

Psychological Safety in the Singing Lesson, Getting Tools into the Hands of Practitioners

Project Portfolio

Introduction

In the transition from university voice student to private practice voice teacher, it became clear to me the kind of teacher I wanted to be, based on the teachers that I had before. I had teachers that degraded and abused me as a student, and I had teachers that built me up as a young singer building on my strengths to improve my weaknesses. The latter is something I knew I wanted to be as a teaching professional. My teaching was further shaped by the introduction to The Mental Health Commission of Canada, and The Canadian National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety, upon working a part time contract job for The Mental Health Commission after completing my Undergraduate degree. The idea of not just promoting mental wellness, but moving to harm prevention in regard to mental health was very meaningful. However, in my career, I would like to not only teach singing to my own students, but provide education for teachers on how to further better their practice with the consideration of impact to mental wellbeing. I would like these principles to reach as many people in the voice teaching discipline as possible, as that is how true change is made. The object for this module then became clear: To create an introductory professional development course on integrating psychological safety practices into the voice lesson designed for one to one voice teachers.

Amy Edmondson, the foreperson in the psychological health and safety field, defines psychological safety as a shared environment in which individuals feel safe to take interpersonal risks, such as asking questions, making mistakes, expressing concerns, or contributing ideas without fear of embarrassment, punishment, or humiliation (Edmondson, 1999). Similarly, Mental Health Commission of Canada's *National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace* describes psychological health and safety as the prevention of psychological harm alongside the promotion of psychological wellbeing within an environment that supports respect, inclusion, and safe participation (CSA Group and Bureau de normalisation du Québec, 2013). Together, these perspectives position psychological health and safety not only as the absence of harm, but as the intentional creation of learning environments that support trust, participation, and respectful interpersonal engagement.

The course serves as a pilot for a potential larger course in the future and introduces foundational concepts of psychological health and safety (PHS) within the context, and using specific examples from the singing lesson. Its main aim is to provide teachers with practical

strategies to create psychologically safe studio environments while reflecting on their current pedagogical practices.

The intended use of this module is primarily for professional development and optional skill building, allowing teachers to demonstrate a commitment to continuously improving their studio environment and ensuring lessons are psychologically safe for their students. By completing the course, participants can reflect on their current teaching practices, identify areas where unintentional harm may occur, adopt evidence informed strategies to promote wellbeing and reduce psychological risk.

Course Design

My main design element is centred around adult learning theory, often articulated through Malcolm Knowles' (1984) theory of andragogy which can provide a critical foundation for designing effective professional development for practicing educators. Unlike pedagogical approaches designed primarily for children, andragogy proposes that adult learners are self directed, bring substantial prior experience to learning environments, are problem centred rather than content centred, and are motivated by material that demonstrates immediate relevance to their professional context. Contemporary applications of andragogy continue to support Knowles' emphasis on self directed, experience based, and problem oriented adult learning approaches (Knapke et al., 2024). And recent research argues that these learning theories remain highly relevant to specifically professional settings (Mukhalalati & Taylor, 2019). This idea of prior experience in the learning environment is particularly applicable to one to one voice teachers who enter the learning environment with existing pedagogical identities, established communication habits, and varied levels of professional experience. These varied levels of experience could provide an inconsistent learning environment, as there are no required qualifications for private voice teachers. This notion was a large influence to undertake the development of an accessible course to try and make vocal education more accessible.

This asynchronous course draws on contemporary best practices in pedagogy to support applied learning. Autonomy supportive teaching practices, including providing rationale, perspective taking, and minimizing controlling language, have been shown to enhance engagement, wellbeing, and exploratory learning in music education contexts (Reeve and Cheon, 2021; Hendriks et al, 2023; Xu and Li, 2025). These principles are integrated into the module through reflective exercises, and scenarios. These practices encourage teachers to critically examine their own behaviour and adopt strategies that minimize harm while fostering

student agency and confidence. (Brookfield 2017) Furthermore, embodied learning research underscores the importance of careful, consent based physical guidance and spatial awareness in studio teaching (Macedonia, 2019; Skulmowski and Rey, 2018), informing the safe touch section of the course.

Additionally, constructivist perspectives on learning further informed the design process. Constructivist theory proposes that knowledge is actively constructed through interpretation and engagement with prior experience rather than transmitted directly from instructor to learner (Bruner, 1961). Within the context of this course, this suggests that voice teachers are unlikely to simply adopt new communication strategies because they are presented as best practice recommendations. Instead, meaningful learning requires opportunities for participants to compare current teaching habits against alternative approaches and make meaning from these comparisons within their own teaching context.

The course was intentionally designed not as a content heavy instructional course but as an applied professional learning experience that encourages critical reflection and immediate implementation within studio teaching practice. Rather than positioning participants as novice learners receiving information passively, the course acknowledges the expertise, and experiential knowledge participants already possess and seeks to build upon it. Loeng (2018) argues that andragogical approaches position adult learners as self directed participants whose prior experiences and intrinsic motivations contribute significantly to the learning process, which is why this course uses reflection prompts, practical teaching scenarios, and downloadable studio tools for connecting new concepts with existing professional practice. This aligns with andragogical principles suggesting that adult learners engage more effectively when they perceive a direct relationship between learning activities and authentic professional challenges (Merriam, 2001).

In encouraging teachers to take this course while thinking of their own teaching methods, inspired the inclusion of reflective practice theory. Schön's (1983) concepts of reflection in action and reflection on action are highly relevant to teaching practice, particularly within complex and interpersonal learning environments such as the voice studio. Reflection in action refers to a practitioner's ability to think critically and adapt while teaching in the moment, whereas reflection on action involves analyzing experiences retrospectively to improve future practice. Schön argues that professional expertise is developed not only through technical knowledge, but through ongoing reflective engagement with real world practice situations. Because of this, reflective learning opportunities were intentionally embedded throughout the course to

encourage practitioners to identify and evaluate implicit communication habits, and why they may have those habits.

For myself as the course designer, this research project offers an opportunity to consolidate my understanding of PHS, translate research and national standards into actionable studio practices, and develop my expertise in educating other voice teachers. The process of designing the course strengthens my ability to communicate complex theoretical principles in accessible formats using adult learning theories, design interactive online learning, both of which contribute to my professional development as a practitioner and future educator of educators.

Source Material

The Standard identifies key psychosocial factors that shape psychologically healthy environments, including civility and respect, clear leadership and expectations, organizational culture, involvement and influence, and protection from psychological harm. These factors provide a conceptual architecture for the course's core modules. For example, the safe language and error correction component reflects the Standard's emphasis on civility and respect, ensuring that corrective feedback in singing lessons avoids humiliation, sarcasm, or identity based criticism (Abbas, Li and Zhang, 2024; Cheng, Wang and Li 2024). Instead, teachers are guided toward behaviour focused, technique specific communication that minimizes psychological risk. Similarly, the safe touch and consent section aligns with the Standard's preventative mandate by foregrounding explicit consent, transparency, and boundary clarity. These are mechanisms that reduce ambiguity and could protect both student and teacher from psychological harm.

The theoretical influence of the Standard ensures that the course is not merely aspirational but grounded in recognized Canadian policy on psychological health and safety, reinforcing both its academic credibility and its practical relevance to contemporary voice teaching.

By using The Standard (CSA Group and Bureau de normalisation du Québec, 2013) as source material, the course translates occupational health principles into a discipline specific context. The Standard provides a robust framework for preventing harm and promoting wellbeing through principles such as civility and respect, clear expectations, accountability, and proactive prevention strategies. Its application to voice pedagogy through this course intends to demonstrate that psychological safety is not an abstract ideal but is an actionable, structured

practice for voice educators that is urgently needed. Research on The Standard was conducted in a previous module and then used as a basis for this course (Meunier, 2025).

The teacher accountability and encouragement components are shaped by The Standard's assertion that leadership carries responsibility for establishing psychologically safe systems. In the context of the voice studio, the teacher occupies a leadership role with evaluative authority (Xu and Li, 2025; Gaunt, 2008). The course therefore integrates an introduction to structured expectations around communication, emotional regulation, and repair processes, reflecting The Standard's call for accountability, fairness, and clear behavioural norms.

Central to the programme is the principle of student voice and agency. Harris (2020) argues that empowering student voice requires structured opportunities for participation, dialogue, and shared decision making rather than tokenistic consultation. Similarly, recent research in Education Sciences (MDPI, 2024) positions student driven instruction as a pedagogical shift toward partnership, where learners exercise meaningful influence over learning processes. Within one to one singing lessons, this translates into collaborative goal setting, repertoire discussions, and reflective dialogue embedded into lesson structure.

Agency supportive teaching further underpins the course content. Reeve and Cheon (2021) demonstrate that agency supportive practices are malleable and can be intentionally developed through professional learning. Their work highlights behaviours such as perspective taking, providing rationales, and minimizing controlling language. A systematic review by Yang, Liu and Li (2022) reinforces that when the teacher supports the student's agency, this consistently predicts greater engagement across contexts. In music education specifically, Hendriks et al. (2023) show that creative agency support enhances exploratory learning and student ownership, while Xu and Li (2025) link agency supportive music teaching directly to student well being outcomes. These findings justify the course's emphasis on safe corrective language, encouragement practices, and structured student choice as core mechanisms for psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999).

Feedback practice adds another major influence. Abbas, Li and Zhang (2024) highlight that psychological safety during feedback episodes determines whether learners interpret critique as growth oriented or threatening. Cheng, Wang and Li (2024) demonstrate that feedback given in support of student agency, enables them to interpret and apply feedback more effectively. Aldridge and Bianchet (2021) further advocate using student feedback about the learning environment as a starting point for co construction, positioning learners as contributors to teaching quality. Klassen, Liu and Chen (2024) provide evidence that structured student to teacher feedback can improve dimensions of teaching practice. In online and blended contexts,

Kuo, Yang and Lee (2023) emphasize the importance of social climate in technology enhanced environments, while Liu, Zhang and Chen (2024) show that carefully designed feedback structures support self regulated learning. However, feedback literature also cautions against excessive or overly corrective feedback practices. Hattie and Timperley (2007) argue that feedback is most effective when it is clear, targeted, and manageable, as learners may become overwhelmed when presented with too much corrective information simultaneously. Similarly, Deci and Ryan (2000) suggest that highly controlling feedback that pressures the learners towards strictly compliance and correctness can negatively impact learner autonomy and intrinsic motivation. Together, these studies inform the course's inclusion of outcomes of language use, and structured mechanisms for the importance of student feedback in the voice studio.

Embodied learning further shapes the course, particularly in relation to touch and physical demonstration in vocal pedagogy. Macedonia (2019) argues that cognition is deeply intertwined with bodily engagement, while Bakker, de Jong and van Dijk (2023) examine “instructional touch” as an organized interactional practice requiring boundary awareness. Maxfield (2023) argues that current literature on physical touch in the voice lesson is sparse and mainly based on anecdote rather than research. Without clear consideration of embodied learning practices, consent, and boundaries, voice instruction risks reinforcing unsafe or ethically ambiguous teaching environments. Given the inherent power dynamics and potential for harm in the voice studio, careful consideration of alternatives and consent practices is essential for ethical instruction.

Collectively, these best practices, together with adult learning and reflective practice frameworks, support a pedagogical model in which psychological safety emerges through agency supportive communication, collaborative feedback systems, embodied awareness, reflective engagement, and learner centred instructional design.

Methodology

The methodological framework for this project employs a narrative literature review approach to synthesise theoretical, pedagogical, and professional perspectives relevant to psychological safety in one to one voice teaching contexts. Narrative literature reviews are particularly appropriate when examining broad and interdisciplinary topics where multiple theoretical perspectives intersect and where the purpose extends beyond evaluating intervention effectiveness to developing conceptual understanding (Baumeister and Leary, 1997). In the context of this project, psychological health and safety intersects with educational psychology,

music pedagogy, adult learning theory, communication practices, and embodied learning research. As a result, a narrative approach allows these diverse bodies of literature to be critically examined and integrated into a coherent pedagogical framework for course development. Particular attention was given to areas including psychological safety, autonomy supportive teaching, feedback practices, adult learning theory, reflective practice, and embodied approaches to instruction. This method facilitates the identification of conceptual links across disciplines while allowing flexibility in examining emerging ideas that may contribute to voice pedagogy specifically.

To ensure relevance and quality of evidence, inclusion criteria focused primarily on peer reviewed literature related to psychological safety, adult learning, professional development, music education, voice pedagogy, educational communication, feedback practices, and instructional design. Literature involving adult learners and professional educational contexts was prioritised where possible. Preference was also given to recent literature in psychological health and safety in order to reflect contemporary educational practices and theoretical developments. However older resources were drawn upon for the foundations of adult learning theory.

Exclusion criteria included literature focused exclusively on child education contexts, highly clinical or therapeutic interventions unrelated to educational practice, and studies lacking direct relevance to voice teaching or pedagogical development.

Key search terms included combinations of:

- "psychological safety" AND "music education"
- "voice pedagogy" AND "feedback"
- "adult learning theory" AND "professional development"
- "autonomy support" AND "music education"
- "embodied learning" AND "singing"
- "instructional touch" AND "education"

Both white and grey literature were included within the search strategy. I included White literature, including peer reviewed journal articles, books, and scholarly publications. I also included grey literature, mainly publications from the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, offered directly applicable frameworks relevant to real world professional practice. Although grey literature may not undergo traditional peer review processes, its inclusion was considered

necessary due to its substantial practical influence within Canadian health and educational contexts. This research process ultimately informed the structure of the course.

For example, literature demonstrating that autonomy supportive teaching enhances learner engagement and wellbeing (Reeve and Cheon, 2021; Xu and Li, 2025) informed the development of the safer language and feedback components. Research on cognitive load and multimedia learning (Sweller, 1988; Mayer, 2009) informed decisions surrounding microlearning structure, narrated video design, and downloadable support materials. Similarly, literature surrounding reflective practice (Schön, 1983) informed the integration of structured reflective prompts throughout the course. Research relating to embodied learning and consent based interaction (Macedonia, 2019; Maxfield, 2023) further informed content relating to safe touch and physical guidance practices.

The narrative review therefore functioned not only as a mechanism for gathering evidence but also as an interpretive process. This style was chosen due to its strength to synthesize diverse topics while keeping an exploratory approach (Ferrari 2015). This approach supports the broader aim of developing a practically relevant and theoretically informed professional learning resource tailored specifically to one to one voice teaching.

The module will be divided into five sections:

1. Foundations of Psychological Safety in Singing Lessons

This section introduces:

- The definition of PHS
- The relevance of psychological risk in singing
- Core preventative principles from the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace

Participants will explore how vulnerability, identity, embodiment, and correction intersect uniquely in voice teaching.

2. Safe Language and Error Correction Guide

This section provides structured guidance on:

- Reframing mistakes as information rather than failure
- Separating the student's identity from vocal output
- Using neutral, specific, technique focused feedback
- Avoiding sarcasm, comparison, or shame based correction

An interactive language guide will present examples of common corrective phrases and ask participants to identify psychologically safe alternatives.

3. Safe Touch and Consent Practices

Given the embodied nature of singing instruction, this section addresses:

- When physical touch may be pedagogically appropriate
- Explicit verbal consent procedures
- Alternatives to touch (mirroring, demonstration, props)

Participants will review a scenario based example and determine appropriate action pathways.

4. Teacher Accountability and Encouragement

This section emphasizes:

- Clear communication of studio expectations
- Transparency in goal setting
- Repair strategies after missteps
- Structured encouragement that reinforces effort and growth

This component aligns strongly with The Standard's emphasis on preventative structures and organizational responsibility for psychological well being.

5. Interactive Case Study and Reflective Practice

Participants will complete a detailed case study involving a psychologically ambiguous lesson scenario. They will identify:

- Risk factors
- Unsafe language or behaviours
- Missed consent opportunities
- Alternative psychologically safe interventions

A guided reflective exercise will prompt teachers to assess their own current practices and identify three actionable changes.

6. Assessment and Certification

At the conclusion of the module, participants will complete:

- A 15–20 question knowledge based quiz

A minimum score of 80% will be required to receive a certificate of completion. This ensures measurable engagement and understanding of key principles.

Aims

- To design and develop an evidence informed asynchronous professional development module that integrates psychological health and safety principles into one to one voice pedagogy.
- To critically translate the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (CSA Group, 2013) into discipline specific guidance for singing teachers.
- To evaluate how contemporary research in agency supportive pedagogy, feedback literacy, student agency, and embodied learning can inform psychologically safe voice teaching practices.
- To strengthen my professional capacity as both a voice teacher and an emerging educator of educators through the design and critical reflection of this module.
- To gain the understanding of core adult learning principles to strengthen my communication of psychological health and safety to practicing voice educators

Objectives

- To identify which PHS principals are most relevant and translatable to an online learning module.
- To build a foundation of a course for more research, and expansion in a future studies module.
- To understand where leading voice pedagogy intersects with psychological health and safety in a relevant way to voice professionals.
- To gain experience in crafting education for other voice professionals and better my understanding of teaching teachers.

Development Timeline

Week	Activity
1. Literature Review Initial Search & Coding	Identify key research on PHS, adult learning, autonomy supportive teaching, feedback, and embodied learning. Compiled database of sources and initial coding framework aligned with the National Standard and module sections.
2. Planned Programme of Study	Draft Planned Programme of Study informing the creation of the artefact.
3. Literature Review	Draft of literature review with thematic sections, linking research to module design.
4. Artefact Drafting	First full draft of demo module content ready, all examples and scenarios included.
5. Finished Draft & Editing	Fully functional interactive intro module with embedded activities. And accompanying research paper drafted to edit.
6. Finalisation & Submission	Submission ready artefact and accompanying module assignment to be submitted.

Kolb's Reflective Model

Concrete Experience

Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory was an assignment requirement for this research project. The theory proposes that learning occurs through a cyclical process involving experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation. This further suggests that learning occurs through a cyclical process involving experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation.

Prior to the development of this course, my understanding of psychologically safe teaching practices emerged primarily through lived educational experiences and professional exposure rather than through a structured pedagogical framework. During my transition from university voice student to private practice voice teacher, I experienced a broad spectrum of teaching approaches. Some educational experiences involved highly supportive environments where strengths were identified and developed in ways that encouraged growth, whereas others involved interactions that felt degrading or psychologically harmful. Through critical reflection on these educational experiences, my understanding of effective teaching evolved beyond the belief that a good teacher is simply a kind or encouraging one. Instead, reflective engagement highlighted the importance of pedagogical knowledge, intentional instructional design, and evidence informed teaching practice in fostering consistently safe and supportive learning environments. Schön's (1983) concept of the reflective practitioner suggests that professional growth emerges through critically examining lived experience and refining future practice accordingly, while Brookfield (2017) argues that reflective practice can help educators identify previously normalized assumptions and teaching behaviours that may negatively affect learners. In reflecting on my own educational history, it became clear that I did not fully recognize the extent of some psychologically harmful experiences until later exposure to more supportive, research informed, and pedagogically educated teachers provided a contrasting model of instruction. This reflective process also reinforced the observation that the teachers with the strongest pedagogical foundations often demonstrated the greatest intentionality, adaptability, and psychological awareness within their teaching practice. Reflective approaches support educators in evaluating how their communication, feedback practices, and relational behaviours impact learner experience and engagement (Mukhalalati and Taylor, 2019; Knapke et al., 2024).

In this context, reflective practice may help teachers, including myself, identify potentially harmful or overly authoritative approaches, and adapt teaching strategies more intentionally.

My understanding of psychological health and safety was later expanded through professional experience with the Mental Health Commission of Canada and exposure to the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (CSA Group and Bureau de normalisation du Québec, 2013). This represented an important shift in thinking, moving beyond a conceptualisation of wellness focused solely on support toward a framework emphasizing both the promotion of well being and the prevention of harm. This was a large task to undertake, as it requires viewing things through a policy lens which I was less familiar with. While I immediately recognised the relevance of these principles, I found myself questioning how such concepts could be translated into one to one voice teaching contexts, to share with other educators standardize practice and reduce student risk.

Prior to beginning this study, I had already attempted to incorporate psychologically safer approaches into my own studio practice. However, these efforts often relied on intuition and personal values rather than evidence informed strategies. Although I viewed kindness and supportive communication as central components of effective teaching, I had not fully considered the broader pedagogical structures through which psychological safety may be supported or undermined. I had experience teaching where kindness or consideration didn't exist in the studio, and when I eventually found more compatible teachers, I found myself trying to copy their methods instead of understanding why they taught the way they taught. My teaching behaviours frequently felt automatic and inherited from previous experiences rather than consciously examined. This could be because personally, I felt as though the world of pedagogy was largely inaccessible as I have never felt at home in academia. This raised important questions regarding whether my good intentions alone were sufficient for establishing psychologically safe learning environments. If I was having these problems, were other teachers as well?

Through the process of preliminary reading and course planning, I began to reinterpret my previous experiences through a more critical lens. I increasingly understood psychological health and safety as a structured and preventative pedagogical practice that extends beyond personal teaching style.

Reflective Observation

Engagement with literature during the planning stages of the course revealed several tensions between my existing assumptions and current educational theory. Initially, I approached the project with a strong focus on content itself, believing that if important information regarding psychological safety was provided to teachers, positive changes in practice would naturally follow. However, exposure to adult learning theory and instructional design literature changed this assumption.

Knowles' theory of andragogy proposes that adult learners are motivated by learning experiences that are self directed, relevant, and immediately applicable to their professional contexts (Knowles, 1984). This prompted me to recognise that effective professional learning requires more than simply presenting accurate information. Instead, educational content must be designed in ways that acknowledge existing learner experience and facilitate practical application. Consequently, I began to realise that knowing content and teaching content effectively are different forms of knowledge.

Further tensions emerged through engagement with cognitive load theory. Sweller (1988) suggests that learning is negatively affected when instructional demands exceed working memory capacity. Initially, I considered psychological safety primarily through the lens of student experience. I had not, however, reflected upon the cognitive demands placed on teachers themselves. In my own teaching practice, I frequently encourage students to focus on only one or two technical concepts at a time. Yet I had not considered the extent to which teachers simultaneously process numerous competing pedagogical considerations, including technique, communication style, emotional responses, and student engagement. Brookfield's concept of the peer lens (2017) further supports the importance of reflective practice by encouraging educators to examine their teaching through the perspectives of others in order to identify blind spots, challenge assumptions, and better understand how pedagogical practices may be experienced by learners. This idea could help me further analyse my own teaching practice as how I perceive I am teaching, may not be how the students receive it, which further makes a case for operationalised psychological health and safety lesson guidelines.

Another inconsistency emerged regarding my previous understanding of psychologically safe teaching and technically effective teaching. I had previously thought of these as potentially separate or competing priorities. Literature surrounding feedback and psychological safety challenged this assumption by suggesting that psychologically safe communication practices may actually strengthen learning outcomes rather than compromise them (Hattie and Timperley, 2007; Edmondson, 1999). Because of this, I began to question whether communication itself

should be considered a central pedagogical skill rather than simply a delivery mechanism for technical instruction.

Abstract Conceptualisation

As a result of these observations, several new areas of learning emerged and helped shape the conceptual direction of the course. Rather than viewing psychological safety solely as a wellbeing initiative, I increasingly understood it as a pedagogical framework capable of influencing learning, participation, and student engagement.

Adult learning theory became particularly influential in reframing my understanding of course design. Knowles (1984) argues that adult learners engage more effectively when learning is immediately relevant and connected to existing experience. Combined with Schön's concept of reflective practice (1983), this suggested that professional learning should not simply provide information but should encourage practitioners to critically examine habitual behaviours and assumptions.

Constructivist learning theory further expanded this understanding by suggesting that learners actively create meaning through interaction between new knowledge and prior experience (Bruner, 1961). This perspective challenged the idea of presenting psychological safety as a set of rigid instructional rules. Instead, the course increasingly evolved toward creating opportunities for practitioners to integrate new concepts into existing teaching frameworks through reflection and scenario based learning.

These conceptual developments generated several guiding research questions:

- 1: How can principles of psychological health and safety be translated into practical guidance for one to one voice teaching?
- 2: How can adult learning theory inform the development of professional learning experiences for voice educators?
- 3: How can communication and delivery of material influence perceptions of psychological safety within voice instruction?

Together, these questions shifted the focus of the project from simple information delivery toward an investigation of how learning itself could facilitate pedagogical change.

Active Experimentation

Following the identification of these conceptual questions, the next stage involved establishing an approach capable of exploring them within the context of course development. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the project, a narrative literature review approach was selected.

Narrative literature reviews provide opportunities to synthesise literature across multiple fields while identifying conceptual relationships between bodies of knowledge (Baumeister and Leary, 1997). This approach was considered particularly appropriate because the project integrates research from multiple disciplines. Rather than testing predefined categories or developing thematic coding structures, the intention was to construct an integrated conceptual foundation capable of informing practical design decisions.

Project Report

One to one voice teaching occupies a uniquely interpersonal and embodied position within music education (Gaunt, 2008). Unlike many forms of classroom based instruction, vocal pedagogy frequently involves personal feedback, emotional vulnerability, and direct engagement with the body as the primary instrument (Fletcher, 2024). Within both private studio and higher education contexts of private lessons in college and universities, voice teachers regularly guide students through activities requiring experimentation, performance exposure, self expression, and corrective critique (Abbas, Li & Zhang, 2024) As a result, the relational environment established within the voice studio can significantly influence student confidence, participation, motivation, and overall learning experience (Ryan and Deci 2000). Existing research within music education has increasingly emphasized the importance of psychologically safe learning environments in supporting student engagement, creativity, and educational risk taking (Barrett and Stauffer, 2014). However, while technical and performance based aspects of vocal pedagogy are extensively explored within voice teaching literature, comparatively less attention has been given to preventative psychological health and safety practices specifically within one to one voice instruction.

This study and companion artefact respond to this gap through the development of a short form asynchronous professional development course titled *Psychological Health and Safety in the Private Voice Lesson*. Designed as a pilot for practicing voice teachers within private studio and institutional teaching contexts, the course introduces research informed approaches to feedback language, communication practices, reflective teaching, and consent based interaction within vocal pedagogy. Importantly, the course does not position psychological safety as separate from effective teaching practice but instead frames psychologically safer communication and reflective pedagogy as preventative professional strategies capable of supporting healthier and more sustainable learning environments.

The development of the course was strongly informed by adult learning and andragogical theory (Knowles, 1984; Loeng, 2018; Mukhalalati and Taylor, 2019; Knapke et al., 2024), reflective practice theory (Schön, 1983; Kolb, 1984; Brookfield, 2017), constructivist and co constructed pedagogical approaches (Aldridge and Bianchet, 2021), and contemporary instructional design principles emphasizing learner agency, psychological safety, feedback practice, and self

regulated learning (Cheng, Wang and Li, 2024; Abbas, Li and Zhang, 2024; Liu, Zhang and Chen, 2024). Knowles' (1984) concept of andragogy suggests that adult learners are most engaged when learning is self directed, problem centred, and immediately relevant to professional practice. This framework was particularly applicable given that the intended audience of the course is experienced voice practitioners. Because of this demographic, the course was intentionally designed as an asynchronous microlearning experience, incorporating reflection prompts, applied teaching scenarios, and downloadable practical resources rather than lecture heavy theoretical instruction. Reflective practice theory, specifically Schön's (1983) concept of the reflective practitioner, also significantly informed the design process by emphasizing the importance of reflection in practice and reflection on practice as tools for critically examining habitual professional behaviour, decision making, and tacit knowledge within teaching practice. These frameworks both shaped the module's preventative and non shaming pedagogical tone, encouraging learners to evaluate existing practices through reflective engagement rather than judgement based correction, as would ideally happen within the voice lesson itself. While traditional behaviourist approaches often emphasize externally directed correction, reinforcement, and teacher controlled learning processes (Skinner, 1953), the module instead draws more strongly from reflective, constructivist, and agency supportive approaches that prioritize learner agency, psychological safety, and collaborative meaning making (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Brookfield, 2017; Loeng, 2018). This approach supports the development of critical self awareness and sustainable pedagogical growth rather than compliance based behavioural correction alone.

Methodologically, the course was designed using a multimedia microlearning approach consisting of short, narrated video segments supported by concise written reinforcement, visual aids, reflective pauses, and low stakes scenario based assessment activities. This design was informed by cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1988) and multimedia learning principles (Mayer, 2009), which suggest that sectioned and multifaceted instructional design may improve comprehension and retention while reducing unnecessary cognitive overload for learners. Additionally, the incorporation of scenario based learning activities was intended to bridge theoretical studio teaching contexts. The inclusion of downloadable support tools, including a safer language communication guide and short consent guidelines, was similarly intended to support transfer of learning into real teaching practice beyond completion of the course itself.

Know That

Nelson's *Know What, Know How, Know That* framework (Nelson, 2013), was used as a structural and analytical tool within this review to examine how theoretical knowledge, practical

application, and reflective understanding informed the development of the course, and the research of this project.

In the context of one to one voice teaching Knowles theory of andragogy is particularly significant, as practitioners are not approaching the course as outsiders, but as experienced educators with established pedagogical identities. As a result, the course was designed not to teach foundational pedagogical knowledge, or to tell the educator they are teaching correctly or incorrectly, but to facilitate critical reflection upon existing teaching practices, particularly in relation to communication, feedback, and relational dynamics (Brookfield, 2017; Cheng, Wang and Li, 2024).

This approach is further supported by Schön's 1983 concept of the reflective practitioner. Within vocal pedagogy, much instructional behaviour is often transmitted through informal apprenticeship models, meaning that teaching strategies may become normalized without thoughtful examination (Gaunt, 2008). This creates a pedagogical context in which reflective interruption becomes necessary in order to examine assumptions about authority, correction, and student interaction. The course therefore integrates structured reflective pauses throughout its design to encourage reflection upon action, enabling teachers to critically evaluate their own pedagogical habits in relation to psychological safety principles.

Together, these frameworks position the course as a form of reflective professional learning rather than a judgement on teaching style, aligning with adult learning principles that emphasise autonomy, relevance, and experiential integration in professional education contexts (Merriam, 2001).

Constructivist learning theory also significantly informs the design of the course, specifically in relation to its emphasis on scenario based learning and making meaning processes. Constructivist approaches suggest that learners actively construct knowledge through engagement with prior experience, rather than passively receiving information (Bruner, 1961). This theoretical position is especially relevant to the intended audience of the course, as voice teachers entering the course already possess established pedagogical frameworks, and communication styles. Constructivist theory also suggests that learners build new understanding by integrating new information with existing knowledge structures, supporting reflective comparison between current and alternative pedagogical approaches rather than passive acceptance of lectured methods (Piaget, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978). This is particularly important in professional development contexts, where identity, experience, and established teaching philosophies play a central role in learner engagement, because these professionals are coming

to this course with pre existing knowledge and teaching styles. By framing psychological safety not as a corrective intervention but as an extension of existing pedagogical practice, the course aligns with constructivist principles that emphasise learner agency and contextual adaptation of knowledge (Kolb, 1984).

This constructivist orientation (Aldridge & Bianchet, 2021) is put into practice through the inclusion of scenario based learning activities that simulate common one to one teaching interactions, particularly those involving corrective feedback, student communication, and consent based physical or demonstrative instruction. Learners are invited to evaluate these scenarios and consider alternative pedagogical responses, therefore engaging in active meaning making rather than passive absorption of best practice guidelines (Loeng, 2018; Aldridge and Bianchet, 2021). Scenario based learning has been shown to enhance professional judgment and transfer of knowledge by situating abstract concepts within authentic or near authentic practice contexts (Errington, 2011). This is particularly significant in vocal pedagogy, where instructional decisions are often made dynamically within interpersonal and emotionally responsive environments (Gaunt, 2008; Edmondson, 1999).

From an instructional design perspective, the course is informed by cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1988) and multimedia learning principles (Mayer, 2009), which emphasise the importance of designing learning environments that support efficient processing of information without overloading working memory. Mayer's (2009) cognitive theory of multimedia learning, suggests that learning is enhanced when verbal and visual information are integrated in a coherent and complementary way. Because of this, the course uses narrated explanations alongside visual summaries and downloadable resources designed in Canva to reinforce key concepts without introducing unnecessary complexity.

In addition, retrieval practice theory informed the inclusion of a short quiz at the end of the module. Research suggests that active recall strengthens long term retention and supports transfer of learning into applied contexts, particularly when assessment is low stakes and scenario based rather than purely factual (Roediger and Karpicke, 2006). The quiz therefore functions not as an evaluative barrier, but as a reinforcement mechanism intended to consolidate learning, support retention, and encourage application within real teaching contexts (Sweller, 1988; Mayer, 2009). Together, these instructional design decisions reflect a coherent attempt to balance accessibility, cognitive efficiency, and applied professional relevance within a constrained 20 minute pilot structure.

Know How

The development of the course was guided by a practice based instructional design approach, with a particular focus on accessibility, scalability, and it is appropriate for the intended user. The decision to construct the module within a Wix based environment was informed by the need for a platform that could support multimedia integration, simple navigation, and self paced completion without requiring synchronous facilitation. Wix is a website hosting platform which has a feature to design a privately accessed web based course. This aligns with research on online adult learning environments, which emphasises the importance of flexibility and agency for working professionals engaging in continuing education (Merriam, 2001). Given that the target audience consists of active voice practitioners balancing teaching schedules, studio management, and performance work, The asynchronous delivery format was designed to support flexible, self directed professional learning while allowing learners time for reflection and practical application between modules (Knapke et al., 2024; Kuo, Yang and Lee, 2023).

The course was structured as a short form microlearning pilot consisting of small specific learning sections rather than a linear lecture format informed by cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1988). As a result, each section of the module was designed to focus on a single theme, such as feedback language or consent practices, rather than combining multiple conceptual ideas within a single learning block. This structural choice was also intended to support progressive reflection, allowing learners to process and evaluate each concept before moving forward (Kolb, 1984; Schön, 1983). Additionally, the pilot nature of the course informed the decision to limit overall duration to approximately twenty minutes. This is mostly due to the constraints of the time limit for the development of this course as a research project, but also ensures that the course functioned as an introductory professional development opportunity rather than an exhaustive training programme.

The learning materials within the course combined narrated video segments, concise written summaries, and visually structured materials created in Canva, informed by Mayer's cognitive theory of multimedia learning (Mayer, 2009). In practice, this resulted in the use of narrated explanations to communicate key conceptual ideas, supported by simplified visual diagrams and keyword summaries designed to reinforce rather than duplicate spoken content.

Particular attention was given to the tone and framing of instructional narration, which was intentionally designed to model the same professional communication style advocated within the course itself (Abbas, Li and Zhang, 2024; Deci and Ryan, 2000). This included maintaining a

balance between professional authority and approachable clarity, avoiding overly technical or abstract language that could create unnecessary cognitive distance for learners. The written materials, including the “safer language cheat sheet” and consent guideline, were designed as external cognitive supports to facilitate transfer of learning into real world teaching contexts. This also offers a way for the learning to continue outside of the course. This approach reflects cognitive load theory principles related to external memory aids, which can reduce intrinsic cognitive load by offloading working memory demands onto structured reference materials (Sweller, 1988; Liu, Zhang and Chen, 2024).

The visual design elements created in Canva were intentionally kept minimal and structured, prioritising clarity over complexity. This decision was made to ensure that visual design supported learning objectives rather than distracting from them (Mayer, 2009). In addition, the consistent formatting across learning materials was intended to support cognitive coherence, allowing learners to easily navigate between conceptual explanations and applied teaching tools. Collectively, these design choices aimed to create a cohesive learning environment that supports comprehension, accessibility, and practical application within a short form professional learning context.

A central component of the courses’s development was the integration of scenario based learning activities and structured reflection points throughout the module. These elements were designed to support applied understanding of psychological health and safety principles within realistic one to one voice teaching contexts. Scenario based learning was selected because it enables learners to engage with authentic or near authentic professional situations, therefore bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical decision making (Errington, 2011). In the context of vocal pedagogy, where instructional decisions are often made dynamically within interpersonal exchanges, this approach was considered particularly appropriate for supporting professional judgment.

Each section encourages learners to evaluate the implications of different communication and teaching choices. This design was intended to shift learning away from passive content reception toward active interpretation and applied reasoning. Rather than positioning responses as strictly correct or incorrect, the scenarios were designed to highlight variation in pedagogical approach and encourage reflection on potential impacts on student experience and psychological safety.

In addition to scenario based tasks, structured reflection prompts were embedded at key points throughout the course. These prompts were designed to encourage metacognitive engagement, enabling learners to critically examine their own teaching behaviours in relation to the concepts

presented. The final quiz was developed as a low stakes retrieval practice activity, rather than a formal assessment tool, in order to reinforce key concepts and support knowledge retention. Research on retrieval practice suggests that active recall strengthens long term learning and enhances transfer into applied contexts, particularly when used in combination with scenario based questioning rather than rote memorisation (Roediger and Karpicke, 2006). Collectively, these methodological choices reflect a deliberate attempt to integrate reflection, application, and reinforcement within a cohesive instructional design framework.

Know What

The conceptual foundation of the artefact is grounded in the notion of psychological safety within learning environments, particularly as it applies to one to one pedagogical contexts. Psychological safety refers to an individual's perception that they can engage, ask questions, make mistakes, and participate without fear of humiliation or negative interpersonal consequences (Edmondson, 1999). Within the context of voice teaching, this is especially significant due to the inherently exposed nature of vocal performance and the close relational dynamic between teacher and student (Gaunt, 2008; Ryan and Deci, 2000). Unlike group based educational settings, one to one instruction intensifies relational influence, as the teacher's communication style, feedback approach, and authority position directly shape the learner's experience of risk, confidence, and self expression (Gaunt, 2008; CSA Group and Bureau de normalisation du Québec, 2013).

The course development process explores the idea that being a technically effective voice teacher, and being a psychologically safe communicator are mutually beneficial when approached through a preventative pedagogical lens. Feedback research suggests that the manner in which correction is delivered significantly influences learner motivation, identity formation, and engagement with learning tasks (Hattie and Timperley, 2007). As a result, the purpose of correction should be reframed not as the identification of deficit, but as a supportive mechanism for learner development. This aligns with psychological safety research, which emphasises that individuals are more likely to engage in risk taking and learning behaviours when they perceive interpersonal environments as non threatening (Edmondson, 1999). In this sense, the additional cognitive and communicative effort required to formulate psychologically safe responses is not a burden, but an integral part of strengthening the learning process itself.

In this learning process, the teacher is often positioned as both technical guide and evaluative authority, which can unintentionally create environments where students prioritise correctness

over exploration (Gaunt, 2008). Research in music education has highlighted that one to one teaching relationships can significantly shape student motivation and concept of self, particularly when feedback is delivered in ways that are perceived as judgmental or overly corrective (Gaunt, 2008). As a result, the course embeds psychological safety as a preventative framework rather than a reactive one, focusing on how everyday pedagogical interactions (such as correction, tone, and phrasing), can either support or inhibit learner engagement and growth. The course therefore positions psychological safety not as a separate wellbeing concern, but as an embedded dimension of effective pedagogy within voice instruction. This supports the core principles of psychological health and safety being proactive and protective as its primary focus.

This framing informed the inclusion of reflective prompts and scenario based evaluation tasks within the course, where learners are encouraged to consider how different teacher responses may influence student willingness to engage, experiment, or take vocal risks. In this way, psychological safety is operationalised as a practical teaching concern rather than an abstract ethical principle.

A second key conceptual area embedded within the course is the role of feedback language and communication style in shaping learner identity and engagement. Feedback in educational contexts is not solely informational but also personal, carrying implicit messages about competence, authority, and belonging. (Yang, 2023) In one to one voice teaching, where instruction is highly personalised, the language used by the teacher can significantly influence how students interpret their progress and self efficacy. (Akolgo, Robiullah, and Ramirez, 2025; Ruusuvuori, Tainio, & Lindfors, 2023). Research in educational psychology suggests that feedback framed in overly evaluative or deficit focused language can negatively impact motivation and self perception, whereas constructive, process oriented feedback supports learner development and resilience (Hattie and Timperley, 2007).

Within vocal pedagogy, corrective language is often a central instructional tool, particularly when addressing technical aspects such as breath support, resonance, or articulation. However, without careful attention to phrasing and tone, corrective feedback may be interpreted as personal criticism rather than instructional guidance. The course therefore introduces the concept of safer language in feedback delivery, encouraging teachers to reframe correction in ways that maintain clarity while reducing potential threat to learner confidence. This includes shifting from evaluative statements toward descriptive, process focused language that emphasises adjustment rather than failure. (CSA Group and Bureau de normalisation du Québec, 2013)

This conceptual focus is put into practice within the course through the inclusion of a safer language cheat sheet, which provides examples of alternative phrasing strategies for common pedagogical situations. The aim is to expand awareness of how language choices can shape student experience, not to standardise teacher communication. By embedding communication theory into practical teaching tools, the course reinforces the idea that feedback is a core mechanism through which psychological safety is either supported or undermined.

The final key conceptual area embedded within the course concerns consent, autonomy, and embodied interaction within one to one voice teaching. Vocal pedagogy frequently involves embodied forms of instruction, requiring the use of demonstration, close teacher student interaction, and observation of physical aspects of performance such as posture, alignment, and breath use (Gaunt, 2008; Skulmowski and Rey, 2018; Macedonia, 2019). While these practices are pedagogically valuable, they also introduce ethical considerations regarding personal boundaries, learner comfort, and autonomy. Consent in educational contexts is increasingly recognised as an ongoing, communicative process rather than a one time agreement, requiring continuous negotiation and sensitivity to learner response (Boddy, 2017).

Within the course, consent is framed as a preventative pedagogical practice that supports psychological safety rather than as a purely procedural or institutional requirement. This includes encouraging practitioners to consider how physical demonstration, observational touch, or close proximity is introduced, explained, and adjusted in response to learner comfort. In one to one settings, where power dynamics are inherently unbalanced, maintaining learner agency becomes particularly important in ensuring that pedagogical interaction remains respectful and supportive rather than directive or imposed.

The inclusion of consent based guidance within the course reflects a broader shift toward ethically reflective teaching practices within performance education, where embodied instruction can be acknowledged as both pedagogically necessary and autonomously sensitive. Rather than providing rigid rules, the course encourages practitioners to adopt a reflective and communicative approach, prioritising transparency and learner choice in all physically or personally invasive teaching moments. This conceptual focus reinforces the overarching preventative aim of the course by positioning ethical awareness not as an external idea, but as an integral component of effective and psychologically safe vocal pedagogy.

Ethics

In developing this course, ethical considerations are central to both content design and participant engagement. One to one voice teaching is inherently vulnerable and identity linked,

with significant emotional and cognitive investment required from students (Yang, 2023). Teaching decisions, ranging from corrective feedback to physical guidance, could carry the potential for unintended psychological harm if not carefully structured (Akolgo, Robiullah, & Ramirez, 2025; Ruusuvuori, Tainio, & Lindfors, 2023). First, the course will model ethical teaching practices by emphasizing psychological safety, consent, and respectful communication, thereby aligning with the ethical principles of transparency and agency (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2013; Edmondson, 1999). In the context of safe touch guidance, explicit consent procedures will be highlighted, and alternative strategies will be offered to minimize risk, reflecting an ethical commitment to student wellbeing and bodily autonomy (Bakker, de Jong and van Dijk, 2023; Maxfield, 2023). Given the inherent power dynamics present within one to one voice instruction, the course also encourages teachers to critically reflect on how feedback practices, communication styles, and instructional authority may impact learner confidence, autonomy, and emotional safety (Gaunt, 2008; Cheng, Wang and Li, 2024; Fletcher, 2024). To mitigate potential harm, the course intentionally adopts a non shaming and reflective pedagogical tone, encouraging critical engagement rather than judgement based evaluation of teaching practices (Brookfield, 2017; Deci and Ryan, 2000). Additionally, the course will be designed to be inclusive and accessible, ensuring that teachers of varying ability levels and professional backgrounds will be able to access the content. Consideration has also been given to cognitive accessibility through the use of segmented content, structured navigation, and multimodal instructional materials intended to reduce unnecessary cognitive overload (Sweller, 1988; Mayer, 2009). All material drawn from The Standard (CSA Group and Bureau de normalisation du Québec, 2013) and relevant educational literature will be accurately cited. The interactive elements and reflective exercises will be structured to encourage critical engagement without placing participants in ethically ambiguous, coercive, or unnecessarily distressing scenarios, therefore modelling ethical pedagogical design while supporting participant agency and reflective autonomy (Loeng, 2018; Knapke et al., 2024; Schön, 1983).

Reflective Conclusion

The development of this course significantly reshaped my understanding of how psychological health and safety can be meaningfully integrated into one to one voice teaching practice. Prior to this project, I was already actively attempting to incorporate psychologically safe approaches into my teaching. Although in doing so, this process was often intuitive, fragmented, and at times overwhelming due to the amount of potential applications across pedagogy, communication, and interpersonal dynamics. While I was aware of relevant literature

surrounding psychological safety in educational and professional contexts (Edmondson, 1999; CSA Group and Bureau de normalisation du Québec, 2013). I found it challenging to translate this knowledge into structured, repeatable, and practically implementable strategies within the constraints of a private studio environment. The process of designing a structured course then provided a mechanism for synthesising a large and often abstract body of knowledge into manageable, applied pedagogical tools.

One of the most pedagogically significant aspects of the course was the integration of structured reflection throughout the module. Reflective practice literature suggests that professional learning is enhanced when practitioners are encouraged to critically examine their own habitual actions and tacit knowledge frameworks (Schön, 1983). Within the context of voice teaching, where much pedagogical behaviour is developed through informal apprenticeship and observation, reflective interruption becomes particularly important in making implicit teaching habits visible (Gaunt, 2008). The inclusion of reflection points within the module therefore serves a preventative function by encouraging teachers to actively interrogate whether their communication patterns and correction strategies are aligned with psychologically safe practice. This reflects a broader commitment to metacognitive engagement, where learners are prompted not only to acquire knowledge but to critically evaluate their own application of it within professional contexts.

The course also reinforced my belief that prevention based pedagogical frameworks are more effective than reactive or corrective models. Rather than focusing on identifying incorrect teaching behaviours, the course presents alternative, research informed strategies that teachers can immediately implement. This aligns with constructivist approaches to learning, which emphasise building on existing knowledge structures rather than replacing them (Bruner, 1961). By grounding scenarios in familiar teaching experiences, the artefact leverages experiential learning principles that support knowledge transfer into practice (Kolb, 1984). This was particularly important to me, as I wanted the module to feel accessible and relevant to working practitioners rather than overly theoretical or abstract. There is evidence that overly academic or technical language can create barriers to engagement in professional learning contexts, particularly when learners are seeking immediately applicable strategies (Mayer, 2009). Because of this, balancing academic learning with accessibility became a central design consideration.

There are, however, clear limitations to the current iteration of the course. Its length restricts depth of theoretical exploration and limits the extent to which complex interpersonal dynamics can be fully addressed. In particular, areas such as teacher student relational dynamics require

further research and more nuanced exploration, as these interactions are highly context dependent and difficult to standardise into prescriptive frameworks. Future development of the course would benefit from incorporating feedback from both educators and students in order to refine content relevance and usability. Additionally, expanding the module into a longer certification programme would allow for deeper engagement with psychological safety principles and more extensive applied practice. The asynchronous format of the course was also a deliberate methodological choice, however, this also introduced limitations, particularly in relation to feedback and dialogue. Without live interaction, reflection becomes a more isolated process, and opportunities for immediate clarification or peer discussion are reduced. This limitation highlights the importance of future iterations incorporating more interactive or collaborative elements, potentially including video demonstrations, peer reflection forums, or practitioner interviews. While synchronous workshops may allow for richer real time interaction, they are often limited by logistical constraints including scheduling, group size, and facilitator availability. Asynchronous learning, by contrast, provides flexibility and agency, allowing participants to engage at a time and pace that suits their professional context (Merriam, 2001).

In terms of impact, I believe this course has the potential to meaningfully influence one to one voice teaching practice by introducing accessible, preventative strategies for communication, feedback, and consent based instruction. Voice students often enter lessons in a highly vulnerable and trust based position, particularly given the embodied and expressive nature of vocal performance (Gaunt, 2008). This places a significant ethical responsibility on educators to ensure that their pedagogical approaches support rather than undermine learner confidence and agency. While the course is intentionally introductory in scope, its aim is to initiate broader awareness of psychological safety as an embedded pedagogical principle rather than an optional consideration.

Also, while there is increasing discourse around trauma informed teaching practices, I chose not to centre this framework within the current course, as it represents a distinct and more clinically complex field of study that extends beyond the scope of this pilot. Instead, the course remains focused on psychological safety as a preventative pedagogical framework rather than a therapeutic intervention model. This distinction is important, as it positions the course within the realm of pedagogical practice rather than clinical or therapeutic training contexts.

Overall, this project has reinforced my belief that effective voice teaching is not only dependent on technical or biological knowledge, but equally on communication, relational awareness, and pedagogical intention. I am increasingly interested in the development of broader professional standards within private voice education, particularly those that recognise psychologically safe

communication as a core competency rather than an option. In future iterations, I intend to expand this work into a more comprehensive certification framework, incorporating further research, practitioner feedback, and applied case studies. Ultimately, I see this course as a starting point toward a more structured and ethically informed approach to voice pedagogy that prioritises both technical excellence and psychological wellbeing in equal measure.

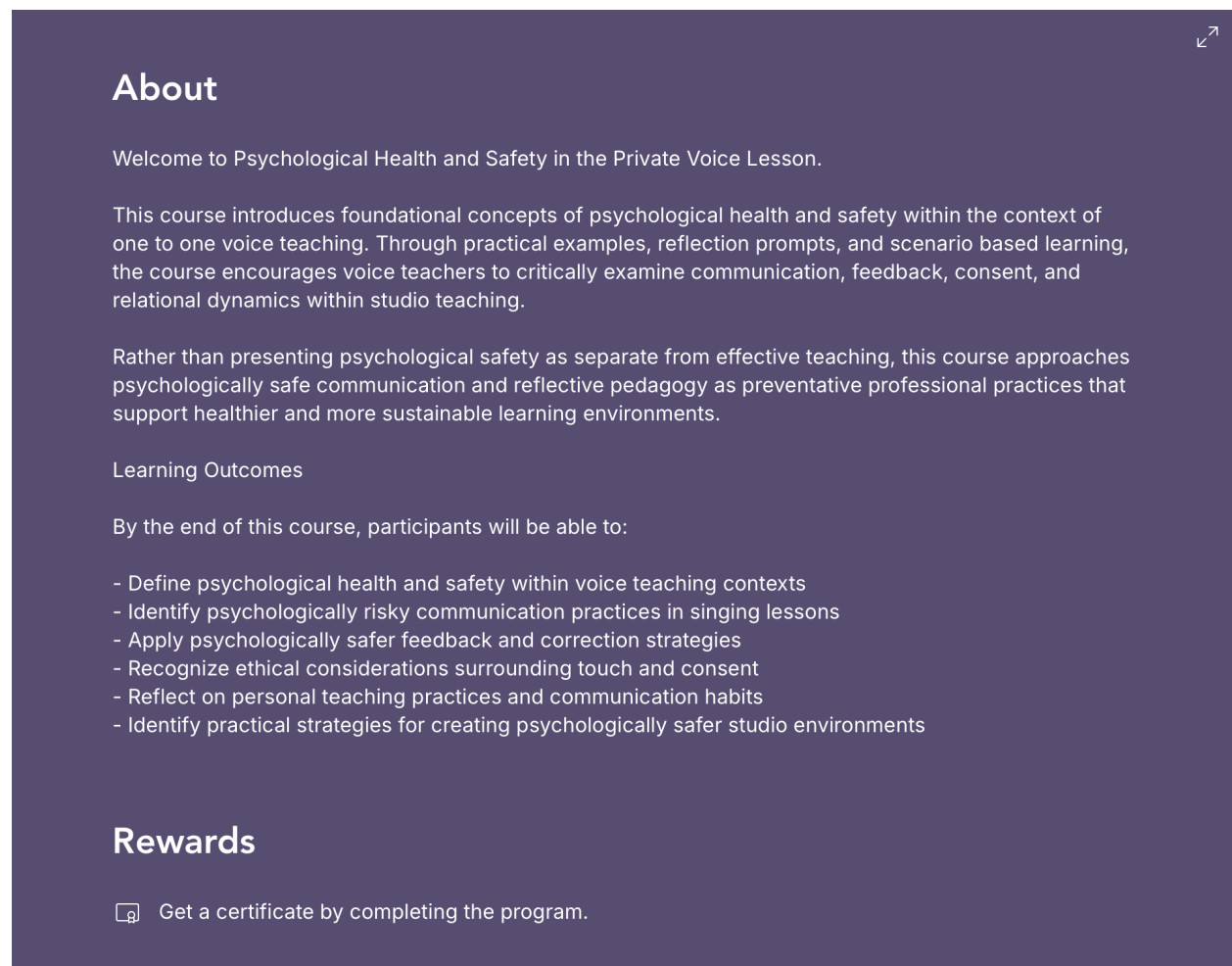
Appendix

Please click the below link to navigate to the Course. You will have to input an email and a password, along with a name for your certificate. Please see below for images of the course content including correct answers to quizzes, along with unlisted YouTube links to the videos for each section.

Course Link: <https://www.meunieradvisorygroup.com/challenge-page/b9e311a4-a022-4bc9-8c82-0a3a1b822c0a>

Course Content Images

About



The screenshot shows a dark purple background with white text. At the top right, there is a small white icon of a square with an arrow pointing outwards. The main heading 'About' is in a large, bold, white font. Below it, the text 'Welcome to Psychological Health and Safety in the Private Voice Lesson.' is in a smaller white font. The next paragraph describes the course content: 'This course introduces foundational concepts of psychological health and safety within the context of one to one voice teaching. Through practical examples, reflection prompts, and scenario based learning, the course encourages voice teachers to critically examine communication, feedback, consent, and relational dynamics within studio teaching.' The following paragraph states: 'Rather than presenting psychological safety as separate from effective teaching, this course approaches psychologically safe communication and reflective pedagogy as preventative professional practices that support healthier and more sustainable learning environments.' Below this, the section 'Learning Outcomes' is introduced, followed by the text 'By the end of this course, participants will be able to:'. A list of six outcomes follows, each preceded by a hyphen. The final section is 'Rewards', which includes a small icon of a certificate and the text 'Get a certificate by completing the program.'

About

Welcome to Psychological Health and Safety in the Private Voice Lesson.

This course introduces foundational concepts of psychological health and safety within the context of one to one voice teaching. Through practical examples, reflection prompts, and scenario based learning, the course encourages voice teachers to critically examine communication, feedback, consent, and relational dynamics within studio teaching.

Rather than presenting psychological safety as separate from effective teaching, this course approaches psychologically safe communication and reflective pedagogy as preventative professional practices that support healthier and more sustainable learning environments.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Define psychological health and safety within voice teaching contexts
- Identify psychologically risky communication practices in singing lessons
- Apply psychologically safer feedback and correction strategies
- Recognize ethical considerations surrounding touch and consent
- Reflect on personal teaching practices and communication habits
- Identify practical strategies for creating psychologically safer studio environments

Rewards

 Get a certificate by completing the program.

Course Sections

Psychological Health and Safety in the
Private Voice Lesson



 6%

 Overview

**Foundations of Psychological Safety in
Singing Les**



1/2 steps



Introduction to Psychological Safety
02:31



Reflection Handout

Safe Language and Error Correction



0/3 steps

Safe Touch and Consent Practices



0/3 steps

Teacher Accountability and Encouragement



0/3 steps

**Interactive Case Study and Reflective
Practice**



0/2 steps

Assessment and Certification



0/1 steps

Course References



0/1 steps

Foundations of Psychological Safety in Singing Lessons

What Makes Voice Teaching Unique?

Vulnerability

Students are frequently asked to perform, experiment, and make mistakes in highly exposed ways.

Embodiment

The body functions as the primary instrument in vocal training.

Corrective Feedback

Voice instruction often relies on immediate correction and evaluation.

Relational Intensity

One to one lessons create close teacher student dynamics with significant evaluative authority.



Complete Step >



Reflection Handout

Please fill out the corresponding reflection to each section title when you are finished the section, you may refer to this later as a reminder of course learning, and further reflective practice.



Reflection Handout.png
Download PNG • 60KB



[< Previous](#)

[Complete Step >](#)

Safe Language and Error Correction

Helpful Feedback Principles

Focus on:

- Technique
- Process
- Adjustment
- Exploration
- Observation

Avoid:

- Shame based comparison
- Sarcasm
- Identity based criticism
- Excessive correction overload

Please download the safer language guide for future use.



Safer Language Guidelines.pdf
Download PDF • 61KB



Safer Language Options

"You're just not getting it." What could we replace this phrase with? *

- ☐ "You didn't practice enough."
- ☒ "Let's try approaching this differently."
- ☐ "No, that's incorrect again."

☺ This response focuses on adjustment and exploration rather than personal deficit.

"You sound lazy in this section." What could we replace this phrase with? *

- ☒ "The breath energy may need more consistency here."
- ☐ "That was weak."
- ☐ "You need to try harder."

☺ Being specific in feedback can avoid confusion and protect against potential harm to learner confidence.

"Other students your age can do this." What could we replace this phrase with?

*

- ☒ "Some skills take repetition and experimentation."
- ☐ "You should know this already."
- ☐ "You're behind."

☺ avoiding comparison based feedback keeps things specific to each student, and minimizes potential impact to student self esteem.

< Previous

Step completed. Keep it up!

↺ Retake Quiz

Next >



Reflection

Please take a moment to complete your safe language and error correction reflection in your handout.

[< Previous](#)

[Complete Step >](#)

Safe Touch and Consent Practices

Consent Practices

- Explain the pedagogical purpose
- Ask explicitly
- Offer alternatives
- Avoid assumptions
- Normalize student choice
- Stay attentive to comfort changes

Please download the safe touch and consent resource for future use.



Safe Touch and Consent Guidelines.pdf
Download PDF • 60KB

[< Previous](#)[Complete Step >](#)

What Would You Do?

A student appears confused about rib expansion during breathing work.

The teacher says:

"Let me just place my hands here so you can feel it."

The student hesitates slightly but does not verbally object.

What is the most psychologically safe next step? *

- ☐ Proceed quickly to avoid awkwardness
- ☐ Ignore the hesitation because the touch is educational
- ☒ Pause and ask for explicit consent while offering alternatives

☒ Consent practices should prioritize clarity, agency, and learner comfort.

Which alternative could support the same teaching goal without touch? *

- ☐ Mirroring rib expansion visually
- ☐ Using a resistance band or prop
- ☐ Guided self-placement by the student
- ☒ All of the above

☒ Alternatives to touch are useful pedagogically, and inherently minimize risk.

[< Previous](#)

Step completed. Keep it up!

[Retake Quiz](#)[Next >](#)



Reflection

Please take a moment to complete your safe touch and consent practice reflection in your handout.

[< Previous](#)

[Complete Step >](#)

Teacher Accountability and Encouragement

Repair Strategy Possibilities

Repair Strategy Possibilities

Scenario 1

"I think my feedback may have come across more harshly than I intended. Let's revisit that concept together."

Scenario 2

"I want to make sure the lesson environment feels productive and respectful. Please let me know if something feels unclear or uncomfortable."

Scenario 3

"I realize I provided too many corrections at once. Let's narrow our focus to one concept."

Reflection

Please take a moment to complete your accountability and encouragement reflection in your handout.

[< Previous](#)[Complete Step >](#)

Interactive Case Study and Reflective Practice



Scenario

Scenario

A 17-year-old student is preparing for an audition.

The student appears anxious and apologizes repeatedly after mistakes.

During the lesson, the teacher interrupts frequently with rapid technical corrections.

At one point, the teacher says:

"You know this should already be fixed by now."

Later, while addressing posture, the teacher physically adjusts the student's shoulders without explanation.

The student becomes quieter throughout the remainder of the lesson.

Identify potential psychological risk factors in this scenario. *

- ☒ Repeated interruption
- ☒ Identity based correction
- ☒ Lack of consent communication
- ☒ Power imbalance
- ☒ Excessive corrective overload

⌚ There are many elements of this scenario where the teacher could have picked safer alternatives, these are just a few examples of potentially unsafe behaviours.

Reflect on what alternative approaches could support the same pedagogical goals more safely? *

Participant Answer Goes Here.

How could consent practices have been handled differently based on consent guidelines we have learned so far? *

Participant Answer Goes Here.

[< Previous](#)

Step completed. Keep it up!

[↺ Retake Quiz](#)

[Next >](#)

Final Quiz

Knowledge Check

Your grade: 100%

A student feels comfortable asking questions, making mistakes, and attempting difficult exercises without fear of embarrassment. This best reflects: *

- ☐ Reduced accountability
- ☐ Lower instructional standards
- ☒ Psychological safety
- ☐ Informal teaching practice

👉 Correct

Which feedback example most effectively separates the student's identity from the technical issue? *

- ☐ "You're not focused today."
- ☒ "The breath coordination became inconsistent during that phrase."
- ☐ "You should already know how to fix this."
- ☐ "You always collapse there."

👉 Correct

< Previous

Step completed. Keep it up!

🔄 Retake Quiz

Next >

Within one to one voice teaching, psychological safety is particularly relevant because: *

- ☐ Lessons involve limited interpersonal interaction
- ☐ Technical feedback is necessary
- ☒ Singing lessons often involve vulnerability, correction, and identity linked performance
- ☐ Students are typically assessed only through written work

👉 Correct

A teacher realizes their feedback became overly harsh during a lesson. Which response best reflects a repair strategy? *

- ☐ Ignoring the interaction to avoid discomfort
- ☐ Repeating the correction more firmly
- ☒ Acknowledging the interaction and reopening communication respectfully
- ☐ Ending the lesson early

👉 Correct

A teacher notices a student becoming overwhelmed during rapid correction. What would most align with psychologically safer instructional practice? *

- ☐ Continuing correction to maintain efficiency
- ☐ Reducing technical expectations for the remainder of the lesson
- ☒ Narrowing feedback focus to fewer concepts at one time
- ☐ Avoiding feedback entirely until confidence improves

✔ Correct

Which teaching approach best supports learner agency within the voice lesson? *

- ☒ Providing rationale for instructional choices and inviting dialogue
- ☐ Maintaining strict teacher control to reduce confusion
- ☐ Avoiding all correction to protect confidence
- ☐ Using comparison to motivate improvement

✔ Correct

A teacher says: "That exercise tells us the coordination may still be adjusting."

Why is this phrasing considered psychologically safer? *

- ☐ It removes all technical critique
- ☒ It focuses on observable process rather than personal failure
- ☐ It lowers expectations for improvement
- ☐ It avoids discussing mistakes directly

✔ Correct

Why does a psychologically safe teaching practice encourage alternatives to physical touch? *

- ☐ Touch is always unethical in educational contexts
- ☒ Alternatives can support instruction while preserving learner agency and comfort
- ☐ Physical demonstration is ineffective in voice teaching
- ☐ Touch should only occur in group instruction

✔ Correct

Which teaching practice most strongly supports transparency and accountability within the studio?. *

- ☐ Avoiding discussion of expectations to maintain flexibility
- ☐ Using only spontaneous lesson structures
- ☒ Clearly communicating goals, boundaries, and expectations
- ☐ Allowing students to interpret expectations independently

✔ Correct

A student hesitates when a teacher proposes using physical touch for alignment work. Which response best reflects consent-based practice? *

- ☐ Proceeding because the touch is pedagogically relevant
- ☐ Reassuring the student that the touch will be brief
- ☒ Pausing to offer alternatives and obtain explicit consent
- ☐ Avoiding all embodied instruction in future lessons

✔ Correct

Which feedback statement is most likely to undermine psychological safety? *

- ☐ "Let's experiment with a different coordination approach."
- ☐ "I noticed more consistency in your resonance there."
- ☒ "You're the only student still struggling with this."
- ☐ "Take a moment and try that phrase again."

✔ Correct

A psychologically safer lesson environment is most likely to encourage students to: *

- ☐ Avoid experimentation in order to minimize mistakes
- ☒ Engage more willingly with feedback
- ☐ Depend entirely on teacher approval before participating
- ☐ Focus primarily on performance outcomes over learning

✔ Correct

Course Reference Section

References

SECTION 1 — FOUNDATIONS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN SINGING LESSONS

Edmondson (1999)

Defines psychological safety as an environment where individuals feel safe to take interpersonal risks without fear of humiliation or punishment.

Mental Health Commission of Canada/CSA Group and Bureau de normalisation du Québec (2013)

Provides the preventative framework for psychological health and safety through respect, inclusion, and reduction of psychological harm.

Gaunt (2008)

Explores the evaluative and relational dynamics present within one to one vocal and instrumental tuition.

Yang (2023)

Examines vulnerability and psychological safety within music learning environments.

Fletcher (2024)

Discusses empathy and relational awareness within voice teaching practice.

Baumeister and Leary (1995)

Supports the importance of belonging and interpersonal connection within learning environments.

SECTION 2 — SAFE LANGUAGE AND ERROR CORRECTION

Abbas, Li and Zhang (2024)

Explores how psychological safety influences learner interpretation of feedback and critique.

Hattie and Timperley (2007)

Provides foundational research on how feedback quality influences learning and engagement.

Cheng, Wang and Li (2024)

Supports agency supportive feedback approaches that encourage learner participation and reflection.

Ryan and Deci (2000)

Examines how controlling communication may reduce intrinsic motivation and learner autonomy.

Reeve and Cheon (2021)

Supports autonomy supportive teaching and psychologically supportive communication practices.

Hendriks et al. (2023)

Explores autonomy supportive practices and student engagement in music education.

Liu, Zhang and Chen (2024)

Supports structured feedback systems and self-regulated learning.

SECTION 3 — SAFE TOUCH AND CONSENT PRACTICES

Bakker, de Jong and van Dijk (2023)

Examines instructional touch as a structured interactional practice requiring boundary awareness.

Maxfield (2023)

Highlights the limited research base and ethical concerns surrounding touch in vocal pedagogy.

Macedonia (2019)

Supports the importance of embodiment and bodily engagement within learning processes.

Skulmowski and Rey (2018)

Provides a framework for embodied learning and physical engagement in educational settings.

Boddy (2017)

Discusses consent as an ongoing communicative and relational process.

Ruusuvuori, Tainio and Lindfors (2023)

Explores embodied interaction and corrective practices within educational contexts.

SECTION 4 — TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Mental Health Commission of Canada/CSA Group and Bureau de normalisation du Québec (2013)

Supports preventative organizational responsibility, accountability, and psychologically safe structures.

Reeve and Cheon (2021)

Supports transparent, autonomy supportive teaching practices.

Hattie and Timperley (2007)

Supports clear, process focused feedback and instructional specificity.

Cheng, Wang and Li (2024)

Supports feedback approaches that reinforce learner agency and engagement.

Course Video Links

Foundations for Psychological Safety in the voice lesson	https://youtu.be/i3oFm_EJNZU
Safe Language and Error Correction	https://youtu.be/3kBjvOeVzNc
Safe Touch and Consent Practices	https://youtu.be/na32c4bwMDk
Teacher Accountability and Encouragement	https://youtu.be/xRAbhJDWopw
Interactive Case Study and Reflective Practice	https://youtu.be/Gf0JkHnyJEA

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