

Trans-Centered Pedagogies for the (Choral) Classroom

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Easy Ways to Support Trans Students (and everyone else, too!)

- » **Normalize sharing pronouns.** All people can support creating inclusive environments for trans people by sharing pronouns during introductions. We don't know someone's pronouns just by looking at them, so normalizing the practice of sharing pronouns helps make room for trans people to feel safe and respected.
- » **Choose ensemble names that include everyone you want to be included.** Gender-specific choirs represent a major part of the choral tradition, but when describing our choirs, ensemble directors must consider if the ensemble is really meant for *all people* of a certain gender (i.e. a women's choir for *all women*) or if it is better described by a group of voice parts (i.e. a treble choir).
- » **Express visible support for LGBTQ+ singers when appropriate.** Many educators think that their support for LGBTQ+ students & singers is obvious, however, data show that having just one person who expresses clear affirmation for LGBTQ+ identities can be life-saving. Even small gestures like stickers/signs of support, or verbal interventions to homophobic/transphobic remarks are significant to creating safe spaces for LGBTQ+ singers.
- » **Wear concert attire that is affirming and accessible for people of all genders.** Many trans people report that gendered concert attire is among the most stressful aspects of performing concert music, and ensemble directors can address this by selecting gender-neutral concert attire, or concert attire with a variety of options for people of all genders.

Additional Vocabulary

- » **AFAB/AMAB:** Acronyms for “assigned female at birth” and “assigned male at birth.” These terms point out that when we come into the world... innumerable others look at our bodies and say what they think our bodies mean to them... Bodily differences are real, and they set us on different trajectories in life, but people who use these “assigning” terms are trying to point out is that our bodies and the paths they put us on, however unchosen they were initially, need not determine everything about us.
- » **Gender-nonconforming, genderqueer, and nonbinary:** The terms all refer to people who do not conform to binary notions of the alignment of sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or gender presentation.
- » **Gender-neutral pronouns:** It is increasingly common to use the plural *they/them/their* in place of a gendered singular pronoun when the sex or gender of the person being referred to is unknown or irrelevant [or when it is the pronoun used by a nonbinary or genderqueer person]. Some people who favor gender-neutral English pronouns might use *ze* or *sie* in place of he and she, or the word *hir* instead of his and her.
- » **Queer:** In the late 1980s and early 1990s, some people reclaimed the word *queer*, which had been a derogatory term for homosexuality, and started using it in a positive way. Although it’s now often used as a synonym for gay or lesbian, the people who first reappropriated the term were trying to find a way to talk about their opposition to heterosexist social norms; *queer* was less a sexual orientation than it was a political one, what the “queer theorists” of the day called being “antiheteronormative.”

excerpted & abridged from “Transgender History: The Roots of Today’s Revoltion,” Susan Stryker 2017

Additional Resources

- » <https://galachoruses.org/resource-center/singers/transgender-voices>
- » <https://transstudent.org>
- » <https://www.glsen.org/educate/resources/>
- » <https://transequality.org>