

Teaching Transgender Students: What every music educator should know

Loraine Sims, DMA Associate Professor, Edith Killgore Kirkpatrick Professor of Voice, LSU

TEACHER TIP:

On the first day of school, have students introduce themselves with the name they would like to be called instead of reading off a roster. This gives trans* youth (and anyone else who doesn't like their legal name) a chance to share the name they are most comfortable with.

transstudent /transstudent @transstudent
TSER Trans Student Equality Resources
transstudent.org/teachertips

SAFE SPACE

GLSEN GLSEN.org

TEACHER TIP:

Don't separate your class by gender or sex, it can make trans* students very uncomfortable and it completely writes off individuals that do not identify in the gender binary. You can't tell how someone identifies from how they look, and their experiences could differ wildly from your own.

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Introduction

- Music teachers should be advocates and allies for our transgender and non-binary students.
- We need to make the applied music studio, music classes, and rehearsal rooms safe spaces.
- The purpose of this presentation will be to give a general introduction to the special considerations that music teachers should know to provide an inclusive atmosphere for transgender or non-binary students.
- The goals will include developing or refining a basic vocabulary of terminology specific to this population and helping to create an awareness and sensitivity for the needs of those students who are in transition.
- Successful work with these students depends on this knowledge and the desire to create a gender neutral environment for learning.

The Gender Unicorn <http://www.transstudent.org/>

Terminology and Useful Info

- Cisgender means that the gender assigned at birth is in agreement with an individual's gender identity. Transgender means that there is a disagreement. Trans is an umbrella term.
- Non-binary, Genderfluid, or Genderqueer means that the individual may feel like one gender one day and the other gender on another day, or may feel like both genders or neither.
- Transgender is an adjective, so using the term "transgendered" is not correct.
- A transgender man (FtM, F2M, AFAB or trans masculine) may prefer to use the pronouns he/him/his and a transgender woman (MtF, M2F, AMAB, or trans feminine) may prefer to use the pronouns she/her/hers.

- Some non-binary people do not identify with either gender designation and may say that they are gender fluid and prefer the pronouns they/them/their or other created pronouns.
- Pronouns matter. Ask if you are uncertain and strive to use the correct pronoun. If a singer chooses a name not given them at birth, it is a sign of respect to use that name.

As a Music Educator –

- The most important thing for you as a teacher is to be an ally. You must be open-minded enough to treat these students with respect and try and support them however possible.
- Be aware of how your trans students are being treated by others in your rehearsal or classes.
- Use every possible awkward question or situation as a teachable moment about respecting everyone, even those different from you.
- You are not there to moralize or criticize. Your job as a teacher is to provide a supportive safe space for your transgender and non-binary students just as you do for your cisgender students.
- Consider allowing gender neutral attire for concerts and recitals, or allowing students to present as the gender of their choice.
- Know where the gender neutral restrooms are located.

Selected Resources

- Richard K. Adler, Sandy Hirsch, and Michelle Mordaunt. *Voice and Communication Therapy for the Transgender/Transsexual Client: A Comprehensive Clinical Guide*. Plural Publishing, 2012.
- Liz Jackson Hearn and Brian Kremer. *The Singing Teacher's Guide to Transgender Voices*. Plural Publishing, 2018.
- Brian Manternach, Michael Chipman, Ruth Rainero, and Caitlin Stave. *Teaching Transgender Singers. Part I: The Voice Teachers' Perspectives*. *Journal of Singing*, September/October 2017, Volume 74, No. 1, pp. 83–88.
- Brian Manternach. *Teaching Transgender Singers. Part II: The Singers' Perspectives*. *Journal of Singing*, November/December 2017, Volume 74, No. 2, pp. 209–214.
- Josh Palkki. https://acda.org/files/choral_journals/PalkkiJu-Ju17.pdf and <http://www.queeringchoir.com/>
- Loraine Sims. *Teaching the Transgender Students*. *Journal of Singing*, January/February 2017, Volume 73, No. 3, pp. 279–282.
- Loraine Sims. *Teaching Lucas: A Transgender Singer's Vocal Journey from Soprano to Tenor*. *Journal of Singing*, March/April 2017, Volume 73, No. 4, pp. 367–375.
- Loraine Sims. *What the FACH? Voice Dysphoria and the Trans or Non-Binary Singer*. *VOICE Prints Journal of the New York Singing Teachers' Association*, Volume 15, Number 5 May--June 2018.
- Helpful weblinks
 - <http://www.transstudent.org/>
 - <https://www.glsen.org/safespace>
 - <https://keyoft.com/>

Contact

Loraine Sims, DMA
 Associate Professor, Edith Killgore Kirkpatrick Professor of Voice
 Voice Studies Division Chair, Vocal Area Coordinator
lsims@lsu.edu