

Philosophy Statement

Over the past seven years, I have had the privilege of teaching individuals of diverse identities and life stages, including both graduate and undergraduate music majors, as a Teaching Assistant (2017-19, 2022-present), Adjunct Voice Instructor (2019-22), and private instructor (2019-present). Serving as the soprano section leader of the 2024 World Youth Choir was a particularly enriching experience, as I found myself in front of a group of sopranos from diverse cultures and musical traditions, helping them to form a cohesive and healthy sound for the extreme demands of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. These experiences have deepened my passion for empowering singers and inspired me to continually improve as a mentor and teacher. As I complete my doctoral studies in Voice Performance with a cognate in Voice Health and Science (May 2025), I am eager to contribute my skills as a researcher and pedagogue in both classical and contemporary styles.

My philosophy as a voice teacher prioritizes freedom in singing by fostering a safe, exploratory environment where students feel comfortable making mistakes and embracing growth. Singing is deeply connected to emotions, so I focus on meeting students where they are during each lesson, beginning with light conversation to gauge their emotional state, vocal health, and energy levels. Through encouraging, constructive feedback and actionable suggestions, I guide students as they discover new dimensions of their voice and develop coordination. Over time, I came to realize that a variety of factors can hinder vocal freedom and confidence in performance. This led me to consider whether practicing beyond the traditional confines of a small practice room – namely, in a virtual reality (VR) simulation of a performance venue -could help students manage both internal and external processes, freeing their cognitive and emotional faculties to be fully present in the performance experience.

I applied for and received funding from the Kate Neal Kinley Fellowship to support my dissertation research investigating the use of VR to prepare singers for real-world performances. In the fall semester, all ten of my non-voice major students at Illinois prepared for a studio recital in an unfamiliar venue. To ensure a robust experimental research design, five of the students prepared in an audio-visual VR replication of the venue, while the other five prepared as usual in the teaching studio without VR enhancement. Regardless of condition, it was a joy to watch all of them—many of whom had never performed solo before—grow in their confidence through the recital process. The opportunity to showcase their new achievements in a studio recital, while initially daunting,

became the inspiration they needed to grow not only as singers but also in their self-esteem as individuals.

This interdisciplinary project, conducted in collaboration with the Department of Speech and Hearing Science, collected data on voice production, perception, and performance anxiety, and we are currently sharing the results of our findings. Recently we presented at 53rd Annual Voice Foundation International Symposium, Midwest Voice Symposium, The Fall Voice Conference, and the Pan-European Voice Conference and contributed an article to *The Voice Foundation Newsletter*. Abstracts have already been accepted for presentation at the upcoming 54th Annual Voice Foundation International Symposium and Forum Acusticum Euronoise 2025 in Malaga, Spain, furthering the dialogue on innovative applications of VR in the training of singers.

Beyond my university studies, I also participated in Estill Level One and Two Workshops in the Spring of 2024 and spent the summer studying Donald Miller's *Resonance in Singing* and Kenneth Bozeman's *Kinesthetic Voice Pedagogy 2* to deepen my understanding of the acoustic principles of registration and resonance. These efforts have enhanced my ability to address both the technical and artistic needs of my students. As a tireless learner and curious researcher, I hope not only to contribute my technical knowledge to your department but also to empower students to achieve vocal freedom and artistic expression.