you will use it prior to walking into the space. This is also a nice time to introduce yourself and meet others
- Timeliness on all things from emails, to responses to phone calls, prep planning, ordering materials, and getting to class
- Flexibility in all things
- Understand the capacity of the organization - especially in these times. If things don't work out the way planned, step in as needed for the success of the program and the students
- Ally with the staff, maintenance, and your participants for success and sustainability

Clark's group:

- Make your needs known to get the materials you need
- Trust the creative process to make connections within your new community
- Ease them into your way of doing things
- Take attrition of some participants in stride
- If you're used to working with youth, you may find that adjustments to your activities/exercises are minimal when working with older adults
- Get "the regulars" on your side; establish that you're genuinely interested in them
- Establish trust with each individual depending on their level of experience, perspective, comfort level, etc
- As the leader, you need to establish the tone of getting folks to interact with each other
- Balancing b/tw skills training and forming a community can be tricky
- You may need to integrate participants' voices where you might've done the talking to empower/engage and have it be less of a lecture

Daniela's group:

- Know your audience and be aware of their needs
- Be flexible and adapt
- Always remember that students WANT to participate, give them the opportunity
- Make sure the organization knows your value as an artist
- Enter with a positive attitude and maintain good relationships with your organization even after your program has completed

Julie's group: (Librarians)

- Have patience.
- Find out what the key needs are for the community
- What is important and where can you be flexible?
- Check expectations - communities are not necessarily all the same
- Don't assume you know the community; come in with new eyes
- Talk to them, figure out what they like. Find out from them what will entice them? What do they want from their library?
- Make presentations on what you are offering
- Ask questions when folks come in, notice what they are asking for