LGBTQIA+

Disrupting Gender Assumptions:
Challenging Cis-Heteronormative Narratives in Dance

January 26, 2022 at
7pm

Presented by: Anthony Alterio, Lindsey Bauer, Barbie Diewald,
Dr. Ari Calvano, and Natalie Swan

Moderated by: Vanessa Kanamoto
Terms and Definitions

**Deadnames** - the birth name of a person who has changed their name as part of their gender transition

**Cisgender** - a person whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth

**Gender Identity** - one’s innermost concept of self; what they perceive themselves and call themselves: female, male, a blend of both, or neither

**Misgender** - addressing a person with a word or pronoun that does not correctly reflect the gender that they identify

**Title IX** of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”
K-12
Disrupting Gender Assumptions in K-12

- Dance is for ALL – addressing gender stereotypes around dance
- Eliminating gender roles in partner dances
- Books to aid discussion and awareness
- How do we share costume notices/dress code?
- Students names and pronouns
Dance is for All
→ Breaking the stereotype that dance is just for girls

- Using topics that draw on students’ interests
- Discussing dancers as athletes
- Highlighting dancers of all genders through videos and photographs in many styles of dance
- Using read alouds
Gender in Partner Dances

Allowing for student choice of:
- Partner
- Movement details - such as arm placement
- Costume/accessory pieces
- Being leader and follower

Photos: 3rd grade class of 2022 & Book Cover sourced from Google
Costumes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>What to wear on May 30th for the Spring Dance Showcase</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PK01</td>
<td>Any shade of blue and white</td>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K012</td>
<td>White shirts and black leggings or pants. Ms. Swan will provide red skirts, red floral headbands, and red bandanas. Children may choose which accessory they would like.</td>
<td>Frida Kahlo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Yellow top and black/dark bottoms</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>All black</td>
<td>Poets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201</td>
<td>Black bottoms and solid colored shirt. See chart below for what color your child’s group is wearing.</td>
<td>NYC &amp; Subway Lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance Club</td>
<td>Red top and black bottoms</td>
<td>Jazz dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All 4th and 5th Grade</td>
<td>“Dress-up” or formal wear of any color. May include pants, skirts, ties, vest, blazer, dress, button down shirt, or school uniform.</td>
<td>Ballroom dances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For some classes, just colors are listed – this means your child is encouraged to wear anything that is that color. School uniforms are also okay to wear! If a student wears a skirt or dress, they should wear shorts or leggings underneath. Sneakers are a must! Bottoms can be pants, leggings, shorts, or skirts. Tops can include shirts of any sleeve length, dresses, sweaters, or other items that cover the top half of the body. Feel free to email me with any questions: nswan@schools.nyc.gov.

Photos - Top: 5th grade class of 2020; Bottom: Kindergarten Class of 2019
Additional Ways to Disrupt Gender Assumptions

- Not using perceived or confirmed gender to divide students into groups or lines
  - Not separating the boys to go across the floor last, but mixing all students together
- Not singling out movements or dance genres just for one gender
- Using neutral colors throughout the room vs. an emphasis on pink
- Holding an additional space/meeting for children to read, discuss, and explore gender - Be-YOU-tiful Book Club
Dance Uniform:
Cooperative Arts & Humanities High School, New Haven Connecticut

Uniforms: All students 9th-12th grade are expected to wear appropriate dance attire during class each day:

For Ballet:
- black leotard and skin tone tights
- black leggings and black leotard
- black form fitting top and dance pants

For Cultural, Modern, and Jazz:
- raspberry unitard
- raspberry 2 piece dancewear set

All bodies need support systems. For your body, please have the appropriate undergarments so that your body feels supported and streamlined.

Photo: “Class of ’20”, Coppola Photography, New Haven CT
Names & Pronouns: Cooperative Arts & Humanities High School, New Haven Connecticut

- Teacher obligation: legal, empathetic, supportive
- Roll call: LAST names only
- Modeling, practicing, my own homework

EXAMPLE of Info form:

1. Name on PowerSchool:
2. Name you would like to use in class:
3. Name that you want to be referred as when I meet your parent or guardian:
4. Pronouns (ex: she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs)
5. May I use these pronouns when I contact home?
6. May I use these pronouns in front of the class?
7. May I use these pronouns with other teachers?
8. Would you like me to follow up with you (in a private conversation) about your pronouns or name?

Photo: “Class of ‘20”, Coppola Photography, New Haven CT
Inclusive Pedagogy in Higher Education

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Syllabus Language: Names and Pronouns

“ If you have a name and/or use pronouns that differ from what appears in your official records, please let me know. I am happy to adjust my roster at any time.”

- Name/pronoun shifts often occur mid-semester

“If something occurs or is said in class that makes you feel uncomfortable, disrespected or unseen, I encourage you to speak with me. If you are uncomfortable speaking to me directly, please fill out a Bias Incident Report Form”

- Provide links or contacts of people that can help support them and/or provide support to the people who may be unintentionally creating a non-inclusive or harmful learning environment
“Physical touch may arise in my pedagogy. It is important to me that we uphold a culture of respect and consent. Please let me know if you are uncomfortable being touched for any reason, at any time. I will ask your permission every time I touch you, and I will always respect your boundaries.”

- “May I touch your shoulder?” Be specific.
- Normalize consent culture in the classroom. Empower students to exercise agency. They do not have to reserve “no” for when they feel unsafe.
- Do not assume that a “yes” to touch in one class automatically means a “yes” to touch the next day.
Additional Pronoun Considerations

- I ask students to let me know if I misgender someone. Some are worried it is rude to correct a professor, but in this case, I let them know it is the polite thing to do with regard to respecting everyone in the room.
- Correct colleagues and students even when the student who you misgendered is not present.
- If you make a mistake: quickly apologize, correct yourself, and move on.
- Prep your guest artists, and remind them if they make a mistake.
- Double-check with ALL students if you are writing recommendations for them.
Three Premises for Inclusive Pedagogy

*inspired by the National LGBTQ Task Force Reproductive Justice Toolkit

Use expansive language that does not presume everyone is cisgender

Provide visual and written materials of and by transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming dancers and scholars

Use Anatomy-First Language

Mount Holyoke College Students in *Tredectet*, 2021. Photo by Derek Fowles
Use expansive language that does not presume everyone is cisgender

There are not two genders. So saying that something is open to “either gender” or “both genders” just reinforces the binary.

- Students
- Dancers
- Everyone
- Artists
- Folks

Provide multiple options without gendering them.

Focus on the **skill** you are teaching, not gender expectations.
Provide visual and written materials of and by transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming dancers and scholars

- Do a syllabus audit!
- Marginalized voices can be hard to locate. A research librarian can help!
- Audit visual materials and the artists you take your students to see.
- Consider including images of dancers who do not conform to gendered physical expectations (i.e.: dancers who choose not to shave their body hair).
Anatomy-First and Intentional Language

- **Anatomy-First Language**: Describing the body in anatomical terms, not gendered terms
  - When discussing variations in pelvic morphology: “if you have a uterus, your pelvis may be shaped this way” rather than “the female pelvis is shaped this way.”
- Gender neutral descriptions for familial relationships
- Terms for structures around the pelvic area like Acetabulum, Pelvic Floor, Pubic Bone, Coccyx, Gluteals. Etc. are not inappropriate to bring into the classroom!
- Reproductive structures, regardless of sex or gender, develop embryologically from the same sorts of tissue.
Resources

Harvard University: Addressing Bias in Medical Education Through Inclusive Anatomical Representation: Harvard University Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Ballez, directed by Katy Pyle: www.ballez.org

National LGBTQ Task Force: www.thetaskforce.org, Queering Reproductive Health, Rights & Justice

App: Essential Anatomy 5 by Elsevier 3D Medical (only available on macs/iPads/iPhones) Getbodysmart.com


Come As You Are by Emily Nagoski, New York, NY. Simon & Schuster, 2015

5 Action Steps to Disrupt Gender Assumptions in Collegiate Productions
Disrupting Gender Assumptions in Collegiate Productions

1. Begins with choosing pieces/season
   - Always asking, why this piece here now?
   - What narratives are being reinforced?
   - Aiming to create balance
Disrupting Gender Assumptions in Collegiate Productions

2. Check Casting Assumptions
   - Audition Style
   - Conversations with Students for Callbacks
     ○ Which parts are you interested?
     ○ What draws you to the role?

*Fires in the Mirror - University of Louisville - 2020
Photo Credit - Tom Fougerousse*
Disrupting Gender Assumptions in Collegiate Productions

3. Costuming Conversations

- Checking in with Costume Designer before they render
- One-sheets with under garment choices
- Open dialogue with students and designers

*Eurydice* - University of Louisville - 2017
Photo Credit - Tom Fougerousse
Disrupting Gender Assumptions in Collegiate Productions

4. Supplemental Materials in the rehearsal room
   - Historical Pieces - with a contemporary lens -
   - Widening perspectives with additional materials

*The Taming of the Shrew* - University of Louisville - 2018
Photo Credit - Tom Fougerousse
Disrupting Gender Assumptions in Collegiate Productions

5. It all comes down to providing choices, listening, and inviting conversation!

- Redistributing power is a great start
- Continue to reflect and find your unique ways to incorporate this work.
Disrupting Gender Assumptions in Collegiate Productions - Works Cited

1. “Growing Up Trans” *Frontline* PBS Documentary
   [https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/growing-up-trans/](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/growing-up-trans/)

2. *Disclosure* – Sam Feder & Laverne Cox Documentary on Netflix


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Organizational Action: Excessive Realness

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Mission Statement:

Excessive Realness is a queer-normative dance intensive geared toward LGBTQIA+ people who consider themselves dancers or use dance as a tool for their own artistic and personal practice. This intensive provides a platform for participants to channel their own artistic practices, personal expression, and sociopolitical engagement through dance, performance, queerness, and the many other intersecting identities that people within these communities hold.
Into Existence

- Erika Randall
- The Standard
- Create Your Own Space
Operation

- Two Co-Directors
- Open Application Process
- Removal of Power
- Not Prescribing to A Norm
- Removing Stigma
- Equity and Equal
- Queers Everywhere!
- LGBTQIA+ and Allies
The Impact

- Creating a Community and Network
- Creating a Safe Space
- Express and Explore
THE SPILL
Classes Taught at ER

- Disruptive Bodies: Performance Lab in Bodily Release & Resistance
- Re-membering: Imagining New Worlds Through the Excavation of Our Bodies’ Memory
- Anatomy through Poetry
- Gender Fluid Ballet
- Articulating Pop Culture: A Somatic/Creative Practice
- Dancing Testimony
- Holding Histories, Moving Bodies
- Trans/Eros: A Queer Approach to Bodies in Crisis
Join the LGBTQIA+ SIG

If you are an NDEO member and would like to stay connected with other LGBTQIA+ identifying NDEO members you can join our Special Interest Group

Email: membership@ndeo.org for more information about joining this SIG