

Teaching Voice to Beginners

Suggestions from Jamie Howe, senior, Northwestern University

In general

- *Admit your own vocal issues/problems...it will make them feel better!
- *Every student is different.
- *Start them on good habits (drinking lots of water, washing hands, etc.)
- *Give lots of praise...take tiny steps forward!
- *Before you touch them: Tell them how you are going to touch them, why, and ask permission.
- *Only teach a few things a week.
- *Have their parents check off their practice schedule. (Give stickers to the young ones!)
- *Ask them what they've had in school/before.
- *Have them sing a song they like and then work on it.

Important beginner concepts

- *Posture
- *Breathing
- *Anatomy
- *High vs. low
- *Head voice vs. chest voice
- *How singing is different than singing

Lesson format

- *Chat with them about how their week/school was
- *Make sure you physically and vocally warmed up
- *Make sure you have time to review at the end and specifically discuss what needs to be practiced.

Repertoire

- *Folk/Americana
- *Rounds (sing with them!)
- *Simple art songs
- *Christmas/seasonal
- *Stuff they want to sing (could even be radio or Disney)