

UNITY CIRCLE



Goal

Getting to Know Each Other Through the Unity Circle to help students and teachers to:

- learn appreciate differences and de benefits of choice, language and community
- help students (and teachers) to learn to appreciate differences and the benefits of choice and community

Target Audience

This activity is particularly suitable to younger students in music/Instrument classes, group lessons.

Material – Class Organisation

- a jar
- pencil and piece of paper for each student
- chairs arranged in a circle

Action

Ask your students to think of a song that describes them, or that they identify with. Depending on the age group and timing, you may wish to give an example for yourself, and give students the evening to think of their word.

On the day of the activity, ask your class to write a significant word from the lyrics down on a piece of paper.

Form a circle with your students. Then, either choose a volunteer, or begin by presenting your chosen word and briefly explain why you selected it. For example, "I chose the word dancer because dancing allows me to express my emotions". Or, "I chose the word libisma because I was born in Suriname and I identify with the community". Or, "I chose the word pitseleh because I'm the youngest of my siblings and that's what my entire family calls me in Yiddish". Put all the presented words in a jar. Pick 1 word at the end of the exercise and listen to the song from which the word comes.

After each student presents his or her word, ask the peers if they can accept them as part of the unity circle. Should any student present themselves with a word that is negatively perceived, try to use the situation as an opportunity to engage in dialogue: give the student a chance to explain his or herself and/or come up with another word, and then pose the question to his peers once again. Continue until the whole class, including the teacher, have been inducted into the unity circle.

You can wrap up by reminding students that it wouldn't be very interesting if we were all alike and there were no differences among us to make each person unique. You can also emphasize to students that everyone has strengths and weaknesses, and is thus diverse in their own way

Timing

This exercise can be repeated several times as an introduction during the first lessons of the school year.

Future Perspective

The collected words can be used creatively in a new way. Perhaps a new song text can arise?

References

After an example of OECD on diversity and language policy.

<https://www.oecd.org/education/cei/cei-teachereducationfordiversity.htm>