



GIVE OUT LOUD: FIRST MOMENTS EPISODE 2, PART 2

WELCOME TO GIVE OUT LOUD!

Sofiya (00:01)

Welcome to GIVE Out Loud, the podcast that shares the journeys of arts educators using the GIVE Guide to apply inclusive practices in the classroom. I am your host, Sofiya Cheyenne Brown, a multidisciplinary performance artist, teaching artist, and disability advocate and consultant. One in four people have a disability. And people with disabilities are the largest minority in the world.

Sofiya (00:26)

We have all intersected with disability in some way, whether personally or by knowing someone else. As educators, we must acknowledge and consider this population that is ever present in our classrooms. GIVE, or Growing Inclusivity for Vibrant Engagement, is a free arts educators' guide for inclusion and accessibility in learning spaces. You can find the GIVE guide at teachwithgive.org.

Sofiya (00:56)

Join me as I meet with different New York City-based professional teaching artists and hear how inclusion plays an integral role in their teaching practice and learn how they're putting the GIVE guide into action. Come on, join me. It's gonna be fun!

Sofiya (01:18)

Last time we spoke with Arielle, she was planning to go into a residency with neurodivergent students to build social emotional skills through theater. And we both spoke about the importance of GIVE and the *WHY*. Well, let me tell you, after hearing Arielle's experience, you



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will feel that sense of why GIVE can be supportive to these ICT classrooms and beyond in these schools.

Sofiya (01:43)

She shares such rich, juicy details about the challenges and surprises that came with working with this school and this group of students. These students were energetic, strong-willed, and eager for the learning. Arielle and her teaching partner Tyler came full circle with adding some extra resources from the GIVE guide, too. It's so beautiful. As part of this episode, we will hear recordings of Arielle reflecting before and after one of her first workshops, woven into our conversation.

Sofiya (02:13)

Let's listen.

Arielle (02:15)

All right, this is Arielle speaking, and I am recording live from my walk to the train. Since our podcast recording, a lot has happened. We had our first session, and it was quite rocky, to be honest. We got to the school to find out that it was the day before spring break, and not just the day before spring break, the last period of the day before spring break.

Arielle (02:44)

So that meant that we were just entering into a room of people who were understandably really ready to get out of school. Also a group who I think on any day would have some challenge navigating a new beginning. And so the pairing of those two things just made for a somewhat challenging start. We also had a teaching artist shift. So my original teaching partner was no longer available for the course of the residency.

Arielle (03:15)

And so because of that, a number of weeks have gone by and it almost feels like we're starting again. So as I go into the workshop today, I'm thinking about first starting them at their desk spots instead of transforming and changing the room. Hopefully that will be grounding. Also we are going to have our agreements up.



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Arielle (03:40)

But not spend too much time sitting in it. Last time we found that while they in some ways really needed a lot of orientation and introduction and agendas and agreements, it also they were really ready to get to the play and and had a hard time sitting in that.

Arielle (04:03)

So today, also trying to get to play right off the bat and last but not least, just entering it today with like a curiosity of what really works structurally, what's really working and what aligns best with their learning needs, and then continuing to build from there. I think our first class into this one was just like such a reminder to that taking time can also mean taking time over the course of many weeks.

Arielle (04:38)

Introduction and orienting to us and to the work that we're doing can take many weeks. One thing that we noticed that was a real point of tension and frustration for the students was that they just kept asking, like, when are we gonna do the acting? When are we gonna do the theater? And so another thing that we're going to, which is like such a real and great question, is to have like a word of the day and to ground everything that we're doing through like one theater term and word.

Arielle (05:11)

So even when we're playing warm-up games that may not feel inherently related to theater, we can bring it back and understand and connect for and with them how it relates to theater practices. Okay. I'll report back.

Sofiya (05:29)

Hi Arielle, welcome back.

Arielle (05:32)

Hi. Thanks for having me.

Sofiya (05:35)



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Of course. No, we're so glad to bring you back in and to tell us about the GIVE guide and the workshops you've been doing. But before we get to that, please share with us your access check in, meaning what how are you doing today and what do you need in the space today and a visual description if you can.

Arielle (05:53)

Absolutely. All right. So this is Arielle speaking. Today my dark brown curly hair is piled in a messy bun on top of my head. I'm wearing a turtleneck tank top, which seems like an interesting pairing of two things for a hot summer day. It's black and behind me is a green abstract painting and a white wall.

Arielle (06:19)

I also have a big smile on my face because I'm really happy to see you, Sofiya, and to be back in a conversation with you. Today my access needs are just that I've had a little bit of a wobbly morning with some unexpected curveballs. So I am just hoping that I bring clarity and groundedness to this conversation and just want you to know that as I enter into the space.

speaker-1 (06:44)

Yes.

Sofiya (06:45)

Thank you very much. For me, and my access need is that I am still a little tired from just like the week. And you know, I have my coffee here, so that's that's checking my need. And yeah, my visual description for today is that I have mid-curly hair. I'm wearing a black shirt as well, and I I'm doing well. I'm excited to talk to you and just get into it.

Sofiya (07:14)

So, tell me about your workshop because the last time we talked, you were just about to go into a workshop and it's been a while since then. So tell me about that first workshop or anything you've been wanting to share about that experience.

Arielle (07:30)



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There's been a lot that's happened in between our last conversation. Now, in fact, an entire residency. So when I spoke with you, I was about to start our first workshop of 10. And now here we are. It is June. And we, being my delightful teaching partner, Tyler and I have completed all 10 workshops. So have so much.

Arielle (07:56)

Yeah, I have a lot to share. because it was a really transparently, it was a really bumpy start. And so I actually think this is a great experience to bring into this podcast because there was so much to sort of like mine and think about and unpack from our beginning, really. I guess I'll I'll preview with that vague statement. And you can let me know what what direction you want me to go in in terms of getting more specific.

Sofiya (08:25)

Oh that's so no, that's I don't think that is uncommon. That's how I'll start is you know, we we come into schools and we have these wonderful opportunities weeks at a time with these students, but it's it's sometimes hard to start and kind of find find the flow as you're going. Something that we talked about last time was why do we need GIVE in the classroom and like why is it important?

Sofiya (08:51)

So I'm curious to know, how you used any of the ones we talked about previously, which I think was like *checklist for planning your inclusive lesson* and the stigma-free classroom resource. Either of those, did you use either of those in your planning or did you even like bring them into your teaching partner? Did you ask that person like to check it out or use it at all? So yeah, tell us more about like how the GIVE guide intersected, whether it was the beginning or throughout.

Arielle (09:19)

Sure. I definitely utilized both resources. And just to sort of bring them back and name them, the first was the *Checklist for Planning and Facilitation and Inclusive Lesson*. And the biggest thing that I feel like I was able to extract from there that really set us up for success was the idea of establishing like structures and routines.

Arielle (09:48)



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Now I don't think we really saw maybe the quote unquote payoff of that until way further down in the residency. It wasn't like, we did that on the first day and had a structure. And then all of a sudden, like that really helped ground us in a flow. It was really something that just laying that groundwork and then continuing to like repeat it and ritualize it, we like saw the benefits of that.

Arielle (10:17)

Way, way, way down the line in the residency. And so I remember us talking a lot about time and giving time in our last session together. And I think the way in which we were talking about that was really about providing time and space in the first workshop itself. Like in sort of that the micro sense of like, okay, let's give time for all these beats to introduce ourselves and to give students time to process.

Arielle (10:45)

And like that is so true and found that to be valuable. And also I was just so aware of how much, how much time it takes to build trust and to build routine over the course of many workshops. And that yeah, we really just needed time in terms of many weeks together to get to know each other and to be able to get into a flow. So I think like that idea of time stretched out over many weeks.

Sofiya (11:14)

It's so hard to find that time. I feel like it's gotten brought up a few times, a lot, you know, with all of us, chatting about, you know, bringing access into the classroom and inclusion and and making space for it. Tell me more about that rocky beginning. Like what was the challenge? What can you name one of probably many challenges that you were facing? So let's start there.

Arielle (11:37)

So I think, I'll I'll point out a few. I mean, one was just a series of external circumstances, which like can happen in any given setting. So it was that we had some scheduling snafus. My teaching, my initial teaching partner ended up not being able to do the residency. We got to the residency and it was the last period of their day before spring break.

Arielle (12:04)



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And so just the feelings in the classroom were the vibes were like, we're already on spring break, y'all. Like we're gonna meet these people. Like it was just, and then because of a series of scheduling matters, we actually didn't see them again for a month. So it was almost like we started twice. And so I actually like really think that we had two beginnings and we needed it. Like we needed it, the students needed it.

Arielle (12:32)

So that was one thing that was difficult, was sort of just this like rocky beginning in terms of logistics. Another thing was that there was a lot of sort of like behavior in the classroom, sometimes bordering on like there were definitely moments of disrespect, either student to student or student to teacher. And so we were prepared for this, but like navigating a lot of dynamics in the room.

Arielle (13:02)

So that was something that was also just like taking our time to to learn the students and their classroom culture and their school culture and their rules and how they approach these types of moments was a huge learning curve. And then another thing I would name is that, and it's kind of related, but I really felt like we needed time to build collective like knowledge and vocabulary around what we were doing. Because the students kept saying like we want to get to the acting and then they would like do these dramatic like fall on the floor like you know Shakespearean sort of like

Sofiya (13:44)

This is the scene. Look at me.

Arielle (13:46)

I think their expectations for what we were going to do and what we had planned, we just had to like figure out how to reconcile those two things and find a shared language together to talk about those two things. So I think two resources that like I hadn't yet thought about, but ended up bringing in from the GIVE guide were first of all, this there's a resource called *Visual Vocabulary*. And it provides

Sofiya (14:16)



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Yes.

Arielle (14:17)

Yes. Have you have you played with this resource at all, Sofiya?

Sofiya (14:21)

Visual Vocab is great. It's it's so it's so great. I have interacted with the *Visual Vocabulary* before and we've actually made some updates in the last like two years on the GIVE Guide with some of the different visuals we're we're offering. But tell me more. Yeah, how did you use this or bring it in?

Arielle (14:44)

So the visual vocabulary, just to give like a little preview of what it is, is essentially a breakdown by art form. So there's for dance, for literary arts, for music, for theater. And it has a number of just like key words, I would call them for each art form, and then also a visual to go with it. And the visuals are also like built super thoughtfully, very are very inclusive in terms of like representation of lots of like different identities and also visual representations of disability in different ways.

Sofiya (15:16)

Can we offer like two examples? I mean, I can give one that I'm looking at right now, which is a visual of an entrance. So it is an an image of a stage where we have curtain drapes at both sides of the image, and then there's two let's call them thespians or actors coming into the the stage and the title of this image is entrance. So this is a visual description of of this image which is used in our *Visual Vocabulary*: "*Entrance*" and there's two characters entering in and the arrows above their head are going inward to the image. So that's like one example of one of the visuals on this resource. Do you want to give another one? Sure. Really quick. Yeah.

Arielle (16:05)

I'll do blocking and this is also a theater term. And so the "*Blocking*" visual is of a a female presenting person with red hair in a power wheelchair, and there is sort of a visual of them in one corner and then an arrow.



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Arielle (16:28)

That's pointing and then another corner, sort of showing that they moved from one place to another place. So that's another example of another image that's on here. But the way that we utilize this is that every week we started because the big question kept being like, when are we going to start the acting? And I think there was this tension with the idea that what we brought in for them just didn't feel like acting enough for them.

Arielle (16:55)

And yet they also really seemed to struggle to be safe with each other in a way that we could build build trust that they were like ready to get there in some ways. and so these key words and terms of like bringing in a theater term and then grounding our whole lesson around like a theater term that we're learning something new, we're doing something very legitimate that actors learn and use and utilize all the time. It was like building theater literacy almost throughout and having a focus every single day was really, really helpful for us and created a lot of buy-in.

Sofiya (17:32)

Yeah, I'd say it's actu absolutely theater literacy, you know, through the visuals. And in a sense, like with that repetition gets them excited for the real the real thing, quote unquote. You know, when they're up on their feet and they're maybe doing some dialogue they've prepped with all of this vocabulary, essentially. So no, that's awesome. And did yeah, was so was it a theater work?

Arielle (17:56)

Yes, it was a theater workshop. Exactly. It was a theater residency. And I guess one of the other things that this sort of ties into is when we think about like, that lesson plan checklist of what are the things that we do to set ourselves up. Like I'm thinking about that lesson plan checklist. And one of the things that is in there are visuals and talk about visuals. And so it makes sense to me that this worked because it was bringing a visual example into the room. And using a visual to sort of support learning and to support, you know, knowledge building.

Sofiya (18:31)

That's great. And you can take all those visuals and make all activity out of them, right? You can have them really embody the image. You know, you can have them describe the image. Have



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them create a story with the images, if any like there's so many different ways to to engage with that. So that's really cool. And that wasn't a resource that we brought up originally, but came up in the process, which is awesome. Anything else you wanted to share about that particular resource or did you want to share another?

Arielle (18:59)

About that resource specifically, but just like hitting home the idea that visuals can be really helpful and useful. What ended up sort of being the like big opening for our students was when we brought in visuals of legitimate real theater photos from different types of productions and had the students try them on. Because then I think they felt and saw that connection between themselves and these sort of legitimate.

Arielle (19:29)

Theater productions that they had in their minds. And so I think one thing I'll underscore there was just that, like again, visuals, visuals, visuals can be so helpful. And then also I think it was this lesson for us in really like listening to them and what was underneath some of their persistent behaviors and like resistance, which was, I don't want to do this because this isn't legitimate. And then finding something that would be like the hook in that would sort of help us meet each other where we were at. And so I think I just highlight that as another like visual example and a moment where where visuals were our friends.

Sofiya (20:07)

Thank you so much for bringing that in. I think it's something that a lot of folks that work with students with disabilities talk about. It's, you know, there's visuals for like not only just a picture, but visuals of an agenda, visuals of the what's happening next. But also from an accessibility perspective, when we include visuals in our lessons, we have to describe them too.

Sofiya (20:33)

And we have to find ways to absorb these visuals and engage with them in multiple ways, not just in one way that we assume is is useful or working for our students. So like if we're bringing visuals in, there's also many entry points into just one visual as well, which is how we create more, you know, in equity in learning and and inclusivity in that experience.



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Sofiya (20:58)

So I love that. I highlight that visuals, visuals, visuals, especially for all communities. Like it doesn't, it's it's it's a highlight in this sort of you know, students with disabilities lens, but it helps everybody and it's an equalizer, I think, in a lot of ways. So thank you so much for bringing that in. That's awesome.

Arielle (21:19)

Thanks for highlighting that too. Just about like the different the ways to approach visuals too. and I think just to add on to that, like one thing I'm thinking about as you were talking about the agenda. And by repeating that, the students learned it and then they could be the leaders of the agenda that day or of our community agreements that also had visuals. And so again, by sort of just that idea of building that collective knowledge, then like leadership can spread throughout the room.

Arielle (21:49)

And students can have more agency so that if and when they're not like wanting to come up and like be the actor in that moment, they can be the stage manager or the narrator or they can be the director and they can take a different role and a position and still find a way into the lesson.

Sofiya (22:07)

Yeah, absolutely. Well, thank you so much for bringing that point in as well. And that repetition, you've been saying that sort of that repetition is so important. That's why residencies are like such a gift. They they can be such a gift. As hard as they are, they can be that building that relationship is really important. Cool. So what else what else did you learn? And did you I'm curious if your partner, when you were working with them, did they did you show them the GIVE guide and where you were able to like pull these resources from? Did they have like a reaction to that?

Arielle (22:40)

Yes. great question. So I I think when we last spoke, I thought that my teaching partner was going to be one person and then ended up being another person. Right. So the person that I ended up teaching with, the great Tyler, P. Tyler Britt, we love Tyler. But one of the gifts of many of Tyler is that Tyler's really familiar with GIVE and has actually like, led a number of GIVE



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workshops. And so there was a lot of like shared language and understanding there, which was great.

Sofiya (23:12)

Here's a clip you sent us of you and Tyler talking before your workshop.

Arielle (23:16)

Okay, Tyler. We are walking down the street, leaving our school, going to the subway. And my question for you, based on our experience in this classroom, what advice would you give to teaching artists entering a new classroom?

P. Tyler (23:34)

Hmm. You're not gonna have all the answers walking in on the first day. and if you're only there for like one class one time, you wanna leave space to like learn as as share. So, like learning prior knowledge from the educators that are in the space and that occupy and hold that space, but also coming in willing to share your knowledge as much as you can.

Arielle (23:58)

And even if you are someone who's really experienced with this resource, like I think there's just continual new revelations with it and that come with an evolving practice. Like I may have seen or seen things in a different light after having this experience and and I imagine that's true for anyone.

Sofiya (24:19)

My gosh, I agree. Thank you for sharing that. I think any of us that have touched the GIVE guide, whether we're really familiar with it or not, we can continue to come back to it and learn something new about ourselves, our practice, or just something that like we hadn't tried yet. And it's it's so true. So yes. I wish I was a fly on the wall in the workshops. I'm sure it was amazing. So did you learn anything? I mean, you sort of touched on this before, but did you learn anything new?

Sofiya (24:49)

About yourself, about your practice within this residency.



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Arielle (24:54)

Definitely. I think it was, I think it was a real lesson in grace, like grace, like giving grace to students, to myself, to my teaching partner, to the classroom teachers who are navigating like a lot. So that was just like I was very humbled many times and sort of was just reminded of the importance of that, of grace and giving it to everyone in the room.

Arielle (25:27)

And, you know, I've been talking a lot about what does it mean to like build collective knowledge in the room and not to just be so all over the place and give a smattering of GIVE resources, but there is a resource on *Building Collective Knowledge* that as I was reflecting on this residency and these beginnings, like I went back to because. I actually haven't spent a lot of time with this resource and reading it, I was like, yes, yes, yes, all of these things.

Sofiya (25:55)

Yeah, I'm like, wait, this collective knowledge resource? Like now you're making me think if I remember it as well. This is very cool. Thank you.

Arielle (26:06)

To me, this really touches on some of the things we've talked about, like routines, but it really helps to get at some of the like friction that I think I was talking about that comes with just being like a guest in someone else's classroom and entering into like a culture that you know we are not necessarily part of. And that was like probably one of the hardest dynamics.

Arielle (26:34)

Like I sometimes just felt very unsure of how to best guide and support within the classroom culture that I was in, and just like describe it a little bit more. There's a lot of both rigidity and flexibility within the classroom. And so it was sometimes hard to know like how to be. I don't know how else to describe that. But and I think it was confusing for students too, like in some ways.

Arielle (27:02)



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The students had a lot of freedom. Like they have this incredible therapeutic environment where they can leave the class whenever they want if they need a break, which like is such a great practice in terms of access or taking care of your needs. And it's also like a very disorienting environment sometimes because of that. And then also within that freedom, there's also a lot of control happening and there's a lot of resistance to authority. And so it was just a very complex room to be in.

Arielle (27:32)

And

Sofiya (27:33)

Yeah.

Arielle (27:34)

One of the things that I'm looking at as like building the collective knowledge is like there's a recommendation to carefully observe the classroom before beginning your residency or program and to also talk about that planning meeting that happens before the beginning. So like pre-beginning.

Arielle (27:56)

And I just thinking about like if I could do this all over again, what would I do? And how would I shape things differently to create a different beginning? And like, I think if I could have observed the classroom and been there in like an observer role and also just approached the planning meeting differently with some of these tips that are in this resource, I think that would have been really useful.

Sofiya (28:24)

Thank you so much for uplifting this. And I also want to say that outside of there's like suggestions of activity, like general activities like call and response or routines, but there's also this section called language and content commonality. And it's like like what you were saying, like how you're connecting your residency to the language that the classroom professionals have been using in their everyday so far.

Sofiya (28:53)



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And it's sometimes hard to like open that up with the classroom teacher, you know, like what are they willing to share with you that works for them, that might work for you? And it's this really hard balance to strike. So it's like thinking about those things ahead or like being ready to like take something in the moment and and keep it in the back of your head so that you have it for the rest of your residency is also part of that.

Arielle (29:21)

I think that's such a good point to make. And like where we really experienced it was around like expectations around play. Like there were moments where we would have students like engaged and would be playing and finally see this moment of like connection and engagement. At least that's what it felt like from our perspective. And also being mindful that that felt like not okay and too much for like the classroom teacher and also like the culture, maybe that's in the school.

Arielle (29:51)

Like at one point I remember us having this like incredible like scene with this vocalization. And like we were disrupting other classes and we're asked to be quiet. And so I think like figuring out what the container for like artistic exploration and play and like the bounds of that within a new space is like it requires planning, time, like conversation, sometimes like difficult conversations, sometimes a negotiation. But I'm glad you brought that up because I think it helps illustrate sort of what that was that we were experiencing.

Sofiya (30:24)

The tension. The tension that's there. Yeah, because there's yeah. And then and then of course there's the, you know, if that class is having too much fun or, you know, if they're having having the time that, you know, was set for them, then the other classes start to go get nosy and it's like, What's happening in there? I wanna be in that class. I don't wanna be in this class. And so it's like this ripple effect depending on the age and where you are, you know, it's it it can be.

Sofiya (30:52)

But it's also really hard, I think yeah, with that expression, like you're saying, that playful expression. And when you're especially a theater workshop, I mean, in an ideal world, like yeah,



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like there is a way where we can be as loud as we want and and not disrupt the rest of the school. But that's really hard. That's definitely a very hard balance to strike.

Sofiya (31:20)

Yeah, I mean, how did it end? What what was the culmination of this? You know, you were talking about building trust. You were talking about building routines, using visuals in the beginning, probably throughout, but definitely in the beginning to sort of create that shared language. These are all things that the GIVE guide provides tips on. But what is the culmination of this group? How did it end? And would you say that, did you use any reflective tools as well, you know, in that end section of the time?

Arielle (31:54)

Yes. So I think every residency is different in terms of like some residencies. And I think this goes into like what building goals and shared goals with the teacher and the students, of like, what does everyone expect by the end of it? And our the teacher that we worked with was very clear that like her goals and her expectations were around sort of social emotional goals and not necessarily in having like a product.

Arielle (32:23)

So we did not have like the pressure of like having to have a certain product and we could really be in process, which was great. But I do think that's something that's important to establish and be clear about at the beginning because people have different ideas about what like, you know, we've been talking a lot about the beginning, but like what does the ending, what are we trying to get to? Because that will inform the beginning.

Sofiya (32:46)

And you mentioned before that the students influence that along the way as well. And they're putting like new things on your to do list or other kind of ways to get there. So yeah, it is it's kinda yeah, it's important to kinda have that idea at least from the beginning. So so there was no expectation of something, but it seemed like maybe the students wanted

Arielle (33:10)



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Yes. So what we ended up with, I think I had talked about how like that one moment where we brought in a visual of different production. So we had two different classes and two different sections we worked with. And I think also something we learned was that like they wanted really different things and were at very different places and needed different, entirely different curriculums. So just coming in and being like, we're going to do the same thing with both classes at a certain point, like wasn't going to work. And we had to differentiate that. And that was

Arielle (33:38)

Again, like a lesson in responding to like the needs in the room, which is feels very fundamental in terms of an access practice. And one group really like lit up with these production photos where they could then like be the characters in the production photos, which then sort of led us to building some scenes and adaptations around their own versions of these productions. And this one class, the younger class, just got really into Shakespeare.

Arielle (34:09)

Like we brought in all these different, it was so shocking. Like we, you know, at the beginning had a lot of different things that they could explore to sort of find the hook for them. We brought in like circus scarves to try clowning. We brought in all these different art forms. And like the thing that they wanted and really lit up from was Shakespeare, unexpectedly. And by the end of it, what we ended up doing was creating a like mini Shakespeare scene where like one of them was the director, two of them were actors, one of them like made the backdrop, another person was the sound designer.

Arielle (34:44)

So they all had different roles and they were all a part of it. And it was also like really flexible and not like a full production. We filmed it for them so they could watch it back to themselves, which I think is like a really great device to be able to use to like students love to watch themselves. and we could like highlight them in that way.

Arielle (35:02)

And then the other class was just very into improvisation. And they also loved Marvel. And so we ended up just doing a lot by the end. They sort of did a culminating event of improv games



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that were rooted in a Marvel World. And so I think that sort of ties back when we're when we're thinking about that lesson plan checklist.

Sofiya (35:31)

This is the checklist planning and facilitating an inclusive lesson resource. Exactly.

Arielle (35:36)

There's something that says provide opportunities for students to self-regulate, make choices, and include their interests. And that I feel like is what, the crux of where we ended up finding our like gold. It was like they needed to be interested. And so, for example, for one group it was Shakespeare, another group it was Marvel and improvisation. And we really needed to build from a place of like interest.

Arielle (36:03)

And also their needs. So as we learned their needs, figuring out the formats that would best support their needs, coupled with their interests, is like really where I think the meeting of those two things is where we really sort of found our groove.

Sofiya (36:16)

Yeah, of course. No, that mak I mean you want them to be motivated and excited about what you're doing and you have to you have to, you know, take those little seeds and water them, let them grow as as they are giving you the nuggets of like the things that they're interested in. It's like we have to find the source and the the center of their interest so that we can expand on it and then get to all of our goals with education.

Sofiya (36:44)

And and, you know, social emotional learning, culturally responsive, you know, learning and all of those things. I love that. That sounds like so much fun. And I also just wanna say that I think a lot of teaching artists that come in or these push-ins, there there can be this expectation to like have something at the end. And I always love to push back on that because it's like

Sofiya (37:09)



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Yes, like in a night it's nice to present something, but like the process and the time and the learning in those little moments of, you know, the activities, the the conversations, the reflections that come after these activities, like that's the learning, you know. So it's really hard sometimes when there's that expectation. So I'm glad you kinda had a little bit of both. Like you had like a little bit of both, which is nice. And you absolutely were like student-led. I mean, you let them kind of guide you and find a way to make something that they were proud of which makes everybody happy in the end and and honestly is the best I think the best lesson, you know. So that's great.

Arielle (37:50)

I think when I look back on it and I think about that first class, and then I think about the fact that they were all in a role that excited them doing theater and playing and also being safe and respectful with each other. Like, I'm like, wow, that was really a lot of growth. When I think about those two things next to each other. Did we do a full production? No, but I think it's what you're talking about: like, what does success look like, and how can we look at and measure success in sort of all in all different scales and sizes.

Arielle (38:23)

And one other thing that I think really helped us just in terms of another routine was that one of the things that the teacher really wanted was for them to like find ways to like collaborate and uplift each other since there was so much like putting each other down and disrespect happening in the classroom.

Arielle (38:42)

And so we ended up creating a compliment wall. And that was sort of like our closing moment was that like every day people got to either give themselves a compliment or give someone else a compliment. And so when I really think about like where we ended, like where we ended was like, yeah, did we have a like really funny version of like the improv game of taxi where like Wolverine was also present? Yes. And did we have this like?

Arielle (39:11)

Really interesting Shakespearean adaptation with like a Star Wars theme song in it. Also, yes. However, what was the most important thing was that I think we built in these like channels and



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moments for students to like be proud of themselves and for us to be proud of them and to like be able to track that growth. And to me, like in the same way that you were talking about of like, you know, having like that's the end product that like I think is the most valuable as opposed to like the production.

Sofiya (39:43)

I agree so much, so much. And sometimes you don't see that all the time at the end of your time with your students. You see it like starting to turn and then you're like, hopefully when I see you in a year or in a few months, like I see that. But no, that's that's that's so great. I was gonna you you did exactly what I was gonna ask, which was like, can you give an example of any of those changes that you've seen? So you just did that, but I don't know if there's any other examples that you want to share that you felt like from beginning to end, there was growth there.

Sofiya (40:16)

It seems like outside of communication, maybe just like some more, you know, respect and mutual respect amongst each other, which was a goal of the teachers as well. I mean, creating something together and everyone working at it does that. It helps those skills. You have to like be part of something. It's not just about one person. So the magic of theater as we all, anyone listening probably knows, but it it it does it does create change. So yeah, I d I don't know if there are any other examples that you wanna share.

Arielle (40:48)

I mean, I think the biggest change could be seen in like maybe just the story of one student who on our first day when we came in was sort of the loudest of being like, I don't want to do this, this isn't acting, and sort of like throwing himself off of the chair, which was day one. That's what I would say is picture of day one. And then day ten, session ten, he was the director. He like he was fully orchestrating. He also couldn't help but act. So he also made himself as the director a role, his own role in his own piece.

Sofiya (41:23)

Of course. Yes

Arielle (41:24)



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And he was just like, I could relate. Like I saw him like step into his artistry, you know, and I was like, this kid is in, he's figuring, he's like in an artistic practice right now. and it was just really cool to see that.

Arielle (41:40)

It also was sweet because he was like at the end revealed that his dad was a director and that he felt like he was being like his dad, which was really cool. But I think I illustrate that to say that like I think these like success stories or what we look at as success can be really sometimes they're really big. Like that arc feels big, and also it's a story of one student. And like one thing that also happened was that our class sizes are tiny. And it's okay for success to be tiny, like it's still monumentals.

Sofiya (42:11)

Yes. Yes. It can only be contagious to the rest of the student body is how I see it. And I think I think a lot of GIVE trainers would say that as well. That like when we're bringing some of this stuff in and we're modeling these accessible practices and helping make space, it it can only trickle to the next class, to the next teacher. Someone wants a little piece of that too, because it it

Sofiya (42:39)

Yeah, making space for that is so important. It just uplifts all of our humanity. Oh wow, this is great. I wanna be a student in your class and play taxi as Wonder Woman or I don't know, witness some Shakespearean something. It's it sounds like such a blast and I really appreciate you sharing all of the GIVE knowledge you dropped. I mean, you've shared a lot of of all of these things like anti-ableist and stigma free classroom we talked about.

Sofiya (43:09)

Planning and facilitating an inclusive lesson we talked about. And then you brought in two new ones, which is visual vocabulary, a fan favorite, and building collective knowledge, which at the end of the day, especially for residencies, right, is like such a good reminder that that's what we're doing. But again, everything you've shared is just really hit home for for what we were talking about, why GIVE is so important for people to know about. So thank you. And I guess I'll see you soon.



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Arielle (43:39)
Thanks Sofiya.

Sofiya (43:42)
I think the biggest takeaway I have from our conversation is how empowered I can be to be more flexible and open to collaboration. The GIVE Guide additional resources that Arielle mentions are *Visual Vocabulary* and *Building Collective Knowledge*. So combine that with the one she mentioned in our previous conversation. That is four resources we've referenced in our time together. And that is just one example of how many resources.

Sofiya (44:11)
Could be accessed for your students in your school. Just based on one teaching artist residency. So check out any of these links to the resources mentioned in our show notes. Thanks, Arielle, my New Vic access sister. What a delight it was to chat with you. Alright, enough about me. Now for you all, the listeners, here's your homework. Your self-reflection question from the GIVE Guide is.

Sofiya (44:39)

- Is there one particular class you can think of where there were successful moments due to a ritual or classroom culture you've built? What made you think of this class?

Take some time, free ride on that question, and I'll see you soon.

Sofiya (44:57)
Thank you for listening to *GIVE Out Loud*. To learn more about the GIVE Guide, visit teachwithgive.org. Want professional learning? Our GIVE trainers are at the Ready. Click the **Work With Us** link on our website.

Sofiya (45:09)
The GIVE Out Loud Podcast would like to thank our co-hosts and GIVE trainers, Arielle Lever, Andrew Strano, and Jashua Sa-Ra. Thanks also to the New Victory Teaching Artist and GIVE Trainer P. Tyler Britt for contributing his voice and experience in this episode.



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Sofiya (45:26)

The GIVE Guide was co-created and continues to evolve through the partnership of three New York City-based organizations: New Victory Theater, ArtsConnection, and Community-Word Project.

Sofiya (45:37)

This podcast was produced by the GIVE Partnership team with special thanks to the creative producing team Jonathan Zautner, Courtney J. Boddie, Carolyn Charpie Fagan, and me, your host, Sofiya Cheyenne Brown.

Sofiya (45:51)

GIVE was made possible by generous launch funding from the New York Community Trust. Continued support is made possible by the nonprofit partner organizations.

Sofiya (46:01)

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