

Self-Talk Lesson Structures

Introduction:

Students will learn about self-talk, identify their own patterns of self-talk, and develop strategies to transform negative self-talk into positive or neutral self-talk to improve their confidence and performance in choir.

Section 1: Lesson Overview

In the choral classroom, fostering a supportive and inclusive environment is important for student growth and success. One crucial aspect of creating such an environment is understanding and noticing how students perceive and talk to themselves. The “voice inside their head” has a lot of power over how a student understands themselves.

Self-talk The internal dialogue or the thoughts that individuals have with themselves, which can influence their feelings, behaviors, and performance.

Categorizing Self-Talk

Negative Self-Talk: Internal dialogue that is critical, discouraging, or self-defeating, often leading to feelings of inadequacy or failure.

Examples of negative self-talk:

- "I'll never be able to hit that high note."
- "I'm the worst singer in this choir."
- "I don't belong here with these talented singers."
- "My voice sounds terrible compared to theirs."
- "I'm going to embarrass myself during the performance."
- "I should just give up trying."

Neutral Self-Talk: Internal dialogue that is factual, objective, and non-judgmental, focusing on observations without emotional bias.

Examples of neutral self-talk:

- "I don't need to be perfect to be valuable."
- "I am worth the space I take up in this group."
- "I'm still learning how to sing this part."
- "I need more practice with this song."
- "It's normal to feel nervous before a performance."

- "I made a mistake, but I can fix it next time."
- "I'll ask for help if I need it."

Positive Self-Talk: Internal dialogue that is encouraging, affirming, and supportive, promoting confidence and a positive mindset.

Examples of positive self-talk:

- "I feel proud of the progress I've made so far."
- "I contribute to the choir, and my efforts matter."
- "I am prepared and ready for this performance."
- "I trust in my training and my voice."
- "I have a unique voice that adds to our choir's sound."

Notice how language associated with neutral self-talk correlates to language used in discussions regarding fixed vs. growth mindsets. Arming students with an awareness of how they speak to themselves and the language to transition their language toward neutral and positive self-talk can be useful in discussions regarding mindset.

It can be possible as well that language that is neutral sounds positive to student ears.

Section 2: Lesson Structure

Day 1: Introduction to Self-Talk (15 minutes)

Objective:

Students will understand what self-talk is and its importance in a choral setting.

Activities:

1. Introduction (5 minutes):

- Briefly explain self-talk and its impact on performance and emotions.
- Provide a simple definition: "Self-talk is the internal dialogue we have with ourselves, which can influence our feelings and actions."

2. Class Discussion (10 minutes):

- Ask students to share what they know about self-talk.
- Discuss how self-talk might affect their singing and overall performance.

3. Homework:

- Reflect on their self-talk during rehearsals or performances and jot down a few examples in their journals/on sticky notes/or mentally. (Homework can be as involved as the educator deems appropriate.)

Day 2: Identifying Types of Self-Talk (20 minutes)

Objective:

Students will learn to identify negative, neutral, and positive self-talk.

Activities:

1. Review (5 minutes):

- Briefly review the concept of self-talk from the previous day.

2. Examples on the Whiteboard/Projector (5 minutes):

- Write examples of negative, neutral, and positive self-talk on the board. (Pre-generated examples are in the template slides in the self-talk resources)
- Discuss each type and how it might sound in a choir context.

3. Class Activity (10 minutes):

- Provide students with scenarios related to choir. (Pre-generated examples are in the template slides in the self-talk resources)
- Have students identify the type of self-talk in each scenario.

4. Homework:

- Observe and note down instances of negative, neutral, and positive self-talk they experience or witness during rehearsals. These notes can be mental or physical, at the discretion of the educator.

Day 3: Transforming Negative Self-Talk

Objective:

Students will learn how to transform negative self-talk into neutral or positive self-talk.

Activities:

1. Review (5 minutes):

- Discuss some examples of self-talk noted by students from the previous homework.

2. Transforming Self-Talk (10 minutes):

- Take examples of negative self-talk from the homework or provide new ones.
- As a class, work together to transform each negative statement into a neutral or positive one.

3. Individual Practice (10 minutes):

- Provide a worksheet with columns for negative, neutral, and positive self-talk. (A usable worksheet is provided)
- Have students write down examples of their own negative self-talk and practice converting them.

4. Homework:

- Continue practicing transforming negative self-talk and write down their experiences.

Day 4: Reinforcing Positive Self-Talk

Objective:

Students will reflect on their self-talk and reinforce positive self-talk strategies.

Activities:

1. Review (5 minutes):
 - Discuss transformations of self-talk from the previous homework.
2. Positive Affirmations (5 minutes)[IT IS OKAY IF THE KIDS FIND SOME OF THESE AFFIRMATIONS CORNY OR CHEESY, IT'S A PROCESS]:
 - Provide each student with an index card to write a positive affirmation related to their singing.
 - Encourage them to keep the card in their music folder.
 - Be prepared to help give students options to pick from if they have trouble generating their own affirmation.

Day 5 and/or Various Check-ins throughout the year: Ongoing Practice and Peer Support

Objective:

Students will integrate positive self-talk into their regular routine and support each other.

Activities:

1. Review:
 - Recap the key points from previous lessons on self-talk.
2. Incorporating Self-Talk in Rehearsals:
 - Integrate positive self-talk reminders and affirmations into regular choir rehearsals.
 - Encourage students to use their affirmations before and during rehearsals.

Ongoing Reinforcement:

- Regularly check in with students about their self-talk during rehearsals.
- Encourage continuous practice of positive self-talk and provide affirmations during challenging parts of the rehearsal.
- “Word Wall” of positive or neutral self-talk.

By spreading the lesson over several days (or weeks), students can gradually build their understanding and practice of positive self-talk, leading to improved confidence and performance in the choral classroom.