

Keeping Your Dance Space Stigma-Free

Dos and Don'ts

DO

- Keep your classroom décor gender neutral
- Use a variety of dance styles/genres in your instruction
- Incorporate music and choreography that represent your students' culture in your lessons
- Allow students ample time in the driver's seat by incorporating mini divergent production episodes in daily lessons
- Encourage inclusive collaboration in groups of mixed genders, and grade levels when possible

DON'T

- Be afraid to ask for student input when lesson planning and selecting music for class and performances
- Use gender specific choreography in class- err on the side of masculine movement in a mixed gender class
- Use an gender-imbalanced playlist for class – use a relatively equal amount male and female artists
- Teach using a traditional studio approach- cued response classes may turn off diverse learners and encourage female-only participation

Tips to Increase Enrollment in Dance Electives

- Accept EVERYBODY who is interested in your program regardless of skill level, previous experience, body type or gender
- Do not hold auditions unless you have more students than you can accommodate
- Make your program accessible- ask to be included in a pep rally or other school function to increase awareness
- Actively seek out male participants
- Build your audience by involving other schools within your district
- Plan theme lessons that increase your visibility in the school – back to school flash mob, anyone??
- Encourage the students you already have to get their friends to join
- Promote yourself! Create a Facebook, Twitter or Instagram account for your program and post often
- Make your students feel like superstars even if they've only just started dancing (and are not terribly confident)
- Stay unfailingly POSITIVE!

Student Panel Suggested Discussion Prompts

Please feel free to ask the student panel anything you feel appropriate, but the following prompts could help get the ball rolling!

- What made you choose dance as your elective?
- How long have you been dancing?
- What is your favorite style of dance?
- What are your favorite activities in dance class?
- What are your least favorite parts of dance class?
- If you were going to help start a dance program in another school, what would you suggest that the teacher do to encourage students to join?
- What should that teacher NOT do?
- Do your non-dancing friends tease you about taking dance?
- If yes, what do you say to them?
- Do you prefer to take regular technique class (warm up, stretch, across the floor, combination), or do you like lessons that use choreography, improvisation, or student-led activities better?
- Do you like to perform in front of an audience?
- What has been the best part of your dance experience so far?
- Is there anything you wish you would do in dance class, but haven't done yet?