

Things I've learned these past 5 years

Music

- Work *WITH* their limited ranges and choose music that sits where they can sing. Yes, this gets challenging, but also creative and rewarding.
- Reminder: young men don't sound the same as older men. Just because they can hit the notes doesn't mean the piece will work for them!
- Transposing is essential
- If it doesn't work for them, change it! Linda Spevacek is not going to hunt you down (if you bought the song, make it work for your guys!)
- Be imaginative. Song only comes in SA or SSA? If the ranges work, transpose or swap lines.
- Program concerts with THEM in mind. Yes, the music needs to teach them concepts, but it also needs to be like-able!
- Always program a tender piece, but be mindful of who you are tender about :)

Singing

- Always sing everything with expression -- face and body
- Move as you sing. The freedom helps them to:
 - release tone
 - be expressive
 - be musical
- Let them hear older singers (including adults)
- Hearing and singing A Cappella music is *awesome* and inspiring
- Sing in falsetto EVERY SINGLE DAY
- Keep up a constant dialogue about voice change. It is reassuring

Behavior/Classroom management

- Pop music is NOT the answer to engagement . . . no matter how much they beg for it! What they are actually telling you is that they want to feel cool/successful/proud of their performance
- Embrace the "HD" in ADHD. Sitting still isn't good for anyone!
- Play. Play every day. They will lay down inhibitions and take more risks. Turn things like dynamics and rhythms into games.
- Make your room a safe place to fail
- Build good *people* first -- the rest will follow
- Build pride in performance -- the rest will follow
- Think of them as a big litter of golden lab puppies and scold accordingly. Often times, saying something like "I *know* you can do better" or "You're better people than *that* -- I want to see your best" works better than getting really negative.

Misc

- "Real Men Sing" festivals are *extremely* cool!
- Folk Dance Friday
- Create a page of links to cool stuff they can listen to
- Sing lots of unison songs
- Consider forming men's groups (BBB, FGM)

Prairie Point Choir website: <https://sites.google.com/site/prairiepointvocalmusic/>

- if you want to hear any of the suggested pieces, go to our web site and click "Concert Videos." Scroll until you find the piece. *Beware-- these are my regular boys . . . sometimes things turn out really well, and other times we're just happy to have gotten through it!
- Select Choir videos are on the "Select Choir" page
- Fastest way to get to our site is to Google "Prairie Point Choir"

Kelly Truax

ktruax@prairiepride.org

Kelly Truax ktruax@prairiepride.org