Chapter 11
Pedagogical Voice: An Empowering Force

11.1 Introduction

Perhaps the most surprising of my core values is pedagogical voice. Why voice you might ask? And we will discuss this below. I have to admit that this one was a surprise to me as well. As I worked through my grounded theory process of clustering the postformal reasoning qualities and sorting out which of the evolutionary themes they related to, I began with only the other three. The first three qualities of love, life and wisdom emerged from the literature in quite a clear and bold way. At first I thought my theorising was complete. But this partial closure was unsatisfying. There were loose ends that did not seem to fit the other core values: qualities like pluralism and relativism, reflexivity and especially Suzanne Cook-Greuter's "construct-aware". Of course these renegades could have all been gathered under wisdom, but this left me feeling uncomfortable.

The situation with the postformal pedagogies was even more disturbing. Where would I place critical pedagogy, postcolonial and global education, postmodern and poststructuralist approaches, artistic and poetic education? I think it was poststructuralism that gave me the key insight into the importance of voice and language in the mix. Secondly, the emphasis on the discourse of power and marginal voices in critical pedagogy gave a further clue. Finally, the refinement of language sensibility in Peter Abbs' poetic education brought the *AHA moment*. It must have come to me as an inspiration, but once the idea arrived it was then obvious. I realised that pedagogical voice was the missing link, meaning voice in its broadest sense, as I indicate below. Even an education that is caring, lively and wise will not be effective in the long run if young people are not empowered to find their voice.

In this chapter, as with the previous three, I reiterate the evolutionary theme, and the related postformal reasoning qualities and pedagogies before entering the philosophical discussion. On the practical side, I discuss the educational approaches

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that awaken voice and language awareness and share some examples from my own and others' teaching experience, finishing with personal reflections.

11.2 Why Voice? A Brief Diagnostic

> Communication between human beings [is] not a process of transportation of information from one mind to another, but is rather to be understood as a process of meaning and interpretation. It is a process that is radically open and undetermined—and hence weak and risky. (Biesta 2014, p. 26)

Why is the human voice important? No matter where we live in the world today, the human voice is predominantly mediated by technology. Children born in the last fifteen to twenty years in affluent countries have never known a world without communication technologies of all kinds. But even in Africa, television has replaced the grandmother in the role of family storyteller, and the mobile phone is replacing face-to-face conversation everywhere.

Why do we want to educate with an awareness of voice and language? Marshall McLuhan claimed decades ago that every advance in technology dulls a former human capacity. The increasing reliance of young people on the sound bytes of the media and the truncated "spelling" of mobile phone text messages as their primary modes of communication dramatically limits the richness of their language development. By contrast, a live human educator telling children stories or facilitating Socratic dialogues with adolescents offers the rich nuances of voice, intonation, eye contact, gestures, facial expression, body language, emotional response and soul warmth. The mode and content of language that we expose children to not only create the foundations of their language but also their thinking patterns and worldviews. Put simply, for young people, having a voice is empowering.

What happens when we are unconscious of our voice and language in education? There is growing evidence that children who are overexposed to screen-mediated forms of communication from an early age become increasingly disconnected from the world around them and become disempowered. A growing number of kindergarten children have delayed language, arguably linked to reduction in real human-voice contact. This is an educational time bomb that will explode in coming decades unless we rehumanise our relationship to voice and language.

What does research say about voice and language in education? Educational, psychological, sociological and philosophical research will be explored in this chapter to gain insights into the under-appreciated importance of being conscious of what we say to young people and how we say it: our pedagogical voice.

11.3 Evolutionary Theme: Linguistic and Paradigmatic Boundary-Crossing

In this chapter we further explore the evolutionary academic and educational movement beyond fragmentation and disciplinary isolationism and towards more integration—particularly through transdisciplinarity. One of the challenges that has emerged from this literature is the difficulty in communicating across different disciplines, epistemologies and paradigms (Eckersley et al. 2006; Grigg et al. 2003). An evolutionary philosophy of education that can overcome this challenge requires tremendous sensitivity to linguistic, cultural and paradigmatic contexts. An important insight of French postmodern and poststructuralist philosophies is the awareness of context in terms of how we language the world. *Language reflexivity*—or construct-awareness—is a significant feature of postformal reasoning (Cook-Greuter 2000; Gidley 2009).

11.3.1 Postformal Reasoning Qualities Aligned to Voice Awareness

The features of postformal reasoning that are aligned to boundary-crossing are reflexivity, language reflexivity and pluralism (or in other words multi-vocal awareness) (see Table 11.1). The extended characteristics of these features are discussed in Chapter 5, Table 5.4, where I cohere these qualities under voice.

11.3.2 Postformal Pedagogies that Empower Multiple Voices

In this electronic age of "voice" mail, "chat" rooms and "talking" computers, perhaps the least valued of evolutionary forces is the human voice itself. Yet

Table 11.1 Postformal Reasoning Qualities Aligned to Voice Awareness

Postformal Reasoning Qualities that cross Disciplinary, Linguistic and Paradigmatic Boundaries	
Reflexivity	The ability to reflect on, and become conscious of, one's own thoughts, feelings, actions and values. Only mature adults can master the postformal trait of reflexivity in times of pressure, stress and uncertainty.
Language reflexivity	Awareness of our language is a subtle but important postformal feature. "The language habit. . . [is] a barrier to further development if it remains unconscious, automatic and unexamined".
Pluralism	The notions of *pluralism* and *relativism* are postmodern moves beyond empirical science as THE epistemology. The concept of multiple voices paves the way for social and cultural diversity in personal and civic spheres.

Table 11.2 Postformal Pedagogies that Empower Multiple Voices

Postformal Approaches Sensitive to Aesthetics, Language, Culture and Paradigm	
Postmodern and poststructuralist education [***approaching truth***]	. . . includes contributions of continental, especially French, philosophy in identifying the politics of voice and marginality.
Aesthetic, artistic and poetic education [***appreciating beauty***]	. . . cultivates aesthetic sensibility through exposure to and participation in diverse artistic activities and reflection on the aesthetics of the world.
Critical, postcolonial, global and planetary education [***applying goodness***]	. . . enhances awareness of dominant political voices and the rights of marginal cultures and sub-cultures to find their voices.

without its presence, little children cannot even learn to speak. Several significant 20th-century thinkers have drawn attention to the developmental and evolutionary significance of self-reflection and creativity in how we language the world (Abbs 2003; Barfield 1985; Derrida 2001; Gadamer 1960/2005; Gangadean 1998; Thompson 1998).

Arguably, the *linguistic turn* in philosophy has not yet significantly influenced formal education. Yet we can encourage this empowering capacity of *language reflexivity* to develop through postmodern and poststructuralist (Elkind 1998; Peters 1998); aesthetic, artistic and poetic (Abbs 2003; Read 1943; Rose and Kincheloe 2003); and critical, postcolonial, global and planetary pedagogies (Freire 1970; Giroux 1992). I cohere these threads under the core value of *pedagogical voice*.

In an additional philosophical manoeuvre, I note that these three contemporary educational styles can also be regarded as having relationships with the Platonic philosophical virtues of Truth, Beauty and Goodness (see Table 11.2).

11.4 Philosophical Perspectives: The Linguistic Turn

> The poetics of education . . . calls for the endless acts of cultural reincarnation—acts which enable students to see with new eyes and to speak with new tongues. (Abbs 2003, p. 17)

In this chapter I use the term *pedagogical voice* as a broad palette to include *family resemblances*[1] among postformal developments in language and linguistics, speech education, the range of voices of teachers and children, the empowerment and human agency notion of "finding one's voice", education in awareness of sound and silence and, most importantly, consciousness of how we "language the world" (Gadamer 1960/2005).

[1] *Family resemblances* was used by Wittgenstein (1968) to refer to the "complicated network of similarities, overlapping and criss-crossing" found in different word uses and meanings (Wittgenstein 1968, p. 32).

Consciousness of how we language the world was popularised in philosophical discourses with the *linguistic turn* (Rorty 1967). The *linguistic turn* was influenced by Ferdinand De Saussure's *linguistic structuralism* (Lyotard 2004; Matthews 1996; Wittgenstein 1968), the *language-games* of Ludwig Wittgenstein's (1968) later *anti-dogmatic* philosophy and the notion of *metanarratives* by Lyotard (2004). Several French philosophers in the poststructuralism mode deepened consciousness of language (Deleuze 1968/1994; Derrida 2001; Foucault 1986; Kristeva 1982). Likewise, transpersonal researcher Rosemary Anderson's *intuitive inquiry* elucidates the uniqueness and particularity of the individual "human voice" in research (R. Anderson 1998, p. 81).

Consciousness of language is a key indicator of postformal reasoning. Both Steiner and Gebser emphasised the significance of language awareness, poetic expression and creativity as part of the new consciousness.

Plato's *Republic,* especially the dialogues with Socrates, marked the end of poetry and image as primary ways of languaging the world and the beginning of the formalisation of philosophy as the new epistemology for the mental-rational consciousness. In a recursive, parabola-shaped re-integration, Gebser claims that the new consciousness is to be birthed through poetry, yet a new kind of *conscious* poetry. In the context of Gebser's and Steiner's views on consciousness evolution, poetry as an artistic condensation of language opens the awareness to a simultaneous experience—*concretion*—of all the consciousness structures. Wilber also identifies the role of language in the new consciousness. However, unlike Steiner and Gebser, he does not emphasise the central importance of poetry and artistry in language.

The re-integration of philosophy and poetry in Western European culture was begun in the late 18th century by English and German romantic philosopher-poets such as Blake, Schelling, Novalis and the Schlegel brothers (Richards 2002; Royce 1892/2001; Steiner 1901/1973). Gebser affirms this in the following quote:

> Our new situation requires new means of description and statement. The new components which have irrupted into our reality demand new 'concepts'... This urgent necessity was perceived and described shortly after the French Revolution by two great figures, Novalis and Hufeland. (Gebser 1949/1985, p. 306)

The enlivening of language was unquestionably a major focus for Steiner in facilitating the birth of the new consciousness, beyond abstract rationality. He stressed the need to awaken the artist in us when it comes to language if we hope in the future to be able to express our experiences of spiritual awareness.

> We have to create ... an immediate connection between *what* we want to say and *how* we want to express it. We have to re-awaken the linguistic artist in us in all areas. ... Each sentence will be seen as a birth, because it must be experienced inwardly in the soul as immediate form, not simply as a thought. (Steiner 1934/1983, pp. 15–16)

Steiner wrote and lectured extensively about the conscious development of language and speech and their significance for human evolution (Steiner 1904/1959, 1961, 1984). He saw speech education as a central part of a healthy evolutionary pedagogy, and the emphasis on oral as well as written language has

remained a core component of Steiner/Waldorf education. Steiner also developed a complex, enlivening movement art called *eurythmy* based on his advanced understanding of how consciousness co-evolves with speech and language (Steiner 1931/1984). Eurythmy is a largely undiscovered postformal art form with the potential to enhance higher-order consciousness through complex creativity and body-mind integration. It can be enacted artistically—with speech or music—or therapeutically. Research into the potential of eurythmy in systems theory has begun (Deijmann n.d.). Such vitalising artistic practices need to be recognised at a time when low vitality is a chronic human condition. Eurythmy could be philosophically located within the emergent *aesthetic literacies* arising from the critique of *narrow literacies* (Gale 2005).

Gebser continued this emphasis on creative language development as central to the evolutionary shift in consciousness claiming it is reflected in new more conscious types of poetry.

> Here again we find, not a loss of ego and the poet as an instrument of the Muses, but a growing above and beyond the mental ego to freedom from the ego: to that freedom which is the guarantor of the spiritual…Whereas poetry from antiquity until the Renaissance proceeded from the 'musing' capabilities of the poet … we find a renunciation of this type of creativity after the French Revolution beginning with Novalis that becomes increasingly and pervasively conscious in its expression. (Gebser 1949/1985, p. 327)

Cook-Greuter supports this stance using the term *construct-aware* to characterise the reflexive feature of postformal language development. She refers to the ego becoming "transparent to itself" at this ego-aware stage (Cook-Greuter 2000, p. 235). In this way she echoes Geber's concept of transparency as one of the features of higher-order, integral thinking, whereby Gebser claims that: "Integral reality is the world's transparency" (Gebser 1949/1985, p. 19).[2]

I use the term *language reflexivity*, with a similar meaning to Cook-Greuter's construct-aware. In addition to Cook-Greuter's work, several other significant 20th-century thinkers, including the French poststructuralists, have drawn attention to the construction of language and its significance in evolution of consciousness (Barfield 1985; Subbiondo 2003; Thompson 1998). Academic and poet, Peter Abbs, argues that there is a spiritual crisis in education and culture and proposes that the language awareness of postmodernity can be increasingly infused with creativity, through the arts in a poetics of education (Abbs 2003). One of the forms of creative language emerging from the poststructuralist philosophers is the use of *neologisms* (Derrida 2001; Gangadean 1998; St. Pierre 2004). Another is the concept of *polysemy*, which is about the "multiple meanings, connotations, connections to other concepts… that particular words possess" (Kincheloe 2006, p. 11).

One of the ways that the *subjective-objective* approach to knowledge can play itself out in language is through *intertextuality*. Although the term *intertextuality* is often associated with the work of de Saussure, it was coined by Bulgarian-French

[2]The full quote from Gebser on this idea can be found in Chapter 9.

philosopher, Julia Kristeva, in France in the late 1960s (Orr 2003). Kristeva's linguistic theorising reflects both the artistry of the mosaic and the rigour of postformal logics, not the least demonstrating postformal language reflexivity. Kristeva's intertextuality also includes other distinct features, such as focusing on "interconnection of ideas where previously none existed" (Orr 2003, p. 24).

11.5 Postformal Pedagogies: Voicing Truth, Beauty and Goodness

Being that can be understood is language. Gadamer Aphorism

The move beyond mental-rationality to integral-postformal culture and consciousness requires an integration of the search for *truth*—via scientific and philosophical epistemologies; with *beauty*—via artistic/aesthetic sensibilities; and with *goodness*—via participatory embodiment and critical enactment of the truth claims that we profess (see Table 11.2). This is a foundational point—often overlooked—that could ground postformal-integral-planetary consciousness in a *concretion*[3] of all consciousness modes, rather than a primarily conceptual abstraction of what integrality might be.

Several educational approaches support and cultivate an awareness of language and voice in education. These include postmodern and poststructuralist educational approaches—which deconstruct and reconstruct in the search for truth; aesthetic, artistic and poetic education—which refine the senses in ways that lead to an appreciation of beauty; and critical, postcolonial, global and planetary education approaches—which include normative values that aim to create a more just world by applying goodness. The first aims to build explicit awareness of how power is constructed through language, including self-reflection; the second assists with enriching, refining and developing more conscious and nuanced language; and the critical cluster of pedagogies particularly emphasises diversity, pluralism and empowering of marginal voices.

Kincheloe, through both his postformal education and his bricolage, applies a strong integrative lens to this significant cluster of pedagogies, building bridges between aesthetic, critical, postmodern and postformal (Kincheloe and Steinberg 1993; Rose and Kincheloe 2003).

[3]Gebser uses the term *concretion* to mean an experiencing in fully awake consciousness of all the previous structures in the same moment.

11.5.1 Postmodern and Poststructural Pedagogies: Approaching Truth

> Whereas modern childhood was defined in terms of differences between age groups, postmodern childhood is identified with differences within age groups. This metamorphism of our conception of childhood has radically transformed educational practice quite independently of any reform movement or agenda. (Elkind 1998, p. 1)

Educational psychologist David Elkind is referring to some general shifts in educational policy and practice that have occurred within US schooling as a result of changing conceptions of childhood in the postmodern era. Most notably, the changes he highlights first include changes to language. He notes that "the introduction of bilingual classes" arises from increased awareness of multi-cultural differences. More educational space needs to be allocated today to the learning of multiple languages and learning about diverse cultures given the inevitability of cultural pluralism in our multicultural global world. Several educational researchers have attended to this issue particularly in relation to emerging issues surrounding spirituality in education (de Souza 2006; Inayatullah 2002; Milojevic 2005). Elkind also points to the need to individualise curriculum so that at one end of the cognitive spectrum it meets the needs of "gifted and talented" students, and at the other end it serves the needs of children with special learning needs and different learning styles. Elkind sees the postmodern spirit as being best exemplified "in our main streaming and inclusion of children with special needs-a group excluded in the modern era" (Elkind 1998, p. 9). He also notes that postmodernism has led to the "modification of our textbooks and of our language to eliminate gender bias" (Elkind 1998, p. 9).

Education researcher, Zhihe Wang, contributes to the conversation as he draws from a Whiteheadian constructive postmodern educational approach to reconfigure Chinese education. Wang claims that Whitehead's "constructive postmodern education may offer an effective antidote to modern test-oriented education" in China. The problems he cites with the current education model include its fragmentation and narrowness; the overemphasis on second-hand knowledge through book learning; the dominance of scientism over imagination and creativity; and the rigidity of abstract concepts compared to process philosophy. One of the most important issues for Wang is that "from a point of view of organic philosophy, constructive postmodern thinkers view the students as living human being instead of machine[s]" (Wang 2004, p. 6). Other forms of reconstructive postmodernism may also contribute to the discourse (Griffin 2002; Kegan 1994).

> Poststructuralism as a contemporary philosophical movement offers a range of theories (of the text), critiques (of institutions), new concepts, and forms of analysis (of power) which are relevant and significant for the study of education. . . In part the significance of poststructuralism for education lies in the fact that it can be construed as a philosophical reaction against a *scientistic* social science. (Peters 1999, pp. 1, 4)

In his introduction to the book, *Naming the Multiple: Poststructuralism and Education*, as in the preceding quote, educational philosopher, Michael Peters,

stresses that poststructuralism cannot be pinned down to a "single methodology, philosophy or body of theory". It is this very aspect of poststructuralism that makes it both so challenging to the modernist education paradigm and so exciting to critical, postmodern, postformal educators who resist modernist education and want to create something completely new. I regard the discourse of poststructuralism in education to be closely aligned to the deconstructive postmodern stream. It aims to challenge, to disrupt, even to unravel all of the old certainties that modernism clings to. But does it build a new educational approach—or perhaps multiple new educational approaches?

Some critical pedagogical theorists consider postmodern, and particularly poststructuralist, pedagogies to be too affected by what they call *ludic postmodernism*, with too little engagement with praxis and *historical materialism* (Eryaman 2006; McLaren and Farahmandpur 2003). Clearly, postmodern and poststructuralist approaches to education add rich dimensions to the diverse gathering of postformal pedagogies and will likely continue to develop over this century.

11.5.2 Aesthetic, Artistic and Poetic Education: Appreciating Beauty

> Art—or, to use a more exact phrase, aesthetic experience—is an essential factor on which Homo Sapiens has depended for the development of his highest cognitive faculties. (Read 1954, p. 143)

Sir Herbert Read (1893–1968) was a powerful advocate for art in education as this quote indicates. The moral, cultural and integrative value of aesthetic education has been known since the time of Plato and has been promoted by philosophers such as Kant, Schiller, Goethe and Schelling through to Steiner and Read in the 20th century and Rose and Kincheloe in recent times. Research and practice of 20th-century art educationists and psychologists support the value of artistic education for cognitive development and the development of meaning in life (J. Anderson 1985; Broudy 1987; Arnheim 1989; Eisner 1985). As discussed in Chapter 2, both Schiller and Read claimed that art/aesthetics should be the very *basis* of education (Read 1943; Schiller 1954/1977). Read also points to reverence as "a religious spirit or attitude that it is inculcated by music, dance and the arts" (Read 1943, p. 222). Art educators emphasise in particular the importance of aesthetics in balancing cognicentrism in education (Abbs 2003; Eisner 1985; Read 1943). Through art, drama and movement, students can see the complex paradoxes of "both/and" relationships, not just the binaries of "either/or".

Steiner regarded the creative arts as a foundation to teaching that gives meaning to every subject and promotes intrinsic motivation and positive self-esteem, rather than just something that could be taught as isolated subjects in themselves. He linked the artistic education of the child with the development of initiative (Steiner 1964, 1976, 1981).

In my own teaching experience, I was continually interweaving between the conceptual content and the multiple ways it could be presented artistically. I found the creative use of a range of artistic media to be the most practical and productive way to foster a multi-faceted and yet integrated worldview. Through art, drama and movement, students learn to see the world from multiple points of view and understand complex interrelationships, which helps them to make sense of the world and ultimately empowers them to find their own personal voice. Critical educators stress the pedagogical value of art, noting it should be more than a mere "add-on" in education.

> Artful teachers and their students begin an intellectual journey that explores the ways meaning is made, consciousness is constructed and social, cultural and political change occurs. This is a profoundly different process of education from the transference of predigested data that now occurs in technical standards-driven education. (Rose and Kincheloe 2003, p. 32)

11.5.3 Critical, Postcolonial, Global and Planetary: Applying Goodness

> Central to such a project is the issue of how pedagogy might provide cultural studies theorists and educators with an opportunity to engage pedagogical practices that are not only transdisciplinary, transgressive, and oppositional, but also connected to a wider project designed to further racial, economic, and political democracy. (Giroux 1998, p. x–xi)

In his foreword to the book series on "Critical Studies in Educational Culture", critical education theorist Henri Giroux makes clear why I have linked critical pedagogy with the Platonic concept of the good through my notion of *applying goodness*. Giroux's *cultural pedagogical practice* includes broader forms of enculturation across such sites as the mass media, in addition to school and university education. He notes how within these diverse contexts "education makes us both subjects of and subject to relations of power" (Giroux 1998, p. xi). Gert Biesta, in his writing on emancipation, explains how the "emancipatory interest of critical pedagogies focuses on the analysis of oppressive structures, practices, and theories", whereby critical education theorists such as Giroux, Michael Apple and Peter McLaren claim that "emancipation can be brought about if people gain an adequate insight into the power relations that constitute their situation" (Biesta 2014, p. 81).

One of the leading inspirations for *critical pedagogy*, particularly in North America, was Brazilian educational philosopher, Paulo Freire (1921–1997), most notably in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* as a way of educating oppressed adults in Latin America (Freire 1970, 1995). His approach was picked up by educators, particularly in the USA, who were looking for alternatives to mainstream education that were more socially just and equitable for the marginalised members of society. Critical educators Kincheloe and McLaren discuss how creativity, criticality, futures orientation and postformality are applying goodness through taking "part in a process of critical world making, guided by the shadowed outline

of a dream of a world less conditioned by misery, suffering and the politics of deceit" (Kincheloe and McLaren 1994, p. 154). Kincheloe and Steinberg went on to develop Freire's critical pedagogy into their postformal education.

Postcolonial educational literature points to the broader global issue of the export of this model to the rest of the world (Gidley 2001a, 2001b; Jain 2000; M. Jain and S. Jain 2003; Jain et al. 2001; S. Jain and M. Jain 2003) and the *hidden curriculum* that growing numbers of children and young people, globally, imbibe from the mass media (Gatto 1992; Gidley 2002; Giroux 2001; Healy 1998; Pearce 1992; Steinberg and Kincheloe 2004).

Global or planetary education is an emerging approach, but its sensibility infuses the work of several contemporary educators (Gidley 2007; Laszlo 2000; Montuori 1999; Morin 2001; Sloan 1992). It also includes educators whose focus is the environmental ecology of the planet (Fien 1998, 2002; Hicks 1995; Jardine 1998; Ornstein and Ehrlich 1991) or the social ecology of the planet, including the globalism, postcolonialism, multiculturalism and multilingualism discourses (Boulding 1990; Dighe 2000; Gangadean 2006; Gidley 2004; Miller 1993; Milojevic 2002; Mische 1986; Yihong 2005). Cosmopolitanism is a significant feature of planetary consciousness and it would be beneficial to cultivate this perspective in school contexts.

11.6 Practical Examples: Finding one's Pedagogical Voice

> On better days we struggle to tear off the tacky film, which covers our educational and poetic aspirations, resist the counterfeit version of consciousness and struggle to locate the smothered springs of renewal. (Abbs 2003, p. 28)

11.6.1 Silent Spaces and Sensitive Sounds

> So much of a schooling system that is negative is silenced by virtue of schools offering silence as a positive non-coercive choice… Schools need silence to overcome their structures such that people in schools can find new meanings of their own and communal togetherness born of choices and democracy. Silence can teach children about living in the world in ways conducive to peaceful co-existence. A silent curriculum with loud effects. (Lees 2013, p. 3)

What kinds of environments are we providing for our children? The world of sound and tone—which incidentally is carried on the air—is heavily polluted today, just like the particle pollution in the air. How often do urban children hear birds or insects sing, wind whistle, creeks babble or waves break? Attention to sound education has been severely neglected, other than through the obvious formal process of music education. We can begin with very young children by allowing them to "hear a pin drop" or taking them to environments where they can actively

listen to natural sounds. Arguably, a joyful teacher starting a class with a song is far less likely to attract resistance than one who shouts to be heard.

In our noise-polluted urban worlds, it is a huge challenge to draw conscious attention to sound, let alone begin to refine and educate the delicate senses in relation to it. By contrast, an educational environment where spoken human language is valued over written and electronic voices for young children may provide an antidote. Poems, singing, drama and natural conversation are all vocal methods that can greatly benefit the development of written language. Additional oral methods include chanting, oration, re-telling stories, tongue twisters and word play. Learning a second or third language is invaluable for enhancing sound awareness and ability to see things from multiple perspectives, not to mention expanding awareness of the cultural *other*. This awareness is also fundamental to dialogical reasoning.

Consciousness of how we voice ourselves with children also makes space for silence, which can be a very powerful arena for holding the space for children to be themselves. British education researcher Helen Lees claims that what she calls "strong silence" offers "a way for children to appreciate their own natural inner resources in a world of mainly media-driven externalising tendencies of the self" (Lees 2012, p. 10). By strong silence Lees means non-coercive, participatory silence, not the kind imposed coercively on children by teachers, which she refers to as "weak silence". Lees clarifies what she means as follows: "A coercive educational silence is used to control or manipulate circumstances... the stare, the sharp pregnant pause, the look, the subtle movement of a hand. This is not silence—it is control" (Lees 2012, p. 63). Other terms for Lees' strong silence include "deep/contemplative/slow silence" (p. 69). Canadian education theorist David Jardine also stresses the importance of cultivating silent spaces in our classrooms.

> We must begin to believe again that silence may be our most articulate response. Silence must become possible again. In the midst of silence, a word, a gesture, a cry, can finally *mean* something, because we can finally hear, finally listen. (Jardine 1998, pp. 30–31)

Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) make a similar point, referring to the respect the ancient Greeks had for moments of silence, perceiving them as representing the presence of Hermes.

> Ancient Greeks . . . were fascinated by the lulls of profound silence that periodically spread across a room filled with conversation. The Greeks postulated that at such moments Hermes had entered the room. By silencing the everyday babble, Hermes allowed the Greeks to tap their imagination, fears, hopes and passions. (Kincheloe and Steinberg 1993, p. 304)

When so much education has become reduced to *vocational training*, it might be useful to consider that the word *voc*ation—from *voce*—originally meant *spiritual calling*. For teachers, it might also be useful to consider how we are facilitating the kind of deep listening that might enable children to hear such a calling (Hillman 1996). A fundamental component of most, if not all, spiritual discipline is contemplation, meditation or prayer. While not recommending meditation for children, listening practices, observation of nature and the inner stillness of absorption in a

creative activity—e.g., painting, wood carving, weaving—are foundations for stillness, open mindedness and open heartedness. Recently silence itself has become a territory of interest and research in education, but it is well beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss this research in detail. For a very good study of strong silence in education, see *Silence in Schools* (Lees 2012).

11.6.2 Languaging the World into Being

> What I see as essential for education [is] the presence of a teacher, not just as a fellow learner or a facilitator of learning, but as someone who, in the most general terms has to bring something to the educational situation that was not really there already. (Biesta 2014, p. 6)

Educational philosopher, Gert Biesta, takes a controversial stand for the important role of a teacher—in the midst of contemporary constructivist and child-centred approaches in education, which overly value notions of "communities of practice" and "learning communities" (Biesta 2014). I agree with Biesta's stand and would go further to say that the authentic human presence of the teacher can only be experienced through the language and voice of the teacher and at times the silences an artful teacher can create between their words. The significance of "teacher presence" is emphasised by Parker Palmer and Rachel Kessler, particularly in her work with teachers and young people (Kessler 2000a, 2000b; Palmer 1998). Others refer to the importance for children's wellbeing of teachers being fully present rather than absent-minded (Uhrmacher 1993).

In a pedagogical environment where teachers are reflexively conscious of their own language and voice and respectful of children's voices, the space can be opened for children to voice their hopes and fears, interests and dreams. The honouring of children's voices in education is in line with the UNESCO project *Education for All through Voices of Children*. In the context of high-stakes testing and performance outcomes, *pedagogical voice* and *language reflexivity* are not high on educational agendas. Speaking to children in ways that demonstrate love and devotion and that evoke reverence, awe and wonder can be stepping stones to wisdom—and to higher awareness generally.

How much more conscious might we be of how we "word" ideas and concepts with children, whose mobile consciousness we are shaping and moulding? To my knowledge little research has been undertaken on the pedagogical affects of different types of language on children. However, the work of Marshall Rosenberg on non-violent communication points to the need for this to occur. Anecdotal evidence from my work as a school psychologist suggests that there is a significant increase in speech impairment in young children in recent years. Research suggests that sustained exposure to electronic "voices"—television, computers and electronic games—may impair early speech development (Clouder et al. 2000; Healy 1998; Pearce 1992). While not advocating the elimination of the latter, more creative

attention to the nuances of the *living word* could facilitate postformal language sensibility at appropriate developmental moments.

11.7 Personal Reflections on Pedagogical Voice

The following is an example from my experience of how the use of simple words ("sun juice") if filled with meaning through an imaginative context can be transformative of a child's consciousness (perhaps for life). Discovering the extraordinary in the ordinary through nurturing "radical amazement".

Personal Reflections. *One of the richest memories from my teaching career was the Winter Solstice festival in the mid-eighties where I worked the "miracle" of "turning oranges into sunballs full of Sun juice". Along with other teachers, I had created an inspired "environment" for our festival that included turning our small classroom into a simulacra of a mystical cave made of a draped parachute and other cloths which could only be entered by crawling into a tunnel made of increasingly darkly coloured silk (violet, indigo). Our school was young, small and intimate and the children were aged between around five and eight years old. Once the children, led by a teacher, ventured inside the room-sized "cave", their eyes grew large as they witnessed pockets of crystals lit by live, flickering, candle light (carefully guarded of course). After they had explored the cave and the crystals with their eyes and hands, tangibly, sensually, experiencing what the mystics of all traditions know, that the "Light can be found in and through the darkness", they were led out of the cave back into the "Sunlight" through another tunnel, this one made of red-, orange- and golden-coloured silks. As each child was re-entering the "outside world" of their classroom, after this communion with mystery, arriving at this new place of "sun renewal" on the other side of darkness (reminiscent of the "dark night of the soul"), they were reverently handed something magical—a bright, half-spherical, golden-orange cup—with the simple words "would you like some sun juice?" Each child carefully took this mysterious object in their hands, held it to their lips and squeezed the sweet "sun juice" into their mouths. They were experiencing wonder and awe. I will never forget the face and eyes of one child, who in another setting would be classified as autistic spectrum disordered. I am quite sure he was transformed by this experience and would never again eat an ordinary orange in quite the same way.*

A critical, pragmatic voice might ask: "What is the point of deluding children into thinking they are drinking sun juice? Don't they need to learn scientific facts so that we can measure what they know in order to grade them?" My response would be that this creative, imaginative gesture, one that fills the child's soul with wonder, can make a great contribution to developing their respect for nature and indeed for developing their evolving, ecological consciousness.

11.8 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have gone against the grain of much of what happens in schools today. Over several decades, global societal pressures by way of the mass media have led us further away from the human voice than ever before in history and more into a technology-mediated world, which bypasses human presence. Since the advent of television, followed by computers, the now ubiquitous mobile phone and soon-to-be wearable technology, young people born this century have little option but to be attached to technological limbs. We do not yet know the long-term effects of this mediated lifestyle, but we do know that "digital detox" vacations are an emerging form of tourism.

While there is a counter-thread to my concerns in that mobile media and new technological platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter have been instrumental tools in empowering young people in some cases, for example, the Arab Spring, it is also the case that these movements have not been sustainable. The technologies themselves are just tools, and the young people who use them need to be educated and empowered to use them for higher purpose.

As educators we carry a developmental—even evolutionary—responsibility to educate with care, with vitality and with wisdom. Ultimately we succeed in this (or fail) through our choice of words, our tone of voice, the timing of our silences, our authentic presence and how well we enable children to express theirs.

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