



GIVE Out Loud: Episode 1: Who's Who

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. Join me.

Sofiya (00:56)

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!

THE WHY

Sofiya (01:19)

Like so many artists, I've had lots of jobs. And as an actor, I've worked on many different shows across the country. I've produced and written films and plays, mostly about my experience as a disabled person. And like many artists, I've also been a teacher, and I've been teaching for as long as I can remember. My first job was actually being a dance teacher assistant at my local dance studio. And as a woman with dwarfism, walking into the room at four feet tall, having access needs, being in any space is disruptive to its quote-unquote normal culture.



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LINKING LEARNING AND THE ARTS





Sofiya (01:53)

And as I've worked as a teaching artist for many different organizations, worked in over 50 schools, elementary, middle, and high schools in New York City, asking for an elevator key or a steps tool for the classroom, I have been met with a range of experiences from kindness, curiosity to ignorance. But I remember one of those first classes I taught as a teaching artist.

Sofiya (02:16)

It was in a middle school in Brooklyn. Students crowded around me, measuring up against my head, testing if they were taller than me. And I remember thinking, when is the classroom teacher going to help me here? But eventually I answered all of the questions. I made space for the students to be curious about my size. And at the end of the class, as the students left, one shy student on their way out of the door said, I think it's awesome that I have a small teacher now because I'm small too.

Sofiya (02:48)

And that student happened to be one who had an IEP and a paraprofessional. And she just quickly brought me back to my younger self, navigating the school system that might quote unquote treat you as special, but lacks access to real representation and authenticity.

Sofiya (03:07)

And so from then on, in every class that I taught, I looked out for the younger versions of me, the young Sofiya's in the room, the students with disabilities that have access needs that are oftentimes known, maybe understood, but can be ignored or overlooked based on fear or a lack of resources, right? So that was it for me. I felt that I had to be the role model that I never had for these young people.

Sofiya (03:34)

Cut to me landing my job at the New Victory Theater, I quickly learned about the GIVE Guide, a website being built by teaching artists based on their experiences in the field working with students with disabilities. I said to myself, this is it. This is my home. These people get it. The GIVE Guide to me is a resource for any teacher that would intersect with a young Sofiya. That's my *WHY*. What about you? What's your *WHY*?



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Sofiya (04:04)

You all listening here are part of the change. One student at a time, one classroom at a time, one GIVE resource at a time, and we can show up and represent for the teachers and students with disabilities navigating the education system. In this podcast, I will be your guide. Episode one of this series will be an introductory episode where we meet each of the teaching artists Arielle, Andrew, and Jashua in their own space.

Sofiya (04:31)

The next three episodes will be broken out into two parts. In part one of each episode, I'll chat with each teaching artist as they plan for their classroom experience. And in part two, we'll reflect together on how it all played out, what they learned, and how the GIVE guide supported them. Welcome. Let's dig in.

INTROS, VISUAL DESCRIPTIONS AND ACCESS CHECKS

This first episode is an introduction to me and my colleagues, who are using the GIVE Guide to transform our classrooms into liberated learning environments.

Sofiya (05:00)

They will each share a visual description and access check. We will also learn about how they got into this work and how they've landed on the GIVE Guide. You will hear their voices interspersed with each question. First, we will hear from Arielle, then Andrew, and finally, Jashua. Let's listen.

Hello, Arielle, and it's just so exciting to share space with you. I can't wait to chat with you and hear all the things you have going on.

Arielle (05:28)

I'm so happy to be here with you as well. The feeling's very mutual.



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Sofiya (05:32)

My visual description for anyone who needs it is I have an olive-toned skin, medium curly hair, and I'm a mixed-raced woman with dwarfism. I'm from Brooklyn, New York. And today my access needs are pretty met. I'm here. I'm excited. So a visual description is really mostly for those that are in the low vision blind community. But for anyone who's even listening to this podcast and not seeing us in the flesh right now.

Sofiya (06:01)

And when, when we're doing Zoom meetings or when we're doing any kind of meeting for anybody that's maybe not in the place to actually look at you and see you, how can you offer a description of yourself that just brings yours yourself into the space that yourself into the room? So visual descriptions are a good practice if you're trying to create spaces of inclusion and belonging, especially for those with people with disabilities. And you know, just encouraging our listeners to write down a visual description of yourself.

Sofiya (06:30)

And sometimes like people that have never done one before want to practice it, you know, and feel it out before they really try it on for size, if you will. So something that we advocate for in this space. And then an access check is just what do you need to access the space? There's different ways to do an access check, but how we do it at the New Vic, which is honestly where I learned about access checks. The first time in my life as a woman with a disability coming into a space and saying, you care about what I need?

Sofiya (07:01)

Oh My gosh, this is like this is amazing. So an access check is just offering to the space, if you need something, how can you access this workshop, this podcast, this engagement, what can we do to help you access it better, easier? And a lot of times that's just someone needs water near them or someone's gonna sit down or I'm gonna need a step stool or there's a lot of different examples of what an access need is.

Sofiya (07:29)

And and I just wanna say as a consultant and being in many spaces too, like it's very difficult to meet everyone's access needs at the same time. And a lot of times when you have conflicting



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access needs, especially when you're working with students with disabilities or in a classroom with lots of different Needs and goals.

Sofiya (07:49)

It's hard to make a space fully accessible, fully universal. But we try and the effort and how we go about it and the learning and unlearning that happens is part of the work. And they're just a really easy way to start your work in bringing more accessibility into your classrooms and any space you're in.

Arielle (08:10)

I'll start with a visual description of myself as well. I am a white woman with long dark brown curly hair that is flowing down close to my like, mid-chest right now. I need a haircut, is what I'm saying. And today I'm wearing pink plastic framed glasses. I have blue eyes and I am podcasting in here from Rockaway Beach in Queens.

Arielle (08:40)

Which is where I live. And I have a lot of the same titles as you, Sofiya. So I'm a person who and I know you through and get to work with you really closely at the New Victory Theater as a teaching artist, which is what brings me here to this GIVE resource and to this podcast. But I also do a lot of work in the teaching, consulting space, all related to accessibility and the intersection of accessibility and theater.

Arielle (09:08)

And the community that I work most closely with in both like making theater with and for and teaching is folks with intellectual and developmental disabilities. So I'm thinking a lot about folks who have like sensory needs and who are coming into spaces with a really big range of support needs.

Sofiya (09:30)

Thanks, Arielle.

Sofiya (09:31)

Hi Andrew.



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Andrew (09:32)

Hi! How you doing, Sofiya?

Sofiya (09:33)

Thank you for being here.

Andrew (09:35)

It's a pleasure. Thank you for having me. What a dr what a dream.

Sofiya (09:38)

I've been asking everybody to provide a visual description and also just an access check if you have any access needs during our time.

Andrew (09:47)

That is a good that's a good check. Okay, let's do a visual description. a white, non-binary person, but male-bodied with a bit of a try-hard mustache that they're giving a go at. they're wearing like orange, square ish glasses, heavy eyebrows, hair that's curlier than it would normally be because they overused hairspray earlier in the week and they're wearing a black sweatshirt that says "Witch Choir in r in red, stitching across it in sort of like gothic-ish font, which was from a Florence and the Machine Machine concert.

Andrew (10:19)

And in the background you can see some Bushwick buildings through the big open window, the tops of some candles in on the windowsill there. And in the very background, just behind them, you see some big green Monstera leaves, which you would see more of if they weren't in the way. I think that's pretty, it might be too much of a visual description.

Sofiya (10:38)

No, whatever it is that you want to share is perfect. And do you have any access needs that you want to share? An access check for now as we get into it.

Andrew (10:47)



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I've got some fidgets in my hand, I've got some like little magnety stones that feel nice but they make a bit of noise, so if that's a problem let me know. other than that, w I've got my water bottle, I've got a chair that I can sit cross legged on, I'm feeling good.

Sofiya (11:03)

Sounds great. Jashua, can you introduce yourself and give us a visual description? And if you have any access needs that you want to share.

Jashua (11:10)

My name is Jashua Sa-Ra. And I am a language artist. I use writing and I use communication, I use drumming and I use healing arts and graphic design arts to communicate things. I am a, I don't know how to say what my race is. I call myself an Earthiopian. I'm a a few different continents and countries splashed together. In fact, I'm wearing my Earthiopian t-shirt today.

Jashua (11:39)

I have hair that is locked into itself. People tend to call these locks. I call them my Afro tree. Sometimes lightning roots. Just depends on how I'm feeling that day. Comes about down to my chest or stomach area. Maybe sand colored. I'm kind of sand colored all over. I spend a lot of time at the beach, so my face and hair is kind of sandy. I've got a beard-ish goatee kind of thing going on as well. So as far as my excess needs, I'm good to go.



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ORIGIN STORIES AND CONNECTIONS TO GIVE

Sofiya (12:12)

I wanted to ask you, what is your story? How did you step into the world of teaching artistry?

Jashua (12:16)

Well, so I started doing teaching artist work in 2002 in Florida. As a result of just knowing another artist, I do massage therapy and I knew another artist who was a massage therapist also. So we spent a lot of time talking and she was talking about the teaching artist work that she was doing. And so my wife at the time and I both applied to get into this organization and we started doing the work. Originally I think I was doing percussion workshops mostly.

Jashua (12:44)

I'm showing up with drums and boom tunes and just making all kind of rhythms all over the place. And I also was doing storytelling and writing. And just kept expanding with it. And you know, over the years I've just branched out and really gotten into this work. I, I wouldn't say I thought I would be doing this as long as I have, but I really love the work. I really love working with these young people. I am very much into helping the world be a better place. And somewhere in my studies I realized the best way to do that is working directly with the future.

Jashua (13:13)

Which we sometimes call children or kids. So that really has helped me in this space all these years. I currently work in the Greater New York area with Community-Word Project and BAM. And I often get sent into some of the more difficult schools. I just started with a school which has had a meeting where it's like a last chance school. They've maybe failed out of all the other schools. And so this is like their last chance to graduate.

Jashua (13:41)

And I've worked with this school for I think over a decade over the years. And they really have grown and that's what I love to see. That's why I love this work is because you can see the changes. I can see that student after we take them to the studio and they come back feeling the importance of I just made a recording and then they play it and all of their friends love it. And



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now they're walking around school as a whole new person. I've watched this happen. So seeing how this affects children is amazing.

Sofiya (14:05)

Thank you, Jashua. Andrew, how did you step into Teaching Artistry and land here?

Andrew (14:10)

I mean, you know, I'm 38 years old. I'm from Australia. I've been living in New York for about six years, just over. I'm entering into my second O-1 visa, which is a visa for which I think is the funniest name in the world, *Aliens of Extraordinary Ability*. Mostly your extraordinary ability has to be hiring and retaining a lawyer to help you with the process, in my experience. but I've been a theater artist for a very long time. I I I guess

Andrew (14:40)

Ooh. Mm mm mm. That's sorry, I've just been distracted.

Sofiya (14:46)

No, you're fine. You're good.

Andrew (14:48)

I'm back. I'm back. I'm sorry. This is so let's I mean, let's start with that. Like I I've had ADHD my whole life, but I didn't figure it out until I was about twenty seven years old. My journey in terms of like teaching artistry and and getting me to this point talking about resistance even, this it folds in immediately, is that like theater, theatre was something that I was passionate about.

Andrew (15:10)

And therefore was easy for me to be good at and get into and be a part of and focus on and have all of that joy in it. It was one of those things that I just was able to connect to and because I was having a great time, I didn't find it a struggle to do. It was a joy to hyper focus on that. Yeah. and so I was able to do that. I was given lots of cool opportunities growing up.

Andrew (15:30)



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Growing up in this little town called Wagga Wagga, you know, I was allowed to be a small-ish fish in a very small pond. and then an even smaller fish in a bigger pond in Melbourne. I moved down there and I studied music theater performance. That led me to start writing my own work because I was realizing that like being in a long run of a musical involves you doing exactly the same thing every night at the same time.

Andrew (15:52)

And that about after about eight weeks, a lot of the challenge of that becomes logistical instead of creative, which, you know, there are certainly ways to engage creatively beyond that. But I was starting to make my own work. But I'd always been teaching alongside this ever since I was sort of 16, I'd been assisting with there was a local gifted and talented program that I was rubbed into helping out with. And then I really started teaching. I did a lot of improv teaching. And so I was teaching for some theaters there. And all of a sudden I was teaching at Stage School Australia.

Andrew (16:24)

I was teaching at NIDA, I was teaching at Monash University, and all of this was sort of alongside various performance opportunities or through grants or through residency opportunities, that sort of thing too.

Andrew (16:39)

And and really I've been specializing in working with neurodivergent learners and now that I've been in New York and working with ArtsConnection, which is how I come to the GIVE Guide, I work with multilingual learners a lot as well in creating like accessible spaces for them to create art and to feel a little less pressure on the English of it all and a little bit more excitement or r or become more confident with the English of it all through the use of arts as well. But yeah, came to Arts Connection. I saw what they were doing.

Andrew (17:10)

I I applied for a teaching artist gig, sort of sustain my playwriting and directing and acting as well. But instead it was like, let's dive in, let's let's get into this teaching stuff that I've done so much at, of and that I really enjoy.



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Andrew (17:23)

And let's keep doing that in New York. I also teach for like Harlem School of the Arts. I've done some teaching in schools teaching creative writing. I've worked in like, ICT classrooms as as mostly a behavior management and, and also creative writing expert. These are the, those are sort of the ways that I'm contributing to these environments.

Sofiya (17:42)

Yeah, that's what I was gonna ask. What art do you bring in when you're teaching? Is it is it writing or is it improv as well or other kind of forms of art?

Andrew (17:51)

Oh everything. I do a lot of work training educators as well. Mm-hmm. So that's like with GIVE teaching them how to be create more accessible art spaces and to like open up that side of things. but also I I do puppetry and I do

Sofiya (18:08)

Yeah, yeah, It's always good to know a puppeteer.

Andrew (18:10)

Yeah, I started with like an ex Henson puppeteer who was a really political puppet maker. He was doing really cool stuff in like Indonesia with shadow puppetry and

Sofiya (18:20)

That's awesome.

Andrew (18:21)

But yeah, I improv, acting, directing, playwriting, classical theater, which is really fun. I really love that because part of my improv background I directed and improvised Shakespeare troupe. for three years I was the artistic director and the director, then I moved over here. And like a show that we were part of cre like that we created has been running consistently for ten years, which is crazy.

Sofiya (18:43)



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Arielle, I'm curious. Can you tell me more about how you came into the GIVE Guide and Teaching Artistry, and also your advocacy work?

Arielle (18:51)

Sure. My sort of origin story of it that I think will lead me to the answering your question is that my roots were in theater. And I I, as a, you know, young person in college really wanted to be a very serious actor. and wanted I went to a conservatory style program and I was very focused on like being on stage and auditioning and all of those things. And they that was fulfilling and interesting and something that I was working towards for a while.

Arielle (19:24)

And then I had an experience where I was introduced to devising and making theater with the language that was used at the time, which is language that I don't currently use, but that our group used was an opportunity to bring adults with special needs in the community with college students. And we started making theater together. And it was some of the most exciting artistically interesting.

Arielle (19:50)

Like it was just like from a human-to-human place, like broke open like what theater is and how people can make theater together and how they can connect when there are conflicting access needs, which you talked about. Like, how do we negotiate them? And how does that become an artistic pursuit? And how it just really broke open, like what is theater? What brings people together through theater?

Arielle (20:14)

And then I started on sort of a path of inclusive theater making, particularly with autistic folks and neurodivergent folks, started mostly with adults.

Sofiya (20:27)

What kind of things did you make? Like musicals, straight plays, short plays?

Arielle (20:32)



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Great question. In the beginning, I would say mostly there was a lot of yes ending to whatever the participants in the room wanted. And so I think that was a really interesting learning experience around like, okay, what happens when we say yes and to all of the ideas that might be a little bit too big and broad? And so figuring out processes to really honor people's interests and experiences.

Arielle (21:01)

But then also create some structures around them. And I ended up co-founding an organization called Collab Theater Group that creates theater programming for individuals with developmental disabilities. And it's all device theater work, but now we have lots of different art mediums and specific classes and productions with which we create theater through. And then that had led me into teaching artistry in general because someone was like, do you know you're a teaching artist? And I was like, What's that? which led me to New Vic.

Sofiya (21:32)

Which is how most teaching artists find out about teaching artistry. It's like, you should do this and you know that's a thing? Yeah.

Arielle (21:39)

Yeah. And then that has sort of created this whole I I don't know, there's been so many different angles and I've worked with young people, I've worked with much older folks, I've worked with folks with dementia and their caregivers. so like thinking about like really early early learners to like people who are 89 and thinking about just wide life experiences in general. I don't know. Also doing some consulting work with thinking about sensory adapted and sensory friendly theater. So there's been there's been a lot a lot going on.

Sofiya (22:12)

Yeah. And so that must have been so amazing or however you intersected with the GIVE guide, considering your work prior to teaching artistry, like working with the community in theater making or in, you know, showcasing different forms of art. When you became a teaching artist with the New Vic, were you involved with the GIVE guide from the beginning or how how did how did that happen?



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Arielle (22:38)

Yes, I remember like our first meetings in twenty nineteen where we were, we being a number of teaching artists from the New Victory Theater and the partner organizations, Community-Word Project, and ArtsConnection, like all got together and there were just like giant chart paper. This is so a teaching artist picture that I'm painting of like how are we storyboarding like all the things we want to include and what d what format does it take?

Arielle (23:06)

So really, really early stages into like resource building of building out specific resources and then sort of many processes from there in terms of creating resources and refining and editing resources and teaching other people about how to use the resources, et cetera, et cetera. So I I feel really lucky that I've gotten to be along for the ride since a very early stage and sort of see it all unfold. And I guess I I want to know, those same things about you. So I'm curious about too, what brought you to this and also what brought you to GIVE specifically.

Sofiya (23:46)

Well, what's funny is, so I've been a teaching artist for a long time. I've done a lot of work with different communities. Definitely, you know, young people with disabilities as well. But prior to New Victory, I worked with a bunch of different organizations that had their own curriculums, you know, and I would follow that curriculum. I would come in and and and d devise theater with young people. And coming into New Vic, I remember at the beginning, which was twenty nineteen.

Sofiya (24:14)

And that also happened to be the year that I became, well, the year that I got pregnant and then became a mother and like right, all of these things that have happened to both of us. that like big life changes post-COVID. But coming into the NuVic space, I just wanted to say that like I remember other teaching artists being like, you need to talk to Arielle. Like Arielle's really in this space. And I'm like, that's cool. And so we individually growing up as New Yorkers had been doing like a lot of advocacy in just just being a teaching artist, like doing it right.

Sofiya (24:49)



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And then you get GIVE or you have this idea of GIVE and you, you f you go, wow, like this is so needed. This has to exist. How can we be a part of it? And so since my beginnings in New Victory, you know, working with that organization, GIVE has been like the heart of it for me. And I feel really like I love going in to see the students.

Sofiya (25:13)

And and doing the activations and all the different work with the shows, which is such a different kind of curriculum model than other organizations I had worked for prior, which is very creative. Like New Victory is super creative and takes care of their teaching artists and just an incredible place to work for. But then you have this GIVE guide. And so for me, it's like coming in as a teaching artist and being a person with short stature, like day one is always, you know, wow, this this my teacher's little.

Sofiya (25:45)

Okay. And then there's like so many questions that all the students have, and there's like gotta be a moment where we're sort of like talking through it and and and and I'm allowing that advocacy and that education to happen at the top. And but when I started working with because of different organizations, I worked with communities with disabilities, I was like, my God, these are my people. Like these are the young version of me. These are the young Sofiya's in the New York City public school system, you know.

Sofiya (26:12)

And I and I really wanted to take care of them so badly. And so when New Vic showed me the GIVE guide, I was just like, this, this is it. This is it. And I'm just so glad to to see that resource, support that resource. And now with this podcast, you know, bring it out there even more for people to learn about. It's created and curated by so many people that have the not only lived experience, but the allyship and the the grit to understand, you know, this is hard work, but so important.

Sofiya (26:46)

And we have to take care of our teachers that are taking care of the students with disabilities. And how we do that is by entering into this GIVE guide. Let me tell you, everybody that's



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listening, there's so much here for you. Anything that you have been struggling with or feel a challenge with in the work that you're doing.

Sofiya (27:05)

There might be something that can address that in this re, in these resources. So part of what we've also talked about, you know, with the GIVE guide and its importance is like as a person with a disability, to me, it was the first thing I'd ever seen that is supporting the education field and addressing ableism. It's addressing ableism that exists in the education system and helps us work through it.

Sofiya (27:33)

To be better communicators to to our students, to our other co-teachers, to our administrators, you know? And there's really not much that exists like that that's really tackling that. And, you know, down to like the history of how education became what it is, you know, especially for these students with disabilities. They were not allowed to go to school. Like only about 50 years ago, 60 years ago, whenever it was.

Sofiya (28:02)

And now, we're, we have classes that are dedicated to students with IEPs and we have districts that are dedicated to students with disabilities and there's still a lot of ableism that exists in this education system. I think New York does a pretty good job, but you know, it's, it's there. And so there's a lot of ways that we as humans in the room can adjust and learn and and bring ourselves to these humans, these other humans that deserve education, and that's why it's it's really important to me.

Arielle (28:37)

Thank you for really going into that. And I think just the, the idea of this guide is for like, the future generation, that really hits me in a big way. I think what you're also discussing in terms of like your personal *WHY* is I mean, I really, really resonate with that as somebody who feels like I'm constantly walking into whether it's like a classroom or a theater space,

Arielle (29:03)



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and like, looking around and saying like what are the barriers and how do we like you know my instinct and my my desires like let like taking like elbows and knocking them down but like how sometimes it's chipping away and the you know the actions look a little bit different but really like I I enter into spaces through that lens and I hope and I strive to constantly walk into a space through an anti-ableist lens and I I think that's GIVE's *WHY* too.

Arielle (29:34)

So I think that's what brings us here is that our personal whys, even though our experiences are very different, are really the same, like one and the same as GIVE's overarching why. And to me, like GIVE as a resource is an acknowledgement and a recognition that like our our systems are are flawed and that and really taking time and stock and like acknowledging what barriers are and GIVE to me is like the arts education community's own personal chipping away, elbowing all of the, you know, at at these barriers and an exercise in imagining and working towards a a a radically more inclusive and accessible future.

Sofiya (30:20)

Yeah, I f I I couldn't agree more. And when we've done our GIVE facilitations and we've worked with different, whether they be teaching artists or classroom teachers, they quickly realize like, yeah, of course. Like our we know about the IDEA, the *Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act*. We know about how this you know, these these services have been implemented into the schools. But do we really know, right? Do we really understand what that history is?

Sofiya (30:50)

How it's impacting our students today. You know, it's so hard for these classroom teachers what they're up against. And so I think the GIVE guide really has such a great, robust way to tackle that, like you said, and break it down and and give you space to kind of dig into it a little bit, right? To understand, like, wow, these are the barriers I'm up against, they're up against. And how are we navigating through it together?

Sofiya (31:19)

Jashua, why does GIVE work for you?

Jashua (31:22)



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Being introduced to the GIVE guide, I was just really impressed with its intelligence. Honestly, it seemed like it was put together by people who are in the field, who do the work, who are considerate about everybody involved, not just the funders, not just the children, not the teachers, not the teaching artists. It seemed like it really considered everybody in the process and made space for everybody to get what they need out of it. And I see so few resources that are that thorough and that intentional.

Jashua (31:50)

So I I really gravitated towards it and really wanted to see how I could help. Other people know, hey, this is a thing and we should use this, especially here in New York, because GIVE Guide, the the whole purpose is to help with accessibility needs, whatever that access is. And I I would say New York has a lot of specific accessibility needs, not even just on the physical side, but like if even if we're just talking about language, there are so many classrooms you'll walk into and English is not spoken at all, or it's the minor language.

Jashua (32:20)

And sometimes as teaching artists, you have to be prepared to understand how do I engage when some of my students don't speak the language I'm speaking for 30 to 45 minutes. They might get a word or two. So how do I still make sure that they're engaged, that they have access to this? So things like that just help me to see like there's a lot that we need help with and often don't know where to get this help. We, you know, we jump on an app, some Duolingo or something, try to get some Spanish up real quick. And it's just like we need more support.

Jashua (32:49)

Whenever we find, hey, I have got students who I'm not fully equipped to access them. Like I want to make sure they're getting the most out of this, but I feel like I'm not equipped. What do I do? GIVE it's right there. And it's it's so thorough. It's really well laid out. It's it's easy to navigate. And so I felt like I haven't seen a lot of tools developed for the teaching artist field as effective, as intentional, as as useful as that one. So I think it's really great. And I'm glad that I can jump on here in this podcast and help some other people know more about it.

Jashua (33:19)



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help them understand what it is and how effective and useful it is. So yeah, I'm excited about that and I appreciate being invited on this space with you.

Sofiya (33:27)

Thank you so much, Jashua. Yeah, you've said everything so beautifully and I can tell that your work in your working with young people and even in I think your professional art world as well is like communication is that center part of like the fuel of everything. And that's what GIVE does. GIVE helps us be better communicators to our students, to our other classroom professionals.

Sofiya (33:54)

Yeah, and I relate so much too with your teaching artist journey as well, like working with certain groups of students that are going through a hard time or, you know, put in alternate learning centers or detention centers or or these after school programs where they're I've I've been lucky to as a teaching artist to work, you know, a lot with different tools to help using theater as a tool to model different life circumstances and and help the students learn various outcomes to to to different life circumstances and and learning conflict resolution or different ways to navigate their emotions or what's happening in relationships in their lives. So it's that communication piece, right? Like that we're talking about.

Sofiya (34:46)

Andrew, tell me more about the GIVE guide. Like y you were saying ArtsConnection brought you to the GIVE Guide. Why why should we be promoting the GIVE Guide? Why is it important to you?

Andrew (34:57)

When we talk about like creating more accessible spaces, we think about like the specifics. And I'm sure we you know you may have touched on this already, but there's this great example that someone gave me really early in the piece when they we were talking about making spaces more comfortable for people, like, maybe we adjust our language so instead of saying "guys", we say "hey everyone" or something, so that we're not excluding anyone, which is like that's such a simple little change. So but and also it's not the biggest deal of a thing.



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Andrew (35:24)

But someone gave me this example, they were like, look, think about when we install like from the road to the footpath, those little cutouts. so that you've got like a little a little ramp.

Sofiya (35:34)

Curb cuts.

Andrew (35:35)

That's what we call here. Yeah. sorry, sometimes I get lost in the Australia.

Sofiya (35:39)

No, that's okay.

Andrew (35:40)

But those curb cuts. Well, you know, it's like they make some they make it easier for someone who's using a wheelchair, but they also make it easier for me if I've got my bags and I'm ta lugging one to the A train to get out to JFK.

Andrew (35:51)

And they also make it easier if you've had an injury and you just happen to be needing that little bit of an extra help or if you're older and taking a big step up is something that's become more difficult. And so it's that thing about like like making it more accessible for one person actually makes it more accessible for everyone. And when we're talking about the arts, I think that like the big goal that I have for arts is participation. I want everyone to be able to participate in the arts. I think that we worry about expertise a lot.

Andrew (36:18)

And I'm really excited actually. I don't I don't need us all to be Broadway performers or Hollywood performers or directors or world famous musicians or whatever. I think that like the soft skills of collaboration and of like listening and working with each other to create something and also the joy of it is something that it should and could be universal.

Andrew (36:41)



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And so it's something that I really love is this idea of making arts accessible for more people and in making it accessible for people in a deliberate way, like opening it up in terms of using extra languages, or using imagery as well as your words, or creating a space where you don't have to go up a flight of stairs to get there if you can, which comes sometimes in New York can be tough. It's it you know, like these are these are ways that make it better for everyone at some point, usually. So in yeah, it's that thing about like except making it specifically more accessible for some people actually helps everyone in the long run.

Andrew (37:15)

And the other way it helps is, you give access to people who you wouldn't be having in that room. And I really believe in that power of collaboration and the fact that when we make something that is that like A plus B equals C and C is better than A or B on their own, usually. There's something that's sort of more exciting about what we can create together that we couldn't create alone. And you know, when you make a space accessible, then you open your space and the and you give access to other brilliant minds that you might not have been lucky enough to have access to.

Sofiya (37:46)

And all of that collaboration and and and centering those voices is what makes for these spaces to be more accessible and and contain like just continuing the cycle of like access just really does expand beyond disability. But starting there is is super important. And a lot of times, you know, working with in ICT classrooms or working with the community, they don't have the access to the arts as well. You know, and so arts are just such a it's an opening for so many things.

Andrew (38:19)

It's like anything. If you if you want the best engineer and you're hiring for engineers and then you set it up where you've got a cover letter, which is professional writing, which is not part of the job description of an engineer, and so you put a cover letter on that application, someone who is time poor or is a single parent or is for whatever reason is gonna find it harder to write that cover letter to get the application in. You might not get that application. So you might actually miss out on the best engineer to be a member of your team because you set up an



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unnecessary hurdle. And so it's that thing about like, let's knock down these dang hurdles. hurdles.

Sofiya (38:51)

The dang hurried.

Andrew (38:52)

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm Australian and would usually use much stronger language, but I'm aware that we might want to keep this a little more open. But if we knock down those dang hurdles, then we're gonna get ourselves like a cooler group of people in that room, who are excited to be there, who we're excited to learn from. We're gonna get other perspectives that we're not used to having or that we can learn from or that can teach us or that can open something up in a way or that can solve a problem that we didn't know that we had or can you know, there's a million things that can come from that. And I think it only benefits us.

CONCLUSION

Sofiya (39:24)

More to come with these three compelling teaching artists. Join us in these conversations around the GIVE Guide and how you can access this information for your learning spaces. The questions we explore when talking with Arielle, Andrew, and Jashua are

1. What is GIVE and why do we use it?
2. How do you personally experience resistance in the classroom as a student? And
3. How can teaching artists and classroom teachers partner together to co-design and co-facilitate inclusive arts lessons?

Sofiya (39:56)

The work of creating accessible and inclusive learning spaces is ongoing. As the GIVE learning community grows and evolves, the GIVE Resources will also continue to evolve and grow.

Sofiya (40:08)



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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 (40:22)

The GIVE Out Loud Podcast would like to thank our co-hosts and GIVE trainers, Arielle Lever, Andrew Strano, and Jashua Sa-Ra.

Sofiya (40:30)

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 (40:41)

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 (40:54)

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 (41:04)

We love being in community with practitioners like you who aim to grow inclusive practices in arts and education. Help our community grow and share TeachWithGive.org with your colleagues and beyond.

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