

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

“Let’s start at the very beginning, a very good place to start. When you read you begin with A B C. When you sing you begin with Do Re Mi” (Hammerstein, 16). Oscar Hammerstein is regarded by many as one of the great librettists of the Twentieth Century, but he is also known for his considerable influence as a teacher. As cliché as these lyrics have become, the concept expressed is one by which students experience their greatest success: building blocks. Working slowly, step by step to solidify a concept gives a student the foundation necessary to build their skillset. Without a strong foundation, students will struggle to achieve the finesse required of the professionals in their field. As a private voice instructor I find this approach imperative. Working foundationally on the healthy function of the human voice is first and foremost, my priority.

Hand in hand with implementing the necessary building blocks, I am also a teacher who chooses to be sensitive to a student’s emotional needs. Yes, I am first and foremost an instructor, and for many, the job stops there. However, looking back, the greatest teachers in my life did not achieve that status through the number of things they taught me, but through the way those things were taught. So, in addition to taking on the role of “instructor”, I choose to be “the friend”, “the cheerleader”, “the nurturer”, and “the coach”. Fostering a strong student/teacher emotional alliance implements an environment in which students feel safe to explore, fail, and try again without fear of judgment. We are always stronger working together.

Lastly, I deeply value my commitment to being a lifelong learner. I don’t have all the answers, and never will. But I do strive to keep an open, curious mind. The world is ever changing, and I firmly believe we must continue to adapt in order to help our students meet the demands placed on them today.