

**NATS Website link: [Science-Informed Voice Pedagogy Resources](#)**

### **How to Use These Resources**

Before accessing the resources below, NATS encourages its members to first read “A Brief History of the NATS Science-Informed Voice Pedagogy Initiative,” in order to understand and appreciate its genesis as a truly crowd-sourced resource. As such, these resources are not considered definitive, but rather, living documents that will develop with input from both current and future NATS members.

### **A Brief History of the NATS Science-Informed Voice Pedagogy Initiative**

As documented in the *Journal of Singing* article [Voice Pedagogy for the 21st Century: The Summation of Two Summits](#) by Amelia Rollings Bigler and Katherine Osborne:

“The Voice Pedagogy Interest Group held Summit II: The Sequel in May 2018 at The University of Southern California. Summit II continued the work of Summit I, held at The Ohio State University in 2015. Lynn Holding and Scott McCoy (co-chairs) and Ken Bozeman and Allen Henderson (co-organizers) invited fifty academic voice pedagogy teachers from across the United States and Canada to consider the question, “What skills are possessed by the ideal singing teacher?” A total of thirty-seven pedagogues attended the [2018] summit, representing thirty-five unique universities with programs in classical, musical theatre, and contemporary commercial music styles. These meetings aimed to establish and recommend a logical curriculum that prepares and trains those entering the voice teaching profession with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed.”

In June 2021, the NATS Voice Science Advisory Committee (VSAC) appointed from its members the Voice Pedagogy Subcommittee (Lynn Holding, chair, Allen Henderson and John Nix) in order to substantiate the considerable work of these previous two Voice Pedagogy Interest Group Summits. To that end, the subcommittee drafted the following mission statement:

“The mission of the Voice Pedagogy Subcommittee of the NATS Voice Science Advisory Committee is to develop, promote and disseminate uniform curricula grounded in science-informed voice knowledge, and to advise teachers engaged in pedagogy instruction;” (approved by the NATS Voice Science Advisory Committee October, 2021).

### **NATS Voice Pedagogy Survey, Fall 2021**

In the Fall of 2021, the Voice Pedagogy Subcommittee of VSAC produced a NATS Voice Pedagogy Survey to ascertain the current state of voice pedagogy instruction in the US and Canada, to be distributed to NATS Voice Pedagogy Subcommittee to survey

NATS members who teach voice pedagogy in institutions of higher education. The committee received detailed responses from 191 pedagogy teachers.

A key finding of the survey was that voice pedagogy is typically delivered as a one term course at both the undergraduate and master's degree levels. Indeed, 70% of the teachers who responded said pedagogy was a one-term class at the undergraduate level, while a plurality (40%) said it was a one-term class at the graduate level. Other findings included:

- Pedagogy courses are most often 2 credit hour classes that meet for 2 or 2 1/2 hours per week
- Courses are most often taught on an every-other-year rotation.
- Master's level classes are cross-listed with undergraduate courses at a majority of schools.
- 66% of the teachers responded that a major update to the syllabi and course materials for voice pedagogy courses at their school had occurred in the last two years.

The response to this question, "What topics are being taught?," depended upon the course model used. Those schools using a one-term course cover the anatomy, physiology, and acoustics of the singing voice; vocal health; lifespan development of the voice; a teaching practicum; and exercise design, and repertoire selection. However, the same teachers noted they are *not* teaching voice classification, a philosophy of teaching, ethics and standards, body work (e.g. Alexander, Tai Chi,) choral applications, the business of running a studio, nor are students able to do live observations of experienced teachers.

Those using a two-course model are able to cover a much richer series of topics, including the teaching of different singing styles, the structuring of practice, the use of technology in the studio, ethical teaching, teaching trans voices, psychology and voice, observation of experienced teachers, and an expanded practicum component where students are able to teach in a supervised situation.

In attempting to ascertain how pedagogy instruction varies from the undergraduate to the graduate level, the following results from the survey were noted:

- Those on the one-course model have graduate courses that resemble the undergraduate courses, in terms of the scope of the topics covered.
- The two-course models are able to cover a greater breadth of topics and seem to do so in greater depth as well.
- A few elite programs at the graduate level have as many as seven graduate pedagogy courses.

## **Takeaways from the Fall 2021 NATS Voice Pedagogy Survey**

While the one-course model may be the norm at most institutions, the advantages of having two courses are evident: more topics can be covered, and in greater detail, and more teacher mentoring can occur through supervised teaching and lesson observations. Therefore, based on the evidence from this survey, as well as the two prior pedagogy summits at The Ohio State University in 2015 and the University of Southern California in 2018, the Voice Pedagogy Subcommittee of VSAC strongly recommends that the two-course model of content delivery be implemented at all institutions of higher learning. *Please see “Survey Results” for more details on the survey responses.*

## **NATS Workshop “Teaching Voice Pedagogy in the Classroom”**

Another benefit of the NATS Voice Pedagogy Survey was the percentage of respondents (63%) who checked the “I am very interested in participating” and/or “Count me in!” responses when asked to volunteer their time to research and supply the specific information for use and implementation at the July, 1 2022 NATS Pre-Conference workshop, [Teaching Voice Pedagogy in the Classroom: Toward a Common Core Curriculum of Science-Informed Knowledge.](#)

In January 2022, forty-four NATS members joined this effort. They staffed four working groups charged with researching science-informed resources, terminology and continuing education programs, in order to assist the aim of the pre-conference workshop, which was to substantiate the considerable work of the previous two Voice Pedagogy Interest Group Summits by moving their collective work forward.

## **Downloadable Resources on the NATS Website link, “Science-Informed Voice Pedagogy Resources”**

The resources on this page are the culmination of a seven-year NATS community effort to create and implement a common core of science-informed voice pedagogy content and resources, to be used by voice professionals who teach voice pedagogy, voice science and/or vocology in an academic, degree-granting setting, all toward the ultimate goal of the creation and implementation of a NATS-recognized, science-informed voice pedagogy curriculum at the university level.

The sheer breadth of voice research and knowledge has expanded exponentially since many of the current curricular structures were created in college and university voice pedagogy programs; the skillset required for a voice teacher has broadened considerably as well. In response to these conditions, all of the resources were assembled and edited

by committee members who took care to seek out both “science-informed” as well as common and historic voice pedagogy resources. Because of the desire to honor both the past and present while looking forward to the future of “science-informed” voice pedagogy, we ask that NATS members accessing these resources keep in mind the crowd-sourced environment in which they were assembled.

Finally, users should note that this resource is an evolving document. If you have a suggestion for a term and definition applicable to singing voice pedagogy to be added here, please submit it to: ***link coming soon.***

The Voice Pedagogy Subcommittee of the NATS Voice Science Advisory Committee,

Lynn Holding, chair  
Allen Henderson  
John Nix

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