Inclusivity in the Choral Classroom 2018 MSVMA Summer Conference

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bit.ly/msvmainclusivity

Quality, Meaningful Experience for All!

Day 1 and Beyond!

"Note cards" Google Form

Name, pronouns, and something interesting that will help me understand you as a learner (i.e. What kind of music you love best, personality traits, successes, challenges, etc.)

Icebreaker Activities and Introductions should always include chosen name and pronouns.

Normalize this!

Choose activities that celebrate the individual (Good News Circle, Partner Interviews, Share Favorites, etc.)

Inclusive Language

Gender

Voice parts only works wonders!

"Sopranos and Altos" vs. "ladies or girls"
"Tenors, baritones, basses" instead of "guys or gentlemen"
"Students or kids" instead of "ladies and gentlemen"

Family

"Parent/Guardian" rather than "Mom/Dad"

Ableist

Meet kids where they are-pronouns and names may change

Uniforms and Housing

Do you have gender neutral uniforms?

Classic black bottoms, matching tops?

Robes?

If Tux/Dress, let every kid choose, no questions asked!

Assign housing based on student's "consistently asserted gender"

[Example Camp Registration Form](#)

Student Statements on Inclusivity

In your experience, what are the characteristics of an inclusive Choral Classroom?

Teamwork, kindness and respect

A great deal of respect from both the students and the teacher, acknowledged and vocalized validation of all identities, and a willingness and ability to challenge and refute preconceptions (e.g. typical choral gender divides)

Caring, being respectful towards people's wishes, & a strong no tolerance policy to bigotry.

Not leaving anyone out based off of bias towards others making sure everyone is involved in activities and practices

In your experience, what are the characteristics of an inclusive Choral Classroom? Continued

I think it is really emphasizing the importance of all parts. Everyone is important in some way to the music.

The characteristics of an inclusive choir environment involve accepting everyone for who they are and what they have to offer, referring to voice parts as what they are instead of the gender (ex. "treble voices" instead of "girls" or "female voices"), asking for students preferred pronouns and/or nicknames, and singing/learning about music from other countries and cultures.

Everyone has the opportunity to lead and comment on improvements to be made in any given piece. Everyone is respectful of others talent and what they have to offer.
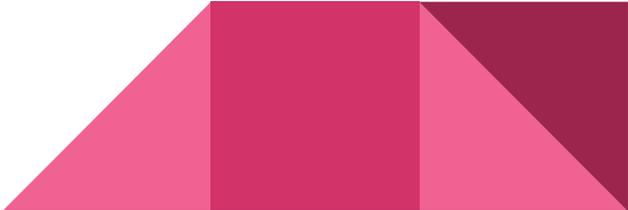
While thinking of your time in class, during performances, while in the audience, while working with guest clinicians, etc., what are some specific examples of things people did that made you feel included, welcome, and safe?

The simple act of referring to upper and lower voice parts as such, rather than "male" and "female" voice parts, or "men" and "women," had an incredible impact on creating a more gender-inclusive environment. Additionally, our teacher put a lot of time and effort into knowing us students individually, knowing our name and pronoun preferences, and ensuring our identities were seen and accepted.

Many students gave this similar response
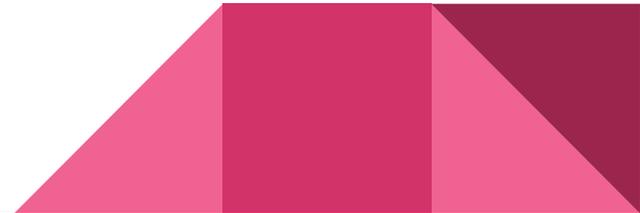
When I was sightreading, I felt like people valued my knowledge and I felt like people had respect for me. Also, I feel like my opinion and perspective was taken into account which made me feel like I really had an impact in class.

Correcting pronouns & introducing our choir as an inclusive & diverse place.

I felt included and welcomed when people reached out and wanted to get to know me as a freshman. The environment in Skyline Choir that you have built is already so warm and welcoming that that carries on from class to class.

Even if I felt like I was the only one making a mistake, they'd generalize the issue rather than specifically call out one person which would prevent then from feeling bad about themselves

Other choir members watching the other groups performances and cheering them on.

If you identify as LGBTQIA+, what characteristics of the choral program were inclusive to you specifically?

A big part of LGBTQIA+ inclusivity is an open community among the students that accepts, supports, and represents queer identities; Inclusivity propagates inclusivity. When this exists, the students are role models for each other, giving them much more confidence to be truly themselves than they would otherwise have. At [my school], there was such a community, which made it much easier for me to express myself openly. I'm sure establishing such a community is very difficult, but it is a major factor in students feeling accepted and included.

Taking the time to ask about pronouns individually & being very careful to always respect them. Also, I loved the soprano/alto & tenor/bass voice part distinctions as opposed to "guys/girls". Also, I really loved being able to stay in the cabin of my gender.
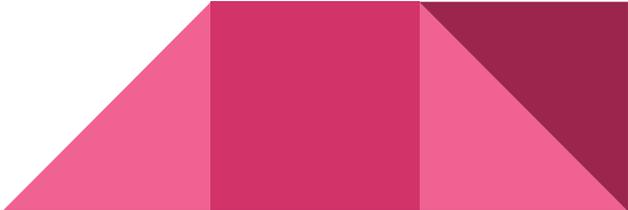
Repertoire

How does the music shape your class?

Text

Student Considerations/Audience Considerations

Does the repertoire represent multiple cultures? Religions? Historical periods?

Representation matters!

Student Contributions

Do students have input into repertoire selections?

Do students have the opportunity to lead rehearsals or a special project?

Do students have equal opportunity to contribute to class discussions?
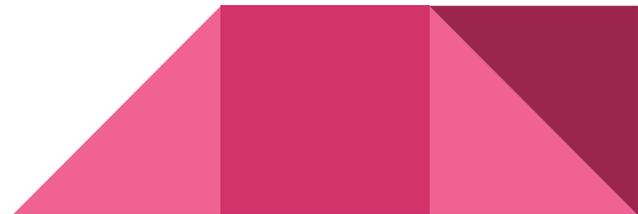
Other Important Considerations

Remove Financial Barriers

Carpool Volunteers

Financial Aid

Fundraisers

Cultural bias

Bravely examine your biases and their contributions to your teaching

How do your biases influence repertoire, travel destinations, listening exercises, sensitivity toward individual student needs and personalities, etc.?

Utilize Culturally Relevant teaching strategies

Do the right thing for kids without fear!

Resources

A Silent Crisis: Creating Safe Schools for Sexual Minority Youth http://www.safeschoolslgbtq.org/

Anti-Defamation league (ADL) www.adl.org

Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education network www.glsen.org

Gender Spectrum www.genderspectrum.org

Southern Poverty Law Center-Teaching Tolerance Project www.tolerance.org

http://www.racialequitytools.org - A web site designed to support people and groups who are working for inclusion, racial equity and social justice. The site includes ideas, strategies and tips, as well as a clearinghouse of resources and links from many sources.
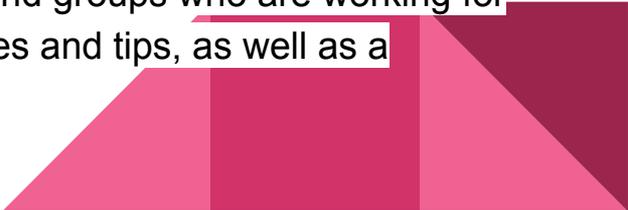
Questions? Thoughts?

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