

INVITING MINDFUL SILENCE INTO PEDAGOGY: SUPPORTING AGENCY,
VOICE, AND CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT THROUGH SILENCE

by

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ABSTRACT

Across pedagogical approaches, silence and speech are rarely recognized as equally important ways to demonstrate knowledge. Favoring speech in the classroom indicates a specific set of assumptions that shows what formal teaching and learning settings should look like. I will approach silence in this study as an opportunity to create space for silent voices and invisible notions of agency. Through an exhaustive literature search and interpretive review of how contemporary pedagogical approaches currently assess silence, I invite the concept of mindful silence into pedagogy as a way to better address the ways that silence - not just speech - can advance teaching and learning. To pursue the inclusion of mindful silence into contemporary approaches to pedagogy I am following the guidelines already provided by a theory of invitational rhetoric. Invitational rhetoric can help mindful silence provide pedagogues and students an alternative pathway to teaching and learning. By reconsidering silence more centrally in interactive pedagogy, a more critical and inclusive classroom—and thus more critically-minded and diverse individuals—can learn how to engage in life-long learning and democratic citizenship in more productive ways. Treating silence as an intentional choice or strategy of teaching and learning thus invites new dimensions of self-reflection, active listening, and deep understanding of other's perspectives to be included as part of a successful educational process. Long term, it is my hope that embracing mindful silence in pedagogy can change the educational environment but also return our focus on how a healthy democracy functions as a productive balance of thoughtfully speaking and critically listening.

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INTRODUCTION

Silence and speech are rarely recognized as equal ways to demonstrate and create knowledge. Many education and communication scholars refer to silence as the absence and even opposite of speech, which marginalizes its multipurpose character (Li, 2004) and possible value for a student's learning process (Kim, 2002; Zembylas & Michaelides, 2004). For the most part, silence is not desired and is viewed as disrespectful behavior in many western classrooms. Ollin (2008) clarifies that student and teacher talk are approached as key elements of engagement and participation with the learning process, which shows a specific set of assumptions that indicates how a formal teaching and learning setting should look. This may be problematic for many learners who do not feel comfortable or ready (many reasons can apply) to raise their voices and, thus, lose a chance to express their knowledge and contribute to the conversation. As well as marginalizing silent voices (Zembylas & Michaelides, 2004), the deficiency to implement silence and speech as equal ways to express presence and interest is problematic in other terms. First, it neglects the beneficial effects of silence on critical engagement inside and outside the classroom (Ollin, 2007). Second, the positive influence of listening and mindfulness on classroom dialogue, discussions, and other interactions is ignored (Myers, 2011). In order to create an inclusive environment for student learning and enhance critical engagement by inviting silence into the classroom, currently used pedagogies need to be reviewed.

The call for change in contemporary education has come from diverse scholarly

perspectives. Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia and Pant (2016) notes that due to the effects of globalization and unification of educational structures, the American education system is undergoing deep structural and programmatic changes—a trend that can be observed globally (Sahlberg, 2006). These changes often focused on how to prepare students for their expected role in society and how they will be successful in the work force (Sahlberg, 2006). Creating a learning and teaching environment that goes beyond these concerns and focuses on the student's growth as a person and critical citizen is, on the other hand, in urgent need of development (Ollin, 2007).

In recent decades, national and international comparisons of student learning (Bonnet, 2010) as well as discussions involving successful teaching and learning strategies to enhance economic standards, have increased (e.g. Maxwell & Wright, 2016; Orlich, 2007). It has become significantly more important to model, measure, and reach academic learning outcomes, which merely serves as a means to justify the traditional model of teaching (Coates, 2014). According to Marilee J. Bresciani Ludvik (2016), this is especially true in higher education, which has structured itself in such increasingly linear systems that it appears to have forgotten one of the greatest teaching principals of all: Individual human beings are educating individual human beings. Bresciani Ludvik (2016) notes that instead of remembering this principal, more energy and time has been contributed towards developing an education model that can manage the masses. Thus, the messy and uncertain process to support individual human development, which can lead to great rewards for all classroom participants, has been forgotten. Asking questions concerning how the individual's learning process is valued and how education is guiding students to become critical citizens, is inevitable.

In these contexts, approaching silence as an opportunity to create space for critical engagement and for the mindful reflection on new and previous ideas is intriguing. In this thesis, I aim to introduce what I call *mindful silence*, into the education and pedagogy. To invite mindful silence into teaching and learning, I will use the theory of invitational rhetoric, which provides the opportunity for the argument of this study. Foss and Griffin's (1995) invitational rhetoric approach offers an alternative to traditional rhetorical scholarship. Traditional rhetorical approaches focus on "[the] conscious intent to change others" (p. 2), and thus the "desire for control and domination" (p. 3) of the rhetor's audience. Instead, Foss and Griffin (1995) focus on *inviting* other (student) voices into the conversation by acknowledging an "invitation to understanding as a means to create a relationship rooted in equality, immanent value, and self-determination" (p. 5). In this thesis, the concept of invitational rhetoric will be connected with the approach of inviting mindful silence into the classroom as an alternative path to teach and learn. This approach includes expectations such as being open to considering new arguments and deeply listening to other's contributions, even if they differ from one's own. Inviting mindful silence is a thoughtful contribution towards developing a critical and inclusive classroom. It provides an opportunity to reconsider how silence can be understood as central to teaching and learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW: SILENCE AND PEDAGOGY

In reviewing the scholarship on silence and pedagogy, I will introduce specific sections as they appear in contemporary education literature for what they show us about dominance, controversies, and/or intriguing elements relating to the purpose of this work. First, I will explore the broad concepts of silence as a communication phenomenon overall. In doing so, I review the literature on silence concerning definitions, types, practices, and perceptions, and I connect the key arguments. Thus, this section will cover the difficulty of defining silence and the diverse forms in which it appears. I am especially interested in Van Manen's (1990) and Kenny's (2011) specifications, which I will introduce in detail. Further, I will show how silence is diversely practiced in everyday life and how it is perceived by the audience. This part will lead towards the review of silence in teaching and learning and how silence may be approached by scholars, teachers, and students.

The next section concerns silence in the field of education specifically. After the previous overview of silence, this step will cover the controversial role of silence in teaching and learning. It will show the relation of speech and silence in the classroom and give explanations for why speech may be favored and silence marginalized. I will explain key tenets of the Buddhist way of teaching and, in addition, how silence can be related to conscious decision making and active participation in learning. Reviewing silence in the classroom cannot be done without reflecting on the power relationships involved. Exploring the difference between silence as a personal choice and as an act of harm

towards others (silencing) is focused on in the last part of this section. Though this work is focusing on the active, engaging, and mindful facets of silence in pedagogy, silence will be also approached as a way to resist these power structures through breaking normative social standards regarding voice.

Concepts of Silence

To make the case for inviting silence as an act of participation in teaching and learning, it is useful to first uncover the diverse facets of silence. Finding a clear definition that describes the entire structure, meaning, and purpose of silence can quickly become a labyrinth and endless path of complexities (Zembylas & Michaelides, 2004). Dauenhauer (1980) articulates silence itself as a complex and positive phenomenon that goes beyond the widely represented western assumption. These assumptions state that silence is the opposite of speech and language (Dauenhauer, 1980; Zembylas & Michaelides, 2004). In other words, silence is commonly recognized as an omission in communicative interactions (Tannen, 1985). In essence, this common approach emphasizes that silence cannot communicate meaning nor can silence stand for a significant communication phenomenon. Kim (2002) highlights two common assumptions, which are used to explain the idea that talk is favored in many western societies. Firstly, it is assumed that individuals express themselves through speech. This means, their ideas, opinions, and identities are communicated through words. Secondly, talk is closely associated with thinking. This entails that speech is a primary medium to show engagement in a thinking process and “it is assumed that the close relationship between talking and thinking is true for everyone, and the same positive meaning of talking should be shared by everyone” (Kim, 2002, p. 828). However, many thinkers

from all over the world have supported silence as not merely the absence of speech or words. Scholars such as Heidegger, Picard, and Wittgenstein have focused on silence and its complexities in detail. Picard (1952) wrote, “When language ceases, silence begins. But it does not begin because language ceases. The absence of language simply makes the presence of silence more apparent” (p. 15). Picard understood that silence can have many meanings and can say something without the necessity of speech. According to Adam Jaworski (1993) the “main common link between speech and silence is that the same interpretive processes apply to someone’s remaining meaningfully silent in discourse as to their speaking” (p. 3). In essence, silence and speech may actually not be opposites but independent communication phenomena, that both create meaning. To view silence in a wider spectrum in society, everyday life and eventually pedagogy, it is helpful to detangle different types and notions of silence.

Definitions and Types

Understanding silence and its diversity means to break it apart in its pieces (Courtney, 1916). Emphasizing the complexity of silence, Saville-Troike (1985) argues that “silence may be used to question, promise, deny, warn, threaten, insult, request, or command, as well as to carry out various kinds of ritual interactions” (p. 11). I will explain Van Manen’s (1990) three categories of silence that are frequently used to examine silence in scholarship. First, literal silence concerns a form of strategic silence, such as the known saying, ‘silence is golden’. This said, being silent may be the most accurate choice to take in certain situations. Van Manen (1990) argues that leaving thoughts as well as opinions or feelings unsaid, can in fact be more efficient than making the mistake of giving too much or wrong information. To see the text or message as a

whole instead of concentrating on its verbal expression can create a realization that silence speaks as loudly as spoken words.

Second, the epistemological silence is the kind of silence individuals' face, when they find themselves confronted with the unspeakable. The unspeakable is a constant variable in human interaction situations. While developing the epistemological type of silence, Van Manen (1990) based his theory on Polanyi's (1958, 1969) idea of tacit knowledge. It describes the phenomenon of knowing something without having the power to articulate its meaning in words. In essence, words cannot always describe a situation or opinion. This lack of linguistic competence to communicate knowledge that is available on just the cognitive level is the alcove of epistemological silence. However, Van Manen (1990) adds that this type of silence may be just temporarily effective, until the individual learns or finds the words that are needed to express the thought.

The third type is called ontological silence. It stands for the "silence of Being or Life itself" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 114). It is based on the fundamental human providence to always return to silence. Even after the most special experiences in life, the ones with enlightening and fulfilling character, one will return to silence that can be felt as both, fulfilling and empty.

Van Manen's types of silence are a broad generalization of the many different ways, someone can and/or chooses to be silent. His approach is widely referred to in diverse scholarships and its significance in the study of silence is prominent. Nevertheless, other approaches to categorize silence are important to consider. Clair (1998) adds a fourth notion of silence to complete Van Manen's (1990) approach. The ideological silence is distinct from Van Manen's (1990) ideas and is significant in order

to examine the suppressive act of silencing individuals through dominant groups of people. Clair (1998) is emphasizing that silence can be a guard to resist power or it can be a violent barrier and action of control. Van Manen's (1990) and Clair's (1998) approaches are primarily separated from the willingness to be silent and rather focus on an outside or natural force to remain quiet. This can be observed in many traditional classrooms that use a lecturing approach to teach. In such settings, teacher talk is the norm and students are primarily expected to speak when the instructor asks them to or if an answer is inquired (Ollin, 2008; Zembylas & Michaelides, 2004). Silence thus becomes a part of authority and power relationship. In turn, Colum Kenny's (2011) research provides a number of detailed silence categories to encompass the everyday "willful" silence. Such willful silence is separated from a violent outside force and refers to the individual's choice to be silent. I name and explain some example categories that can be particularly significant for inviting silence into pedagogy.

First, the wise or virtuous silence is part of gentle and quiet communication. It provides a tool to show compassion and grows through the unwillingness to judge too harshly or definitely. The wise or virtuous silence "arises from being aware what we put into words frequently fails to express truth adequately and may be regretted" (Kenny, 2011, p. 6). Secondly, modest silence is created through one's modesty and other moral aspects. In addition, if individuals are confronted by adversity or disapproval it can become difficult to remain silent. This cunning silence is created by the person's ability to balance the usefulness of words in specific situations and is similar to Van Manen's (1990) literal silence theory. The eloquent silence is created by deep emotions such as gratitude, true love, or intense anxiety. For some, these feelings may be less meaningfully

expressed through language than through silence. Kenny (2011) adds the pregnant silence at this point, to refer to the "complete silence that is filled with the brooding presence of thoughts or feelings that one has not expressed" (Kenny, 2011, p. 22). Lastly, the satisfied silence comes into play when one feels physically and mentally in the right place and balanced with the surroundings—no words are needed in this situation.

The meanings and approaches of silence are fruitful and it is beyond the scope of this work to provide a more detailed analysis of all of them. However, after establishing an overview of frequently addressed types of silences, it is interesting to look at how people make sense of silence and how its diverse meanings can be encountered or possibly taken for granted. In the lines of silence in education, Zembylas and Michaelides (2004) raise intriguing concerns about how students encounter silence and how they may use it in class. It is not the primary purpose of this work to answer these questions but their consideration plays an important role in inviting silence into education and therefore need to be considered. The following sections give an overview about how scholarship makes sense of how individuals use and perceive silence.

Practices and Perceptions

How silence is applied and perceived by individuals is important to understand in the context of inviting silence into the classroom. Zembylas and Michaelides (2004) consider two different directions how silence can be practiced. Firstly, silence can stand alone and thus, independent as an autonomous phenomenon. In this case, silence and language do not have a relationship and are not identical. Taking this further, silence does not need the support of speech but expresses meaning on its own. This is important when inviting silence as a way of creating, processing, and transforming knowledge. Secondly,

if silence is used a part of sound (language) it cannot stand alone and cannot be revoked. In this case, silence and speech are depended on each other in order to express the message's meaning. In sum, people (students) can use silence alone or in connection with speech.

Bruneau's (2008) interest to study silence, led him to create an outline of the characteristics how most U.S. citizens use silence on a regular basis in their everyday life. He refers to silence as "deeply psychological and removes linearity, silence removes order and structure, and concerns transcendental being or consciousness" (p. 78). In other words, silence breaks the western norm to prefer verbal communication and involves active thinking and listening. Tus, a silent student cannot be limitedly assessed to the inability to communicate knowledge— she/he may carry many meanings and purposes and is silence because of various circumstances (Kim, 2002). In short, the meaning and purpose why a student or other individual remains silent is not fixed to one specific reason. Rather, the reason behind silence is fluent and depends on the specific contexts in which silence occurs (Clair, 1998; Glenn, 2004). These contexts can concern among others social, societal, cultural, racial, and behavioral backgrounds (Clair, 1998). Tannen (1985) studies conversational styles where silence is used and perceived differently by the participants, depending on their personal and communicative backgrounds (e.g. if talk is desired in the family). Saville-Troike (1985) adds the concern of silence as a sign or symbol in communicative situations and complements the general concern when a pause is actually experienced as silence. In this spirit, linguistic and language are "instruments by which humans interact and the means of constructing by what it means to be human" (Ferguson, 2012, p. 113). In short, language and voice are the birth places of

communities, political action, and living. This mindset can be observed in many education settings, where speech is privileged and silent voices are often overlooked (Hao, 2011). In essence, the valuable and creative side of silence is made nearly impossible for the students to explore. This is problematic in terms of acknowledging individual ways of thinking and learning as well as individual backgrounds.

How silence is used by students in the classroom setting is variant. Boler (2001) states that at least three primary reasons can be identified: Shyness, resistance to dominant discourses in the classroom setting, or reflection and engagement. These three reasons may derive from different intentions. However, they all carry meaning and can reflect the person's character, the perception of the learning environment, and/or the individual's critical mind. Reflecting on how silence is used and made sense of underscores that inviting silence into teaching and learning is intriguing to consider. As shown, many types of silence exist and classroom participants may be silent because of many different reasons. Nevertheless, silence seems to be addressed narrowly in the classroom and it is useful to look closer at this approach and its concerns.

Silence in Teaching and Learning Scholarship

Silence in the classroom and education scholarship is described controversially and depends mainly on linear assumptions (Li, 2004), which receives increasing critique. Silence role in education is especially controversial in terms of expectations of student participation to follow standardized norms of speech (Hao, 2011), agency (King & Sawyer, 1998), and expressing voice (Li, 2004). Li (2004) argues that questioning the status quo of silence and speech as well as their discourse in the fields of education and pedagogy can recover silenced voices and acknowledge silence as an important source of

knowledge. Zembylas and Michaelides (2004) discover how students experience silence and the favor of talk in the classroom setting. Favoring talk means ironically to silence the silence. Furthermore, Zembylas and Michaelides (2004) raise many questions, such as how and/or can a teacher justify if a student remains silent because of being shy, lazy, or resistance of authority? Can a student aim to make a political stand with being silent? Does silence mean that the student cannot put ideas into the right words (yet)? Zembylas and Michaelides (2004) emphasize that education studies ignore the value of silence in pedagogy and thus, its power to respect the development of the self. In addition, silence can be a difficult medium in the classroom if it is used to practice authority, harm, and/or power over a silenced individual (Ferguson, 1999). Thus, I address how silence can occur in the classroom and how silence can create power dynamics between participants.

(De)Valuing Silence in Pedagogy

The role of silence in the school culture is ambiguous and significant to study (Li, 2004). Zembylas and Michaelides (2004) stress the critique that teachers assess silence too one-sided and do not value its creative character. Acknowledging silence as solely a factor of marginalization, self-denial, immaturity or dependence is just reflecting the traditional western view of silence in pedagogy (Yancey & Spooner, 1994). Zembylas and Michaelides's (2004) study is using the Eastern Buddhist concept of teaching to widen the focus of silence in pedagogy. The Buddhist traditions show distinct differences to western tactics. Firstly, silence is acknowledged as empowering and expressive. Secondly, the western controversy between the role of silence and talk is not emphasized and thus, neither is favored over the other. By doing so, Buddhists are able to take away the fixation of negative perceptions about silence and emphasize its positive character in

specific situations. Lastly, the traditions show a certain curiosity to explore how silence can benefit pedagogical practices and how it can enrich the student's and teacher's experience of learning and teaching. By studying the mystical perspective on silence, as it is used in many eastern cultures, it is important to know that silence is not argued to be a strict refusal or denial of speaking. Rather, silence might be the best response in certain situations "because it is only in silence that any possible meaning can be found" (Zembylas & Michaelides, 2004). However, it is not denied that silence can be the least appropriate response in other situations.

King and Sawyer (1998) acknowledge that certain pedagogy studies focus on making students more "mindful of their communication behaviors" (p. 333). Such studies have a significant function in supporting the development of a more conscious society. Being mindful of what is said and how it is said can make a significant difference in people's interactions. Small changes that seem to be unnecessary to mention can support a more egalitarian society. Changing communication habits towards more mindful interactions can be one element of such a transforming approach. In these lines, forming a critical mind and develop self-critic can arguably happen as much within language as through silence. Hao (2011) says that "silence could foster meaningful pedagogical interactions between teachers and students" (p. 275). Knowing that most of the student's emotional and thoughtful communication takes place without verbal expressions (Gilmore, 1985), shines additional light on silence and other non-verbal tactics in pedagogy.

To conclude this section with the words of Zembylas and Michaelides (2004): "Educators have the responsibility to create a safe place for our students by valuing

silence and by incorporating into our classrooms the time and space necessary to experience the pedagogical values of silence” (p. 205). Li (2004) suggests that pedagogy scholars and educators step away from silencing silence in the classroom because with valuing speaking over silence, teachers miss out on and limit specific pedagogical opportunities. These opportunities can concern inviting learners to engage in mindful dialogic and rhetorical moments as well as the developing critical thinking and questioning habits.

The critic on silence as a beneficial tool (in education) continues “more specifically to cast silence as a condition that the patriarchy consciously or unconsciously manipulates in order to maintain male privilege” (Kalamaras, 1994, p. 2). Privilege and power are two phenomena that influence the classroom environment in many ways and include the linear use and marginalization of silence. To change the status quo and invite silence as a way of understanding ideas and eventually agency and voice, power structures that influence silence in everyday life and especially the classroom are recognized.

Silence and Power in the Classroom

Silence appears in various contexts of power, resistance, and gender issues. As Bruneau (2008) says, silence can be “[a] method of persuasion to restrict talk, motion, behavior, and the muting of many forms of expression” (p. 83). Bruneau (2008) further explains that silence is traditionally used by a teacher as a way to ground and support hierarchical power relationships. This can have negative effects on the classroom environment and eventually silence student voices. However, silence cannot just appear

in the form of silencing but also as a way to resist power and norms of speech. Students can use silence as resistance such as purposefully not participating in class discussions.

The least accepted reason for a student to be silent in the classroom is being silent as a mean of confrontation. The situation may be intensified if the student also uses provocative gestures and mimics, such as smiling or eye rolling (Gilmore, 1985). Using silence to show power and control in a situation of authority is what Gilmore (1985) calls, “stylized sulking”. Gilmore (1985) argues that a situation in which the learner resists the teacher’s authority with being silent is difficult to assess for the instructor because his/her position of power cannot force the student to speak. When refusing to speak, the student resists to engage in the linguistic order of the classroom, which can be perceived negatively by the teacher as a threat or lack of respect.

Standardized norms of privileging speech are socially created and emerge through how individuals create meanings and associations in a continual exchange between their own histories and the environment that is socially, culturally, and historically formed. Both elements are formed by the individuals and influence them (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Meanings and associations are not merely created through discourse but is complemented through silence. In this sense, “the ambiguous value of silence can be seen to arise either from what is assumed to be evidenced or from what is assumed to be omitted” (Tannen, 1985, p. 94). If teachers assess moments of silence as primarily a force related subject and aggressive resistance against authorities, the communicative relationship between the teacher and the student is likely to break down and resolve in separation and partitioning (Griffin, 1992). On the other hand, if it is acknowledged that silence can operate to create and improve the self and the learning environment, it does

not always have to be encountered with fear and overcoming power. Similarly, Michael Foucault (1980) asserts that “silence and secrecy are a shelter for power, anchoring its prohibitions, but they also loosen its hold and provide for relatively obscure areas of tolerance” (p. 101). Taking this into account, the existence of silence therefore is creating an alternative form to resist. This can mean to reject verbal participation as a standardized practice of community building, identity formation, and norm setting. In the case of identity formation resistance becomes associated with being silent as a way to reject social discourses and power that refer to one can only shape her or his identity through talk.

In terms of education, where power relationships are organized through strict norms, Gilmore (1985) fears that the silent student resist the authority of the teacher while knowing that the teacher’s power does not allow to force the student to speak up. However, some scholars encourage educators to try and deeply understand the reason of the student’s silence. Rather than immediately supposing silence as a form of neglecting respect. Resisting linguistic norms of society and embracing the individual’s choice of silence needs to be analyzed within individual situations and perspectives (Hao, 2011).

In sum, silence can have a motivation of resistance towards any institution that is build up on verbal participation (Ferguson, 1999). A key distinction to recognize silence as a creating phenomenon is to separate between silence as a refusal to engage and as a thoughtful process of creating new meanings.

AN INVITATION TO TEACH AND LEARN DIFFERENTLY

In the following, invitational rhetoric will be introduced as a framework to invite alternative pedagogy approaches into modern education approaches. As reviewed, contemporary western pedagogy approaches benefit speech and talk but often restrict the power of silence. This may result through a preference of talk over silence and supports the status quo of the current western society (Hao, 2011). To invite silence into pedagogy as an important part means to distinguish between diverse silence types (the positive and negative) and focus on inviting, respecting, and listening to different voices that challenge one's own beliefs and enhance critical thinking. To archive this goal, the literature of invitational rhetoric will be introduced to bridge the gap between contemporary pedagogy and inviting silence.

Invitational Rhetoric's Relationship to Silence

The concept of invitational rhetoric emphasizes that a deep understanding of the meanings other people believe in is the “most productive endeavor and that a profound understanding of other people might inform our own choices in important ways” (Bone, Griffin, Scholz, 2008, p. 457). According to this, invitational rhetoric can be used to improve classroom practices and invite silent voices into the conversation. The traditional U.S. American classroom is typically host to competition and thus separation—valuing student competing with each other as the best way to motivate and learn (Gabriel & Smithson, 1990). Tompkins (1990) argues: “I’ve come to realize that the classroom is a microcosm of the world; it is the chance we have to practice whatever ideals we may

cherish. The kind of classroom situation one creates is the acid test of what it is one really stands for” (p. 656). Using invitational rhetoric concepts in the classroom can transform the learning environment into a noncompetitive culture that aims to include all student voices in an environment of respect and tolerance, and deep understanding (Kirtley, 2014).

Foss and Griffin’s (1995) theory offers an opportunity to consider how to invite students to practice and understand silence, instead of privileging talk and verbal presence. It provides a feministic alternative model to address the status quo of traditional rhetorical theory that is focusing on rhetoric as a medium of persuasion. Traditional scholarship is emphasizing that the overall purpose of rhetoric is to change other’s perspective towards one’s own. Thus, interactions have been focused on as “essentially and primarily in terms of, persuasion, influence, and power (Shepherd, 1992, p. 204). As addressed in the former section, rhetoric in the classroom is traditionally approach to give information to a student, who is expected eventually to respond in some sort of verbal communication (Ollin, 2008). To address the persuasive character of traditional rhetoric, invitational rhetoric is foregrounding the creation of relationships that are grounded in equality, immanent value, and self-determination. By doing so, Foss and Griffin’s (1995) invite other (student) voices and give them the chance to be heard and clearly understood. Invitational rhetoric is in essence a concept of sharing one’s perspectives as an invitation to consider and understand, instead of wanting to change the audiences’ perspective definitely (Kirtley, 2014). In these lines, the speaker (student/teacher) does not “have the right to claim that their experiences or perspectives are superior to those of their audience members” (Foss & Griffin, 1995 p. 6). This is interesting to consider when making the

point for recognizing silence as a way to express and transform knowledge. Silence and to be silent then, becomes a purposeful choice for the individual (Ollin, 2008).

The three main elements of feminism can be discovered in Foss and Griffin's original work from 1995, as the base of invitational rhetoric. They are "explicitly challenge the positive value the patriarchy accords to changing and thus dominating others" (p. 4). Equality is the highest valued concept and aims to make a "commitment to the creation of relationships of equality to the elimination of the dominance and elitism that characterizes most human relationships" (p. 4). In essence, efforts to receive power over someone by oppressing him or her (with speech) is not a condition that will lead towards a relationship of equality. The second element is in acknowledging the immanent value of "all living beings" (p. 4) in the world. This means, all beings have a unique worth and need to be seen and approached as individuals that all have rights and self-worth (Bone, Griffin, Scholz, 2008). Neglecting the immanent value of a student and trying to change it by primarily assessment her/his knowing through verbal participation, can hurt the student's uniqueness and chance to make sense of critical issues.

The third component is self-determination that "typically comprises a feminist world-view" (Foss & Griffin, 1995, p. 4). It is based on the understanding to deeply respect the other and allows the individual to make their own decision and choices. In terms of creating and assessing knowledge in pedagogy, this entails to invite students into practices and tactics that embrace mindful silence. In essence, Foss and Griffin (1995) argue that the two primary rhetorical components of invitational rhetoric are to offer perspectives and to create external conditions that give others the chance to present their perspectives and ideas in an atmosphere of absolute respect and equality. Foss and Griffin

(1995) say: “Inviting another into one’s world to see something through one’s own eyes does not attempt to judge or denigrate others’ perspectives but is open to and tries to appreciate and validate those perspectives, even if they differ dramatically” (p. 5).

Establishing this environment is necessary for inviting silence into the classroom and to emphasize that silent perspectives can be thoughtfully prepared, thorough, and passionate.

I value the theory of invitational rhetoric, as it is introduced by Foss and Griffin (1995), to provide an opportunity to consider how silence can be invited to complement existing pedagogy approaches and how this could look like in theory, as well as how the implications can look like. Furthermore, it provides guidelines that contribute to shape the form of silence, I aim to introduce in this paper. A silence that implements the thoughtful, purposeful, and sometimes strategic ways of critically considering information, multiple perspectives, and one’s own positionality(s) in the classroom.

Inviting Mindful Silence: Examining Silence in Pedagogy

The foregoing reviewed literature shows some challenges that are faced concerning silence in teaching and learning. These challenges range from marginalizing quiet or silent voices and favoring speech as a way to participate in the classroom to assessing silence in diverse ways. It continues towards acknowledging that the goal to support a student’s critical thinking skills is in some ways complicated. Pedagogy scholars have started the attempt to answer some of these questions by advertising verbal participation as an overall strategy to enhance students’ agency and expression of knowledge and learning. However, after highlighting that speech cannot be the only way

to assess and create ideas and that silence is more than empty space and denial, the positive outcomes of silence need to be further acknowledged in pedagogy.

To avoid a misuse of silence as a way to marginalize a student's voice and approach silence in terms of silencing, a specific and active form of silence is aimed to be introduced in this thesis. Foss and Griffin (1995) highlight the openness people have to engage in, to discover other's meanings and to create an equal and mindful understanding environment to share positions. Tannen (1985) and Allen (1978) encourage to view silence as a way to explore the self and personal positions. These aspects underline the value of mindful engagement and attentive silence. To encounter this, it is approached to look at how frequently and contemporary used pedagogy approaches make sense of silence. By taking this further, the components of silence, which lead towards active engagement and learning, will be summarized and introduced as elements of what will be called "mindful silence". The first research question to explore is consequently:

RQ1: How is silence incorporated into existing approaches to teaching and learning?

The need for a pedagogy of silence has been addressed by a small group of scholars (e.g. Berto & Barbiero, 2016; Kim, 2002; Ollin, 2008; Zembylas & Michaelides, 2004). However, a specific approach how to put this need into a distinct theory by still acknowledging that modern education approaches show effective tenets, is missing. Besides making a case for mindful silence, its elements, role, and where it is coming from with research question one, this study further aims to discover how mindful silence could look like in pedagogy and what the implications are. Therefore, the second and third research questions are:

RQ2: How can mindful silence be invited into all relevant approaches to pedagogy in meaningful ways?

RQ3: What are the implications of centralizing mindful silence in teaching and learning?

I will explore these questions through an evaluation of four contemporary approaches to pedagogy, as based on a review of literature that was conducted within an exhaustive research on frequently used education approaches. These four approaches are active learning, critical pedagogy, performative pedagogy, and contemplative teaching and learning. They appeared to be frequently used and cited in modern education research and address silence in diverse and/or complementing ways. I seek to examine the pedagogical texts of these four approaches through an interpretive lens to identify and explain each text's articulation of the role of silence in its associated approach to pedagogy. The pedagogical texts were chosen through an extensive search for literature explaining each approach to pedagogy and to summarize their major tenets. Resulting are the texts that were centrally and most frequently cited across explanations of each type of pedagogy. I researched these texts primarily through looking at university library databases, through searching in google scholar for the four pedagogy approaches, and through seeking suggestions from teaching and learning professionals at the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at Boise State University.

To explore the first research question, I will analyze the pedagogical texts in a two-step practice. The first step includes an interpretive look at the four approaches and their pedagogical texts in terms of how they address silence as a way to enhance learning.

A qualitative, interpretive approach is used because of its usefulness in interpreting the pedagogical texts as explained in the following.

Interpretation involves the process of constructing new meaning through insights from established facts (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017). In essence, interpreting concerns the process in which researchers assign meaning to the discourse from one original context and translate its meaning to another context (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). It allows the researcher to create a deep understanding of the texts and to move away from strictly decoding original intentions and/or unchangeable meanings of one work, but to self-develop new meanings that are applicable for the actual context (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017). This is important to consider in this work, because a new theory of mindful silence is aimed to be developed, which requires certain flexibility in pulling aspects from different approaches together and review them in the context of this work.

Furthermore, Lindlof and Taylor (2011) summarize key characteristics and commitments of a qualitative interpretive approach. According to the authors, realities are unique, plural, simultaneously, and local phenomena occurring between human interactions through use of symbols, sense, and choice making. The knowledge about social reality is developed by interrelationships between the researcher and the study. In short, interpretive researchers are the methodological instruments for the study (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Thus, interpretive researchers have to keep in mind that meaning is created in the spaces between the text structures and the researcher's identity is invented and contingent, but not autonomous. In short, using an interpretive approach will allow me to view the individual pedagogy approaches separated from the pressure of society, history and overall social environment, but it will also allow me to see these aspects in

one picture together. By using the key contributions that were collected and interpreted in the first step, I aim to receive a detailed overview of how centralizing mindful silence currently looks like and/or could look like in contemporary scholarship.

The second research question concerns the role and meaning of mindful silence in contemporary pedagogy. Mindful silence is a specific form of silence that I aim to define through analyzing and pulling together the sections of the already proposed literature and findings of the proposed examination of pedagogy texts and their take on silence and silent engagement. The parts that consider silence as a mindful and creating medium to engage in the present moment will be especially considered at this point. The analysis of this question will implement how mindful silence looks like, where it is coming from, its meaning and elements.

This knowledge will lead me towards discussing the third research question: What are the implications of centralizing mindful silence in teaching and learning? This question approaches why centralizing mindful silence matters, how the implications of a pedagogy that centralizes mindful silence can look like in and potentially outside of the classroom, what can this approach potentially do for a democratic citizenship, and other occurring questions. I propose to discuss potential answers to this question after analyzing the four education approaches and their selected pedagogical texts and interpret their takes on silence for a new theory of mindful silence.

Considering Four Specific Approaches to Pedagogy

Four specific approaches to pedagogy appear to address silence in meaningful ways. I chose to review pedagogical texts from the following four approaches to pedagogy: active learning, critical pedagogy, contemplative, and performative pedagogy.

These four approaches to pedagogy were selected after an extensive review of teaching and learning scholarship in which they appeared to most frequently incorporate speech and silence in significant—albeit different—ways. Throughout the review of literature, it became apparent that critical pedagogy was especially aimed at attempting to question the status quo and advocate for change via student learning (Freire, 2008). However, critical pedagogy relies heavily on speech participation to pursue this goal, which implies that students must speak up to assess their learning and understanding (Hao, 2011).

Active learning pedagogy follows an approach to teaching and learning that encourages the students to be engaged in a variety of activities that are especially created to practice communication with each other and support collaboration (Faust & Paulson, 1998). Thus, an alternative approach that positions silence as an equally important aspect to invite into teaching and learning is also important. Contemplative pedagogy, for example, addresses how to integrate silence, holistic, and self-reflective lenses into the classroom but not necessarily its relationship to speech. While contemplative pedagogy practices have gained increased attention in teaching and learning scholarship more recently (Grace, 2011), its appearance in higher education practices still seems to be missing in most classrooms. Lastly, performative pedagogy is an approach that invites teaching and learning as performances to be focused on with a focus on active presentation that does not highlight silence as an integral part of its focus (Hao, 2011). I will next present an overview of each of these approaches to pedagogy as a way to discuss key assumptions as presented in pedagogical texts frequently cited in teaching and learning scholarship about each approach.

Critical Pedagogy

The principal statement of approaches to critical pedagogy, driven by critical scholars like Paolo Freire (1995/1998), Henry Giroux (1998), and Peter McLaren (1997), claims that education is inherently political. Thus, these scholars and others conclude, educators and students together should strive to engage the educational process as transformative (Giroux, 1988), culturally significant (Freire, 1998), and well-poised to address the “injustices, inequalities, and myths of an often oppressive world” (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 4). The roots of critical pedagogy treat all human beings, and thus learners, as living in cultural contexts. While people are influenced by the conditions of the situations within which they find themselves, they also influence their larger cultural contexts by engaging them in everyday life. Thus, a primary purpose of critical pedagogy is to engage students “where they are” about social, political, and economic positions as a way to solve oppression and injustice (McLaren, 1997).

Critical pedagogy is grounded in critical theory (Giroux, 2011; Gruenewald, 2003). McLaren (1997) as a “way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the reproduction of knowledge, the institutional structures of school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society and nation state” (p. 1). Labaree (1997) explains that like many other influential US institutions, education and learning have come to promote equality while ironically working against it in their everyday practices and policies. Labaree (1997) names three main goals of critical pedagogy: (1) democratic equality, (2) social efficiency, and (3) social mobility. These goals demonstrate how the nature of socio-political education ultimately change based on other matters such as whether schooling is public or private,

education approaches are socio-political or market-based, or how education is valued in the larger society within which it is engaged.

Critical pedagogy has arguably strong ties to Marxist and neo-Marxist ideology. Gruenewald (2003) describes these connections as visible in critical pedagogy's "transformational educational response to institutional and ideological domination, especially under capitalism" (p. 4). Burbules and Berk (1999) argue that critical pedagogy is an approach within educational institutions and other media that questions inequalities embedded in larger systemic power relations, exposes the false belief that opportunity and advantage are the same for all students, and reveals the real life dangers of failing to question larger social systems when they do not protect all of their members. Thus, critical pedagogy is often referred to as student-centered rather than instructor-centered, suggesting that students should always work *with* instructors to co-create meaningful perspective-taking opportunities and sense-making skills rather than simply regurgitate the knowledge and perspectives of their instructors (Freire, 1995). Critical pedagogy calls for constantly questioning the status quo with the idea that what is can always be better (McLaren, 1997).

Critical pedagogy is not without its critics, however. In terms of silence, the benefits of listening rather than questioning may ultimately end up—perhaps ironically—marginalizing certain voices in its insistence that the status quo be questioned as an external performance. Hao (2011) points out that critical pedagogy literature in the United States emphasizes the importance of "encouraging marginalized students to participate verbally as a way to instill knowledge and liberate themselves from dominant discourses" (p. 276). He goes on to criticize critical pedagogy's propensity to refer to teachers that

follow the traditional approaches to teaching and learning as the “knower” (and thus lecturer or presenter of information) and students who silently listen to those lectures as “learners” who are passive collectors of information. To meet this concern of passive students, scholars have increasingly pointed out the benefits of active learning pedagogy and its approaches have been invited into many classrooms.

Active Learning Pedagogy

Over the past decade, significant changes have been made in the classroom settings across disciplines. From strict lecturing and knowledge confrontation from the teachers side with students as passive listeners, the interest in creating new, active, project based learning styles have become focus (Niemi, 2002). Active learning has grown into a widely approached teaching technique to enhance student centered learning and decentralize the instructor’s presence as a lecturer. The concept is defined after an approach of doing by being aware and thinking about the involved actions (Niemi, 2002). Or as Faust and Paulson (1998) point out, it addresses “any learning activity engaged in by students in a classroom other than listening passively to an instructor’s lecture” (p. 4). The concept follows a wide variety of learning principles, which draw on the definition of learning. Learning here is defined as a “process that leads to change, which occurs as a result of experience and increases the potential for improved performance and future learning” (Ambrose et al., 2010, p. 3). It is touching on the “new meta-knowledge of teaching and learning, new concepts of learning environments and new knowledge of learner diversity have offered several initiatives to seek new practices at schools” (Niemi, 2002). Metacognitive skills are tenets of active learning and a large amount of research on these techniques has been conducted (Biggs, 1988; Borkowski, 1996). Ruohotie

(1994) states, that the term metacognition is primarily used to define the conscious selection and assessment of strategies in learning. It can be separated into knowledge and skills. The knowledge is based on the individual's understanding and his or her own learning strategies and processes as well as the understanding of the self as an individual learner. Knowledge "directs choice of the strategy to be applied in any given situation" (Ruohotie, 1994, p. 33).

The active learning approach offers many methods and classroom strategies that engage students in a sense-making progress. The learners are motivated to solve problems, question, experiment, explore, create, and eventually communicate their answering process in the process of solving issues (Webb, 2016). Chickering and Gamson (1987) point out that students "do not learn much just by sitting in class listening to teachers, memorizing prepackaged assignments, and vitting out answers" (p. 3). Rather, students learn by "talking about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, apply it to their daily, lives" (p. 3). Thus, the information needs to become a part of the student.

Tileston (2007) explains that the recent changes in education practices are due to the result of changing demographics, advancements of technology and cognitive information processing research. Furthermore, the high economic pressures in higher education setting the pace. Today's workspace is increasingly demanding for team-based and collaborative work strategies. Companies are looking for creative, and collaborative professionals who can pick up the time pressure of the temporary fast-paced society and economy. The educational response is advertising flexible, multimedia, and creative group experiences in the classrooms. Another key approach of active learning theories,

centralizes the quality of learning that depends inherently on the learner's skills to control their own learning orientation, to develop questioning skills, to learn to reflect on themselves, and control their own learning path (Niemi, 2002). This is acknowledged by using collaborative, active, visual, and multidimensional activities to encourage the student's motivation and concentration. Thus, reflection, self-understanding, and awareness of the learning environment play a great role in active learning pedagogy. However, alternative learning opportunities – other than collaborative and speech centered activities – can support learners to reach this stake. In this sense, and to invite new and active silent approaches into the classroom, contemplative pedagogy offers many insights and practical examples.

Contemplative Pedagogy

Contemplative pedagogy offers diverse methods that enhances the student's learning environment and situation on many levels and offers a welcoming take on silence. Zajonc (2013) summarizes, "contemplative practices support the development of student attention, emotional balance, empathetic connection, compassion, and altruistic behavior, while also providing new pedagogical techniques that support creativity and the learning of course content" (p. 83). The theoretical approach that roots contemplative pedagogy assures that voluntary attention, balance of emotions, individual insights, and compassion are valuable aspects in learning and are able to be developed through continuously practice. Zajonc (2013) further explains that contemplative pedagogy strengthens experience through repeated engagement and therefore guides students to use their personal capacities for insights that will help them to reach a true understanding of the material content and may assist in the unique moment of discovering new knowledge.

Kahane (2009) adds that a pedagogy of multicultural society requires that students be supported in contemplative practices to support mindful attention to their own personal experiences in variable areas.

Contemplative pedagogy aims several pedagogical goals and is largely empirical. It aims to investigate the truth and reasoning of a claim through the student's own inner research and first-hand experience (Grace, 2011). Modern research shows that contemplative practice, even if merely performed for small periods, improves the student's attention (Tang et al., 2007), cognition, and cognitive flexibility (Tang et al., 2007). Such pedagogical practices may be used in any field of higher and/or other professional education level from hard sciences to social sciences, liberal arts, law or other areas of study, contemplative exercises promise to support the learning success and satisfaction. Stress reduction, mastering of the course content, strengthening attention, or supporting emotional balance are factors that can benefit (Zajonc, 2013). Contemplative practices in education vary strongly, including silence, sitting meditation, compassion practices, walking meditation, deep listening, mindfulness, yoga, calligraphy, guided meditations, nature observation, self inquiry, and many others (Grace, 2011). The roots of these practices circulate especially around mindfulness, concentration, open awareness, and sustaining contradictions (Zajonc, 2013).

Mindfulness may be the most commonly used classroom contemplative practice. It is a Western invention, but rooted in the traditions of the Eastern world, as the Zajonc (2013) explains. It consists of moment-to-moment experiences, nonjudgmental awareness, and is often applied by control of breathing and/or mediation. Concentration is a related practice that emphasizes the total attention on breathing or indeed any other

object. In doing so, concentration supports making concrete observations or performing and creating actual discursive reasons about specific aspects. Open awareness is often experienced as creativity. In contrast to concentration, open awareness offers space to explore in diverse, more individually open directions and be aware of diverse options. The last component is sustaining contradictions. An especially demanding but significant exercise for the imagination of the self and others. Instead of seeking to solve contradiction, it may be better to keep it and even embrace the experience of how two opposites can be true in some way at the same time (Zajonc, 2013). Thus, contemplative pedagogy strives for complete attentiveness of all participants and strives for insights and the full comprehension that prevent ignorance. Grace (2011) notes more examples of possible practices, such as (guided) meditation, compassion practices, walking meditation, deep listening, mindfulness, yoga, art, nature observation, self-reflection and many others.

As mentioned, contemplative pedagogies include a wide variety of practices, but the most characteristic practice and experience is meditation. Kahane (2009) suggests that contemplative pedagogies can help students and teachers to recognize the processes of thought, judgment, and reaction which may keep them captured within their own privilege that can resolve unknowing or even ignorance. Grace (2011) adds that contemplative pedagogy is not about a specific goal, a greatly planned outcome, or even big effort. Rather it is about being in the moment and living the lifelong path of self-growth. Thus, it can reach a beneficial presence in the world for all learners and their environment. In order to invite silence into the classroom, it has to be accepted and taught as an active and intentional approach of learning and transforming knowledge. As I will

address in the following, performative pedagogy offers an approach to bridge the gap between silence as a form of laziness and undesired classroom phenomenon and silence as an intentional, creating, and active performance.

Performative pedagogy

Performative pedagogy puts a focus on the questions how human performances are made sense of in and outside the classroom and how identities and bodies are understood as political and ideological actors, as well as (free) individuals (Hao, 2011). It points out which role performance plays in understanding identities and bodies within the context of politics and ideologies. Performativity is an associated part of performative pedagogy and can be understood as conventionalized repetition of acts (performances) that are constructed through social discourses (Butler, 1990). Hao (2011) explains that the classroom is a place where students and teachers create and maintain an educational culture. By doing so, the classroom setting becomes a place of individual and social performances, which can include silence.

In short, the education environment is created through individual social performances that are engaged in practices of diverse relational levels and are influenced by normalized behavioral standards. In terms of silence in the classroom, expecting students to verbally participate is a “performative classroom act” (Hao, 2011), which has been standardized in western academic environments. Thus, silent students are often assessed as behaving inappropriately. Alexander, Anderson and Gallegos (2004) makes clear that with understanding teaching as an event of performance, it appears that teaching means doing something by also being the repetitive act of doing, which holds its existential and practical existence. Performance in pedagogy functions as a “hetorical

construction of social influence” (Alexander, Anderson & Gallegos, 2004, p. 2), which helps to understand how classroom norms such as verbal participation and silence influences how student’s identities and knowledge are viewed and assessed. Furthermore, performative pedagogy points out that human beings are ever changing and constantly working with contradictory situations, which make them resist closure. Thus, identities are seen as steadily changing phenomena that can appear in multiple forms and are shaped by the situation they find themselves in (Pineau, 1998).

Connecting performance research with pedagogy creates a certain flexibility for teachers and students, to express themselves and their knowledge in diverse ways, which potentially can vary from behavioral standards. In these lines, Hao (2011) uses performative pedagogy to critique contemporary critical pedagogy and stresses the approach that silence should be understood as a performative phenomenon. In doing so, various performances (types) of silence need to be acknowledged in order to value different beings and ideologies that students are embedded in. Such an approach offers a space to not merely reduce silence to a negative attribute in education, such as the absence of speech, but honors its practical, active, and multifunctional value (Hao, 2011). Warren (2004) states, “[p]erformative pedagogy’s strength lies in the two axes that make up its educational thrust: a performative mode of analysis and a performative mode of engagement” (p. 100). In essence, performative pedagogy requires to acknowledge that human actions are performances themselves and that individuals are social actors, which always try to establish their everyday lives (Ellsworth, 1997).

A pedagogy of performance also focuses on the learner’s long term success. This entails being active in learning activities and getting to know how to engage best through

the individual participation that they embody (Warren, 2004). Another intriguing point about performative pedagogy is the connection between the student and the institution in which the student must challenge the status quo and critically question it (Warren, 2004). Finally, performative pedagogy acknowledges to embrace and observe the performativity of everyday classroom experiences and emphasizes how actions (being silent) shape and influence the environment, individuals, and the learning outcome (Hao, 2011). As Alexander, Anderson and Gallegos (2004) highlight, teaching is a collaborative act brought to life by at least five interdependent variables:

1. The presence of acting/active bodies;
2. The practice of audiencing (or receptive and reciprocal enactment between teachers and students);
3. The aestheticized transactional communication process of any theatricalized event that is crafted with intent with many backstage performances that affect content, form, and function;
4. The overarching political influence of society on curriculum; and
5. The tension and tensiveness of cultural and political resistance to and of knowledge negotiated with passion and necessary compassion (p. 4).

In sum, performative pedagogy offers a unique view on classroom performances and thus can create space to assess silence not merely in terms of traditional education scholarship but also as an active performance. Thus, silence receives the acceptance to create and expresses culturally, politically, and ideologically positions, which can eventually change the status quo.

After briefly explaining these four chosen approaches to pedagogy, a selection of scholars most significant to their development, and central tenets revealed across their central pedagogical texts, I will now more specifically focus on how silence appears—or does not appear—across all four approaches. In doing so, I aim to reveal how silence is addressed in both theory and in practice. Furthermore, I aim to identify how silence is *not* addressed across these approaches to pedagogy such that I may discuss new possibilities for how silence can be integrated into contemporary approaches to pedagogy.

CENTRAL TENETS OF SILENCE ACROSS CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO PEDAGOGY

While reviewing literature focused on these four approaches to pedagogy, I searched for a connection (or disassociation) between each approach and the role of silence in teaching and learning. Each statement that revealed such a connection was put into an Excel table and reviewed such that they could be grouped according to their overall purpose and meaning. Creating this table did not just support me in terms of organization. It made it possible to pull the parts from the pedagogical texts that address silence to review them separately from the whole pedagogical text. By doing so, themes such as “silence as critical thinking” and “silence as form of individuality” emerged. For example, McLaren (1997) states: "Critical pedagogy is a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society, and nation state" (p. 1). Even though silence is not explicitly addressed as a particular part of critical pedagogy literature overall, critical thinking and transforming knowledge can arguably take place in silence. This creates an opportunity for a more active form of silence to be incorporated into critical pedagogy than is currently in place. Performative education, in comparison, claims that it can "shape the way we conceptualize silence not only in terms of what is at stake but also who is implicated culturally, politically, and ideologically" (Hao, 2011, p. 273).

My evaluation of the commonalities across the silence-related exemplars pulled from all four literatures produced patterns that I both categorized and interpreted. I color coded each category into its own color to make the category's appearance frequency within and across each education approach visual. This coding process enabled me to summarize the most prevalent categories for each approach, describe them, and note unique findings, possible connections, and other interpretively developed ideas that supported and/or added to the understanding of my research questions.

The findings of this interpretive review will be named and explained in the following sections. Firstly, I will point out the individual findings of each education approach. Secondly, I will present the findings across these approaches.

Silence in Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy does not inclusively address silence as an active and positive phenomenon in the classroom. A positive perspective on silence was not mentioned in the reviewed pedagogical texts overall. Instead, silence is acknowledged as disturbing the classroom norms (e.g. verbal participation) and as a state, which has to be overcome. A majority of critical pedagogy scholars address silence in form of "silencing another" and/or "being silenced by another", the opposite perspective of where this project attempts to posit silence. Nevertheless, by looking closer at the principals of critical pedagogy, the pedagogical texts showed that the values and priorities of a critical approach can arguably connect with a thoughtful and active form of silent engagement. This connection can be observed within the following categories, which show how silence can be interpretively viewed in critical pedagogy. Three major occurring categories could be defined:

Silence can potentially appear in critical pedagogy as a practice 1) to engage the student in critical reflection and participation, 2) to foster social change, and 3) as an alternative expression of resistance and empowerment. These categories invite an intriguing perspective on silence in critical pedagogy, which will now be defined more closely. The key purposes of critical pedagogy were addressed above and showed the importance of critical actions that change the status quo of society, power relations, and challenging the students to create these actions. In addition, according to the pedagogical texts, critical pedagogy does not associate itself as an advocate of pure critical thinking. However, by interpreting the above stated categories it appeared to be clear that silence is (un/intentionally) taking on a significant role in this pedagogy.

Silence in critical pedagogy can be viewed as 1) engaging the student in critical reflection and participation in the classroom. With calling for reflection, sense making, criticizing, and taking actions, silence seemed to be the invisible partner that is supporting critical education in its goal for critical acting and discussion. Along these lines, Freire (1995) states that “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (p. 17) are central parts of critical pedagogy. In addition, McLaren (1997) says that “critical pedagogy and multicultural education need to acknowledge the specificity of local struggles around the micro politics of race, class, gender and sexual formation” (p. 1). Both arguments do not address silence literally but touch on higher-level thinking and learning, which can potentially be reached in silence. Instead of taking the presented status quo for granted, the arguments incorporate critical questioning and development of new perspectives. Grace (2007) says that contemporary circumstances in society, politics,

and other social levels "challenged us to announce a different reality, one that empowers learner-workers as critical questioning subjects who focus on their location in life, learning, and work" (p. 96). Critical questioning and being aware of individual circumstances are the mindful parts of silence, if it is taught as such. Then, silence can support the student to see the wider picture instead of focusing on her or his singular views. These practices can arguably be practiced in silence, where the student can reflect on (e.g., "acknowledge" or "perceive") the situation and form an individual perspective before it can be discussed with others.

While reviewing the critical pedagogical texts, silence also appeared to 2) foster social change and thus, prepare activities that enhance the status quo of society. McLaren and Smith (2010) acknowledge that "in the realm of public education, critical pedagogy calls for teachers and students to abandon a banking education approach and move toward one that is more dialogic and emancipatory"(p. 332). Furthermore, Freire (2004) avowed: "I am convinced that the first condition for being able to accept or reject one form or another of manifesting change is being open to the new, to the different, to innovation, to doubt" (p. 12). Similar to the first category, critical pedagogical texts can include silence as a way to critically reflect but here we see the added element of making mindful actions through this reflection. These actions can be the start for well thought through change. In addition, Freire's (2004) call for change through innovation and being open minded connects to the proposed theory of inviting silence as an alternative to speech into the classroom.

Silence in critical pedagogy can also be seen as 3) an alternative expression of resistance and empowerment by the individual. Across critical scholarship, silencing is

traditionally viewed as something that is “done” to someone, an outcome of violence and oppression. The intention to silence others, and thus create silent individuals, concerns what I will call *violent silence*. Giroux (2011) notes: "Critical pedagogy takes as one of its central projects an attempt to be discerning and attentive to those places and practices in which social agency has been denied" (p. 3). Thus, the call for “speaking up” and fighting the standards of oppression (e.g. silenced people) in and outside the classroom appeared to make sense. However, silence in its diversity can also be a practice that is intentionally and willfully done by someone. Giroux (2011) says: "The fundamental challenge facing educators within the current age of neoliberalism is to provide the conditions for students to address how knowledge is related to the power of both self-definition and social agency" (p. 72). In terms of silence, this can mean that neglecting silent voices shows contra-productivity towards inclusive excellence and agency in the classroom. With silence being a choice and demonstration of critical engagement, it becomes part of the individual, his or her voice, and agency.

In sum, critical pedagogy may not have shown a specifically open-minded approach on silence in the first place. However, after looking interpretively at the values and priorities of this approach, silence became involved in terms of engaging the student in critical reflection and participation, to foster social change, and to offer an alternative expression of resistance and empowerment. Through these categories, silence appeared to be intentional and a practice to invite mindful engagement, instead of being an outcome of oppression and marginalization. To eventually view silence as an active component, critical pedagogy must come to the acceptance of this perspective alternative, which entails that mindful and thoughtful critics can be developed in silence.

Silence in Active Learning Pedagogy

Silence appeared in active learning pedagogical texts as recognized but not exclusively valued as a form of active performance and/or engagement. In essence, even though silence is incorporated in merely a few exercises, such as "wait time" (Faust & Paulson, 1998, p. 8), between questions and answers it is not widely accepted as a way to present mindfulness and knowledge development by the student. Active learning follows an active approach, where the students are primarily involved in some sort of activity, which indeed shows positive effects for some students (Niemi, 2002). However, most methods strive towards persuading the student to verbally participate and to overcome silence in the classroom. Nevertheless, my analysis revealed that most dynamic active learning exercises eventually require attentive and active listening, which is a key aspect of the silence defined in this project. This observation supports the understanding how silence is interpreted to occur in the pedagogical texts. Five major categories were revealed while analyzing how active learning's strategies and key values address silence (even if unintentionally):

Active learning pedagogy can be interpreted to value silence as 1) preparing for critical engagement, 2) attentive listening, 3) a form of metacognitive learning, and 4) silence as another individual way of learning. These categories do not simply inform how silence was interpreted as part of active learning; they also address three key elements of active learning: reflection, critical thinking, and decision making.

Silence as 1) preparing for critical engagement is the first key category that shows how silence is unintentionally addressed by this pedagogical approach. Unintentionally here is meant in the way that the pedagogical texts of active learning do not exclusively

advocate for silence but still require the students to listen attentively, think thoroughly, and engage critically. Faust and Paulson (1998) argue that "requiring students to 'work it out' without relying on an authority's position increases the likelihood that they will be able to assess theories critically when presented with them" (p. 12). In addition, Niemi (2002) adds that "active learning strategies emphasize constructivistic qualities in knowledge processing. These are independent inquiry, and structuring and restructuring of knowledge" (p. 764). These learning behaviors require independent and deep critical thinking skills, which arguably can take place while a student is silent. To be able to critically engage with others means to be able to form a personal position that needs to be manifested in clear arguments and/or ideas. Active silence can support the student in this process with providing a space to think and reflect. Thus, I interpret silence as an unintentional part of preparation for critical engagement in active learning pedagogy that has not been celebrated yet.

Silence as 2) attentive listening is one of the key practices that active learning offers to implement silence in the classroom. The pedagogical texts did not speak directly of silence as a part of attentive listening but addressed it as wait time. Faust and Paulson (1998) mention that "wait time gets all students thinking actively about the question rather than allowing them to rely passively on those students who are fastest out of the gate" (p. 8). Along these lines, if students are required to be actively silent (for active thinking to occur), and do not have to answer a question right away, more students will have the ability to engage and also to listen. Furthermore, when students who normally would not have the chance to voice their opinion contribute to the discussion, new perspectives can be offered that can enhance the knowledge spectrum of all participants.

Silence can support the processing of the question on the speaker's side (prior to answering), and the audience will be engaged in active listening that concentrates on the speakers' words instead of the listeners' next contribution.

Potentially tied with attentive listening, silence appears in active learning pedagogy as 3) a form of metacognitive learning. One quote that stands out regarding this category is from Armbruster et al (2009). The authors say that by "placing students at the center of instruction, this approach shifts the focus from teaching to learning and promotes a learning environment more amenable to the metacognitive development necessary for students to become independent and critical thinkers" (p. 203). If silence is acknowledged as a metacognitive strategy, it is a significant part of developing independent and critical thinking habits. Silence then, is a knowledge-creating element of active learning.

Another category interpreted frequently in the active learning texts involved 4) silence as another individual way of learning. The background of this element is that active learning pedagogy is a part of the instructional revolution that strives to make learning more student centered and strives towards inclusive excellence of each student. This motivation includes the acknowledgement of diverse learning styles that students embody and rejects to benefit one learning approach over another. In response, Niemi (2002) says that "open learning environments, which require students' own initiative, planning, experimentation, elaboration and self-evaluation, still seem to be rare" (p. 776). Niemi's (2002) arguments of self-initiative, elaboration, and self-evaluation can be especially practiced through active thinking approaches, where students use the silent space to critically engage with themselves and create individual responses. It is thus

interesting to find that active, verbal engagement and “hands on approaches” are favored in active learning approaches when arguably silence is required among them. Niemi (2002) further states: “How we learn and comprehend knowledge depends on our beliefs, attitudes, and values and our self-concept as a learner” (p. 765). Thus, marginalizing silent voices is a violation of the learner’s individual way to reflect on feelings, opinions, and reactions towards the situation.

In sum, the interpretive review of the chosen active learning texts shows possibilities to assess silence and acknowledge silent (student) voices. Silence may not be addressed as important or desired in active learning, yet the main categories show that reflection, critical questioning, and attentive listening are a part of active learning. Silence is, for example, mirrored in active listening and critical reflection through metacognitive exercises. Active learning shows many connections to silence that can be practiced in many ways to enhance the learning experience.

Silence in Contemplative Pedagogy

After evaluating the selected pedagogical texts on contemplative learning pedagogy, and specifically how they address silence, an overall observation was made: Contemplative education offers numerous ways and arguments about how and why silence should play a distinct part in the classroom. Contemplative pedagogy offers many practices that include silence as a way to become balanced with the material and one’s individual understanding in the topic. Silence, in these ways, can support the student to make mindful decisions and helps to create an intentional dialogue between classroom participants. Silence is celebrated as a practice to reflect on the self and develop a meaningful connection to the course content. Because contemplative practices address

silence specifically and in depth, many quotes and arguments were observed and evaluated. Two main categories emerged regarding the role of silence in contemplative learning:

Contemplative pedagogy addresses silence as a practice to 1) develop attentiveness towards others and one's self, 2) mindful practice to create a safe classroom space of social engagement and dialogue.

Contemplative pedagogy offers students guidance on how to be mindful and attentive in silent periods. Thus, silence in contemplative pedagogy is addressed as the invitation to 1) develop attentiveness towards others and one's self. Through acknowledging this power of creating value and being engaged without verbally communicating, the students receive an alternative way to engage and to enact agency. Zajonc (2013) advocates "for a contemplative as well as a critical intellectual education, one that seeks a comprehensive and deep understanding of self and world" (p. 91). This call can be an answer to Kahane's (2009) concern of the conflict between personal beliefs and the role one plays to follow social norms: "Rather, the point is that this "deeper" story of my motivations and resistances, of my embodied and emotional experiences, is so much at odds with the narrative I would standardly offer of my life, my moral and philosophical commitments, and the kind of person I am" (p. 52-53). Contemplative silence can be assessed as an invitation to make sense of this conflict and to empower the individual to stand up for its experience.

The next category concerns silence as 2) mindful practice to create a safe classroom space of social engagement and dialogue. A safe classroom space and dialogue here, go hand in hand with each other. Through creating a classroom climate where

individuals feel respected and able to engage, dialogue can take place. Kahane (2009) gives the example that "meditating together at the beginning of each class brought us into the room together, and allowed a calmer and more careful engagement with one another; this laid the foundation for better work in groups than students were used to experiencing, or than I had ever experienced in other classrooms" (p. 55). Being mindful about others and being present with one's self are key aspects in contemplative pedagogy that are acknowledged to support an open minded classroom. Simmer–Brown (2013) acknowledge that "students are learning one of the most important peacemaking skills of our time, the ability to truly deepen and grow when encountering the "other" in another, while also encountering it in themselves" (p. 39). Self-reflection is a key subject in education and prepares the student for further engagement inside and eventually outside the classroom. Reflection can be practiced in multiple ways and one of these possibilities can be an active form of silence. Within a safe classroom environment mindful dialogues among participants are created that are based on listening and thoughtfully developed contributions.

Respecting silent student voices is addressed as a way to value diversity, consider alternatives, and eventually allow the individual to shape ideas and thoughts before they are expressed verbally in public. Along these lines, Simmer-Brown (2013) summarizes the fundamental dialogue skills as "listening deeply with an open mind; looking freshly at the other person and respecting; suspending judgments; and voicing their own truths"(p. 36). These practices are meant to support the student long-term and help to foster deep conversations and understandings in and outside the education environment. Listening is addressed as a particular important behavior to learn and engage. Some findings show

that contemplative pedagogy highlights how without silence, critical engagement is not possible. Grace (2011), for example, states "Self-Knowledge and the importance of first-person awareness. Self-knowledge, therefore, is important for critical thinking capacity and wise life decisions" (p. 115). According to this, critical words can be developed in silence until they can be made public.

In sum, contemplative education puts a distinct focus on the positive values of silence and offers practices that can support the learning process. Being introspective and attentive towards others and acknowledge that each individual's experience has the power to contribute to the classroom is an invitation to view the subject and eventually the world around it differently. As Grace (2011) points out, contemplative pedagogy "is meant as an invitation, which the reader can adapt and adopt (or not) within his or her own local context and meaning system" (p. 100). Understanding where one's own knowledge and that of other's is coming from is a valuable practice for reflecting and sharing the teaching and learning process. According to contemplative pedagogical texts, in times of information overload, polarized democracies, and the force to speak up, moments of silence can help to handle the information and eventually form successful contributions.

Silence in Performative Pedagogy

Findings surrounding the relationship between performative pedagogy and silence highlight a unique perspective on contemporary education and inclusiveness of diverse pedagogical approaches. The pedagogical texts revealed that silence in performative pedagogy is not explicitly studied thus far, with the exception of Hao (2011). Hao's (2011) work gave the initial inspiration to include performative pedagogy into the current

study. Through reviewing its pedagogical texts, performance theory emerged as an approach to invite silence as an active and intentional performance in the classroom. By doing so, it rejects standardized educational rituals, such as verbal participation, which are called for in many contemporary education approaches.

In general terms, performative pedagogy opens a way to view silence in its diverse facets and acknowledges its opportunity to be accepted as an active performance by the student and even teacher. Instead of offering distinct practices, the pedagogical texts invited scholars to recognize different classroom contributions, such as silence, as purposeful performances. Thus, silence can be valued as more than merely the absence of speech, knowledge, and/or presence. In essence, Hao (2011) contributes that “performative pedagogy’s commitment in understanding silence through multiple lenses. By doing so, we are not simply defining silence in binary terms, but rather looking at different ways silence could be performed in the classroom” (p. 273). Besides this idea of silence as valuable performance, the following will present the silence categories, which stood out the most:

Performative pedagogy addresses silence in two strong categories: 1) as an intentional and active performance and 2) as embodied individuality and empowerment.

Performative pedagogy texts overall (e.g., Pineau, 1993; Schechner, 2001) discussed how the classroom participant’s identities and bodies are influenced, shaped, and constructed through and within performances (such as silence or speech). Thus, silence can be viewed as 1) an intentional and active performance. Performative pedagogy assesses the classroom participants from different perspectives and acknowledges their individuality, personal ways to express themselves and their

knowing, and how they can perceive others. Hao (2011) highlights consider silence as “an active performance of human subjectivity, agency, and voice in other cultures” (p. 276). Addressing silence as an additional and active performance in the classroom offers silent students an opportunity to be acknowledged as active participants. To add to this statement, Schechner (2001) argues: “Performance studies works from the premise that anything and everything can be studied "as" performance” (p. 160). Being able to choose, silence as an intentional performance and to select how to develop knowledge and eventually express it is a part of the learner freedom to show its diversity and identity. Especially the latter leads to the next category: embodied participation.

Performative pedagogy suggests that the focus should not always primarily lay on the outcome of an educational inquiry, rather, the process that embodies how the students developed the answer, position, and/or contribution entails greater value. Thus, the pedagogical texts gave the opportunity to address silence as 2) embodied individuality and empowerment. Learning about how individuals perform, why they perform in this way, and which strategy they chose to make sense of their performance prior, offers new analytical elements towards teaching and learning. Schechner (2001) adds “[performance] scholars emphasize how performances mark identities, bend and remake time, adorn and reshape the body, tell stories, and provide people with the means to play with the worlds they not only in a bit but to a large degree construct” (p. 162). Silence can be one of these performances that needs to be available to use for all students because “performative pedagogy shapes the way we conceptualize silence not only in terms of what are at stake but also who are implicated culturally, politically, and ideologically” (Hao, 2011, p. 273). Thus, performances shape the individual and make his or her being

individual itself. Being silent can be a form of how an individual feel most appropriately engaged in a particular situation or how a future interaction may be created. Both situations have to be conscious of the performances by others and one's self.

Opening up the conversation to different types of silence as they can be practiced in the classroom will allow silent students to feel more comfortable and less judged by their personality and identity. This feeling of comfort can eventually lead towards more engagement. In sum, performative pedagogy offers the approach view silence as an action and a way to express something. This approach to pedagogy can form a language towards possibilities (Alexander, Anderson & Gallegos, 2004) that strives away from neglecting silent student behavior because it shows a rejection of the questionable status quo. Performative pedagogy's texts then address silence as an intentional and active performance that embodies participation and empowerment by the student. It shows a reflection of the student's individual choices to perform through this diverse but disregarded phenomena in education: silence. Lastly, silence in performative pedagogy represents the marginalized silent (student) voice, through acknowledging silence as an active performance that can be implemented in the classroom.

Silence Across Pedagogical Texts

After interpreting the representations of silence in each distinct education approach, a look across these approaches and their pedagogical texts shows unique confluences and connections. Critical pedagogy, active learning, performative pedagogy, and contemplative education show diverse perspectives on silence. However, across these pedagogies, shared values that arguably require or can implement silence are reflected. All four approaches acknowledge that students' and teachers' contributions to the

classroom are influenced by their background, history, individuality, and other outside factors. Contemplative pedagogy uses attentive silence as an invitation to become aware of these influences and become conscious of how they are able to contribute to one's own perspectives. Thus, silence is a practice of reflection and distinct part of sense making processes. Interestingly, critical pedagogy and active learning theory also speak of the influences that work upon the individual, but do not view silence as a practice that can lessen potential negative effects of such influences.

The categories concerning silence as “reflection”, “self-reflection and empowerment”, and “reflection and critical questioning”, are frequently addressed throughout the three approaches. These categories embody silence as an active performance (reflection) and learning process that prepares the student for critical engagement through (self-) reflection. Interpreting the value of reflection as a common element throughout the four pedagogies leads to another finding, which regards the preparation for critical and mindful engagement through silence. Whereas contemplative pedagogy is valuing silence as an inclusive part of a critical engaging learning process, active learning and critical learning do not speak of silence in such manner. However, by advocating for critical engagement, both approaches include reflection, which arguably requires active silence. Since performative pedagogy gives the invitation to view silence as an active performance, it can bridge the gap between critical and active learning pedagogies and contemplative pedagogy's focus on silence. As Hao (2011) points out: “Performative pedagogy's commitment in understanding silence through multiple lenses. By doing so, we are not simply defining silence in binary terms, but rather looking at different ways silence could be performed in the classroom” (p. 273).

In addition to observing a frequently addressed elements, it is intriguing to interpret how these four pedagogy approaches complement each other and create a, as I will describe it, merging flow. Such a flow connects the purpose and values of each approaches with each other in some way. Furthermore, looking at these approaches as a combined flow of merging and complementing values shows flexibility to invite new ways of teaching and learning, such as silence. Beginning this flow of concepts with critical pedagogy is purposeful because it shows the least appreciation of silence in the classroom. As the forgoing literature showed, critical pedagogy focusses on silence mainly as violent and oppressive. However, critical pedagogy does inherently advocate for thoughtful and critical engagement. In addition, this approach values individuals that aim to change the status quo and engage in critical decision making individually and with others. All of these elements can derive from an active approach of silence, which leads to the next flow component, active learning education.

Active learning incorporates distinct parts of critical pedagogy and adds a focus on student learning. Whereas critical pedagogy may be seen as a partial outcome of learning, active learning offers various tools to reach this goal. Although active learning does not speak literally of silence as a purposeful and desired classroom practice, it makes room for reflective exercises that ultimately include silence. In essence, critical pedagogy offers the critical theoretical approach in this flow and active learning includes a focus on how students learn effectively. Both approaches do not speak literally of silence as significant in the classroom but show desired outcomes that can be complemented and/or take place in silence.

The third component in the flow is contemplative pedagogy. This contemplative education shows high value of silence as a way to learn and teach. It offers practices, such as meditation, that compliment and add to active learning in order to expands its repertoire of different approaches to student learning. Contemplative pedagogy can also add to the values of critical pedagogy, as it is emphasizing the power of reflection, which can positively influence critical decision making and engagement. So far, the flow describes how critical, active learning, and contemplative pedagogy's values complement each other, merge in their purposes, and make room for acknowledging silence. Thus, the last component is performative pedagogy, which offers the theoretical approach of interpreting silence as an active performance and connects silence theoretically with all three former approaches. In sum, the four reviewed pedagogy approaches complement each other and can implement silence as a way to expand their focus on mindful and critical student learning.

Through the interpretive review of the pedagogical texts and the foregoing literature on silence overall it appears that many forms of and possibilities for silence exist. However, many frequently used contemporary classroom approaches are primarily assessing silence as an undesired and negative outcome of oppression, disengagement, rejection, or other challenging and disruptive behaviors. Because these challenges around silence are reasonable, it is clear that not every form of silence can be respected as inclusive and thoughtful. Yet, while reviewing how silence is addressed in pedagogical texts across a diverse selection of pedagogies, silence appears to be a way of (willfully) doing and being as well. This approach entails an active, performative, and especially mindful perspective on silence, purposefully enacted by the individual in the classroom.

This specific facet of silence will be introduced in the following as a concept of what I will call *mindful silence*. To develop the concept of mindful silence, as it is approached in this work, I draw on the findings how pedagogical texts address silence and on the foregoing literature overall. I will name and explain its components, roots, and purpose.

HOW TO CREATE CHANGE: INVITING MINDFUL SILENCE

Silence entails diverse perspectives that influence its power, value, and how individuals perceive it. The literature on silence points out that it cannot merely be assessed as a negative byproduct of communication. Rather, silence has specific components that can enrich the situation it is used in and it is expressing something without using verbal communication. In addition, silence can be willfully used by an individual as a way to resist social norms, standards or other limitations, which leads to a sense of empowerment. Interpretively reviewing how silence is addressed in pedagogical texts of frequently and contemporary used education approaches affirmed these observations. If silence is addressed in these wider theories, it always includes a reflecting and deep thinking component that offers a challenge to the classroom participants. This challenge concerns the mindful development of ideas, integration of diverse perspectives, and mindful engagement in the classroom.

To develop a concept of mindful silence I reviewed the findings of the literature review on silence overall, its facets, its relationship to education scholarship and practice, and its components of empowerment. I was specifically concerned with how teaching and learning literature reflects on silence as a mindful phenomenon, as a way of doing and being. Additional literature examples were selected if they showed a distinct contribution to defining mindful silence. Furthermore, I used my developed findings on critical, active learning, contemplative, and performative pedagogy to underscore pedagogical elements that can be associated with a mindful form of silence enacted by classroom participants.

The second research question asked: How can mindful silence be invited into all relevant approaches to pedagogy in meaningful ways? The following sections will address this question and make the case for mindful silence in education. Overall, mindful silence is the type of silence that focuses on creating purposeful knowledge, using silence as a way to communicate/participate, respect others, and form constructive information by being open minded and realizing the specific context in which it is used. I propose that mindful silence is created and defined by four previously conceptualized components: mindfulness, conscious communication, and silent perceptive listening. All parts are connected and overlap in some distinct ways.

Making the Case for Mindful Silence

The first and strongest influential element of mindful silence is mindfulness itself. To understand the meaning of mindfulness, especially in the context of the classroom environment, it is helpful to consider its counterpart, mindlessness, as well. In these terms, over the last decades, scholars have started to focus on the argument that individuals have to mindfully construct their messages in order to engage in successful and critical communication (King & Sawyer, 1998). Motley (1992) states that “a certain level of mindfulness seems necessary in order to do different what communication research says should be done differently” (p. 306). Burgoon, Berger, and Waldron (2000) point out that misconceptions about mindfulness are common. Mindfulness cannot be simply equated with consciousness, planned through, and strategic behavior, whereas mindlessness is assessed as “reactive, superficially processed, routine, rigid, and emotional” (Burgoon, Berger and Waldron, 2000, p. 112). Instead both phenomena need to be complicated. Langer (1989) and Slavik (2014) support an approach that considers

mindfulness as the condition, when an individual is open, sensitive to the specific context and engaged in the present moment (Slavik, 2014). In connection to silence and education, mindful silent students are engaged and critically attentive towards learning within their own and others presence. Thus, mindfulness here refers to silent learning as an active and ongoing processing of information, being aware of multiple perspectives, and the ability to create new and inventive knowledge.

While reviewing pedagogical texts on contemporary pedagogies, the findings within contemplative education show that mindfulness is a state of mind that is chosen and embodied by the individual, which ultimately requires intentional engagement with the elements of mindfulness. Grace (2011) acknowledges that contemplation offers an invitation to understanding and becoming engaged. Critical pedagogy scholars such as Giroux (2011) strive for empowering the student to become independent thinkers and highlight that critical education is “premised on the assumption that learning is not about processing received knowledge but about actually transforming it as a part of a more expansive struggle for individual rights and social justice” (p. 72). Thus, an individual cannot be forced to become a mindful learner. Mindfulness and mindful silence are intentional choices that require reflection and willful engagement with the subject, others, and one self.

While reflecting on the mindful roots of mindful silence, a question comes into mind: How do classroom participants chose to be mindful and what is influencing their choice? Langer’s (1989) work stresses an ideology of mindfulness and aims for an ethical position. In her approach, individuals need to learn how to stop falling back into automated behavioral responses through practicing self-awareness and a mature cognitive

mindset. This approach seems to be suggestive in the way that many students are not taught to listen closely and to think attentively before engaging. Taking the time and practice mindful silence is an approach that at first may seem contradictory to standardized classroom norms that favor fast answers and speech overall. However, stretching these norms and inviting a new mindful approach can be beneficial for the classroom community because more thoughtful voices can be heard and the engagement increased.

The reviewed pedagogical texts revealed that mindfulness is not addressed by all approaches specifically but its outcomes and components, such as critical decision making, are desired by all. Contemplative pedagogy advocates mindfulness as one of its key elements that supports the students in their academic success, overall emotional balance, critical decision making, and being in an environment where many positions and opinions come together. Being mindfully silent is a primary aspect in contemplative pedagogy to explore the self and other's positions. Critical and active learning pedagogy require the students to make thoughtful decisions and be attentive of surrounding influences. Mindfulness is a significant component to reach these goals because it helps to be present in the moment and be aware of one's own and other contributions. In addition, Burgoon, Berger and Waldron's (2000) work addresses how mindful communication can be evoked and strategically used through interpersonal communication practices. By doing so, the authors emphasize that mindfulness may be a key towards the solution progress for various social dilemmas, such as marginalizing certain groups of human beings, misunderstandings, and gender inequalities. Mindfulness then, has the ability to benefit the classroom and education environment, where

individuals are asked to be engaged in these issues and are confronted with diverse voices that need to be heard, considered, and consciously communicated. This leads to the next component of mindful silence: conscious communication.

As cognitive research and theories about mindfulness made their way into human communication scholarship, a paradigm shift appeared towards a language of intentionality. This language touches on the responsibility of the individual about his or her conscious communicative choices (Langer, 1989). By doing so, researchers have begun to revise terms, such as conscious communication, intentional communication, and communicative strategies (Hample, 1992; Kellerman, 1992; Stamp & Knapp, 1990). Understanding communicative choices can be crucial in connection to assessing a student's ability to express his/her voice or the choice to resist. Resistance can be practiced in mindful and conscious forms, such as remaining mindful silent, if it is offered and taught as such. To name an example, when a teacher or fellow student asks a provocative question and expects the audience to answer impulsively. While practicing mindful silence, the confronted student can take the moments of silence to create a thoughtful answer. This could help contribute to a constructive conversation and ultimately reflect the student's voice and agency to influence the situation.

Conscious communication supports necessary skills to express the students' perceptions and ideas without judging others and to listen without criticizing the message immediately and/ or trying to change the audience. Bone, Griffin, and Scholz (2008) state that the true understanding of other perspectives is the "most productive endeavor and that a profound understanding of other people might inform our own choices in important ways" (p. 457). Thus, deeper understandings and connections can be developed and

separation and miscommunications can be prevented. Following a conscious communication path is underlying security in speech and helps to facilitate in conflicting situations, such as being wrong in a discussion (Sherts, 2009). In addition, Paris, Small, and Heyman (2007) consider the difficulty that people may not have a problem with meaning what they say, but saying what they actually mean is an issue that many (students) may have encountered throughout their lives. Once words are spoken, they belong to the audience's sense making efforts and perceptions of the speaker. Paris, Small, and Heyman (2007) argue that many times this sense making effort goes into a different direction than the speaker intended the original message. Such miscommunications can have hurtful, unproductive, and unintentional consequences. On the other hand, they point out that being conscious and thoughtful of situational factors can affect the conversational situation positively (Paris, Small, & Heyman, 2007). These situational factors that can affect the situation include: the person that receives the message (e.g. relationship to the speaker); the underlying factors that are not visible and/or known at first glance (e.g. audience's social background); the purpose of the message and interaction; the expected reaction of the audience; and the message's appropriateness (e.g. timely). Being aware of the existence of these factors and conscious about their appearance can prevent miscommunication, false communication, and support the sharing of opinions and ideas in a respectful and productive way. Contemplative pedagogy scholars make the argument that conscious communication is developed by deep thinking and considering of many diverse influences, which one can engage in through (mindful) silence (Kahane, 2009).

The last key component necessary for understanding mindful silence is what I will

call silent perceptive listening. This form of active listening is conceptualized through two key elements: purposeful silence and perceptive listening. Purposeful silence is reflected on as a cautious choice and emphasizes the decision when to speak, to whom, and about what (Myers, 2011). In these terms, silence is enforced by the silent individual but socially authorized at the same time. It may increase the probability of the audience's listening when someone speaks and might influence others' feelings about the speaker's character. In addition, the audience needs to engage in perceptive listening in order to collect the message of the speaker and to analyze it mindfully (Myers, 2011). Lacey (2013) argues for listening as a central aspect in the communicative, experimental, and public sphere, referring especially to the circumstances of the contemporary mediated world.

Listening plays a distinct part in the four reviewed pedagogy approaches. Attentive and perceptive listening is a primary aspect to create successful dialog and inclusive conversations. All reviewed pedagogical texts require such active listening and purposeful communication. Communication can, as this research underlines, take place in form of silence. Contemplative education strengthens this argument and views silence as a way to critically reflect (Grace, 2011). In addition, purposeful silence, is a way of being and doing, that entails perceptive listening. Both elements can eventually lead to better developed and mindful interactions that support the individual in becoming evaluated individually and less on how it performs to standardized norms. Performative theory creates the theoretical approach to view purposeful silence and perceptive listening as active practices that are implemented in mindful silence (Hao, 2011). In these lines, mindful silent students can be assessed as active participants that are able to make

mindful contributions. Inviting the opportunity to be silent and concentrate on mindfulness while learning (and listening) might be a positive way to “allow time for reflection on teaching and learning” (Li, 2004, p. 70). Slavik’s (2014) study of the impact of mindfulness-based practices in the classroom of third year undergraduate students showed that positive changes could be perceived in the sense of transitioning to class, participate in the moment, and engaging with the learning process. Furthermore, the students recognized improvements in concentration and information processing. They acknowledged decreasing anxiety and stress feelings, a development of insightful thinking and creativity, and more reflectivity on themselves and others.

In sum, mindful silence implements thoughtful, purposeful, and sometimes strategic ways of critically considering information, other perspectives, and/or one’s self in the classroom. Mindful silence draws on the scholarship of mindfulness, conscious communication, and perceptive silent listening. It invites learning from and with other individuals, through silence and listening, and should be considered as a meaningful addition to enhance the outcomes of teaching and learning. Having the alternative to engage in mindful silence offers agency for the student, to choose her/his own way of contributing to the class and make a stand on a topic, without having to fully disclose, when such contributions are still developing. This can develop empowerment and eventually strengthen the student’s ability to present her/his voice in a thoughtful, conscious, and inclusive manner.

MINDFUL SILENCE IN PEDAGOGY: SUPPORTING AGENCY, VOICE, AND CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT

The purpose of this thesis is to invite mindful silence into contemporary pedagogy. This approach is rooted in a call for change in education that strives towards a learning community of inclusive excellence and mindfully engaged individuals. I am using the theory of invitational rhetoric (Foss & Griffin, 1995) to invite mindful silence into pedagogy because it emphasizes the deep understanding of diverse perspectives and forms of engagement. After a broad review of the literature on silence in education, it became clear that it is a typical contemporary classroom norm to expect students to speak up and share knowledge to enhance and assess their learning. Hao (2011) states: “In many western (European and US American) cultural contexts, classroom practices are grounded in Socratic traditions that highly value private and public questioning of knowledge and expressing one’s ideas” (p. 270). Thus, especially the western cultures favor speech as a way to demonstrate presence, power, and agency. With such a pedagogical partiality, fast learners and comfortable speakers are privileged, whereas peers and professors often judge students who appear to be silent as disengaged, disinterested, less prepared or less intelligent. Overall, in traditional frameworks, silence is represented to the student as unfavorable, uncomfortable, and something to overcome.

The favoring of speech is constructed through a long history of violent silence and its suppressive consequences on marginalized individuals. This marginalization of human beings through silencing their voices is not meant to be neglected or ignored in this

thesis. I recognize that many reasons can apply to keep an individual from being able or willing to speak freely. While this concern is recognized, I propose an alternative way to teach and learn that addresses silence as a choice of consciously being and doing.

Mindful silence plays an important role in helping to create and process information, which increases listening to each other and one's self. Thus, a pedagogical approach that incorporates mindful silence creates awareness of agency and acknowledges silent voices.

I invite the theory of mindful silence into education because it is a promising theoretical approach towards inclusive excellence, agency awareness, and acknowledgement of (silent) voices. Furthermore, it changes the status quo of standardized (classroom) norms and invites the student to be considerate of more than her/his own perspective. The third research question asks: What are the implications of centralizing mindful silence in teaching and learning? Since this work developed a theoretical approach of mindful silence, the implications are not confirmed through practice yet. However, potential outcomes and implications can be made by acknowledging the previous research and can be further developed in future studies.

As our socio-political climate becomes increasingly complex, critical engagement becomes even more essential. I argue that democratic critical engagement needs to come from a place of thought and reflection, which arguably can be supported through mindful silence. I believe that education can open doors to societal inclusivity and to a more engaged democracy if students are encouraged to practice mindful silence regularly. Such an invitation will support the learners to engage in deep understanding of other perspectives. A primary role of education needs to be the broadening of student

perspectives, opening their minds to new information, and helping them to accept that others may have different opinions. This highlights the purpose of invitational rhetoric (Foss & Griffin, 1995). Foss and Griffin (1995) state that their approach of invitational rhetoric aims to prevent the individual from trying to change the other and does not give one speaker “the right to claim that their experiences or perspectives are superior to those of their audience members” (p. 6). Rather, “change may be the result of invitational rhetoric, but change is not its purpose” (p. 6). In practical terms, invitational rhetoric opens the door for instructors to acknowledge that valuable contributions can be made in many forms and can widen the understanding of the world for all participants. Through this approach, mindful silence can be invited, silent students empowered, and verbally active students enabled to learn about new perspectives. In doing so, it highlights that deep understanding of others is a “most productive endeavor and that a profound understanding of other people might inform our own choices in important ways” (Bone, Griffin, & Scholz, 2008, p. 457). In essence, invitational rhetoric opens a door, leading towards deep acknowledgement of one another and underlining that students cannot be persuaded to learn through standardized practices. Rather, students receive a choice to engage in learning. This theoretical approach invites each classroom participant to become an active part of the learning experience by staying true to his/her own person and expressing individuality.

Teaching students that mindful silence is a way of being and doing could have great effect on their awareness of voice and agency in the classroom. Many pedagogies perceive that agency and dialogue in the classroom can only be reached when students use their voices, in terms of spoken words, to share lived experiences (Hao, 2011). As

mentioned before, this assumption favors a western way of teaching and a particular way of being and thinking. What is forgotten is that individuals have unique ways of being and doing things. Requiring a student to share thoughts, even if they may lose value through words, may negatively affect the learning experience of the students. On the other hand, if the learners are invited to practice mindful silence, the pressure to find a quick answer may decrease and more voices will be eventually heard. Thus, mindful silence can support the silent voices that have been marginalized, ironically, by trying to make them heard.

In addition, agency is another primary element that can benefit from mindful silence. The more student voices are heard the more agency can be reflected upon. In essence, inviting the classroom participants to widen the normalized structures (e.g. favoring of verbal engagement) will enable them to choose whether mindful silence, speech, or other forms of engagement may be most effective or appropriate. Agency is not just given through the opportunity of choice but also by being able to acknowledge others' agency. It is a primary purpose of mindful silence to make the other heard, through silence, as well as through voice. People then, are able to own and express their silence to others and can open up when a mindful learning environment of mutual awareness is created. Inviting mindful silence thus opens up a classroom climate of diverse perspectives and possibilities towards new understandings. As Zajonc (2013) highlights, contradictions are significant to explore and invite to discussions. "Rather than seek[ing] to resolve contradiction, it is often better to maintain and even intensify the experience of how two opposites can be true at the same time" (Zajonc, 2013, p. 86). This practice requires a high amount of self-reflection and awareness. I argue that by

inviting mindful silence the students gain the ability to discover contradictions and let go of wanting to persuade others about their own positions.

Mindful silence can have highly beneficial outcomes on the individual in the classroom as well as among the group. Grace (2011) argues for the benefits of (mindful) silence for the whole classroom community: "Self-knowledge and self-mastery are not only beneficial for the individual. Such individual attainments also benefit the human collective" (p. 116). From the instructor's perspective it may be overwhelming to think about mindful silence as an alternative way of teaching and learning. Too long has silence been disfavored and assessed as something to overcome. But as the findings show, many contemporary pedagogical approaches already require the elements of silence, but hesitate to acknowledge silence as a distinct partner. Mindful silence is not meant to be overwhelming or just another aspect to teach. Due to its alternative character, mindful silence can be implemented as what I will call an "input pause" – a small pause between activities that gives the student space for thinking and reflection. Another practical example is to start the class with a couple of minutes to practice mindful silence. The instructor can state a prompt that helps to stir the students' attention and encourage them to be present and concentrated on the following class material. I would like to especially refer to meditation practices. Grace (2011) states that after she introduced silent meditation into her classroom the students showed positive transformations "by learning how to be mentally present" and "got more out of lectures and schoolwork" (p. 107). In addition, "because they were happier on the inside, they harmed themselves less and became more productive citizens of the campus and their family" (p. 107). Furthermore, "students certify that, in these classes, they feel free to believe, practice,

question, explore, doubt, and not-know” (p. 108). Thus, meditation and other contemplative practices should not be neglected. They can offer to prepare the student’s mind for critical engagement (Kahane, 2009) and highlight the importance of listening to others and one’s self (Zajonc, 2013). In addition, Grace (2011) points out that “students who learned to self-activate ‘inner coherence’ were successful in decreasing test anxiety at will and showed improvement in overall emotional disposition” (p. 113). Therefore, meditation can support the individual as a student and as a person, which are elements that connect tightly with mindful silence. In addition, meditation can help to include elements of contemplative pedagogy into other pedagogies as well.

Active learning is implementing reflective practices, such as silent writing (e.g., minute papers), where the student is asked to silently write down thoughts. Though silence is likely implemented in these activities, I argue that it is not mindful silence. Mindful silence is concerned with the mental stage before words can be put into writing or speech, and thus, published. It is practiced in moments of deep thinking and reflection that should not be distracted with writing. I suggest combining both strategies with a period of mindful silence, followed by silent writing. Both exercises have the ability to complement each other well and support the student in processing information.

Perhaps more important than specific exercises is acknowledging that mindful silence can be an accepted behavior in the classroom and teaching the students how to be mindfully silent. The latter can be done by inviting learners to engage in invitational rhetoric and acknowledging that different perspectives should not be marginalized by one’s own position. Mindful silence in these terms can support self-reflection, attentive

listening, and the acknowledgement that diverse perspectives exist. Furthermore, students need to be taught about the relationship of mindful silence and attentive listening.

Listening may be one of the strongest but most overlooked elements in today's classrooms and society. Just like silence, listening is often "done" to someone. In the classroom, students are required to listen to the teacher, other authorities, and peers. Whereas listening can be passive and a form of disengagement, it is traditionally assessed as something positive and effective for teaching and learning. Silence on the other hand receives negative attention. Arguably, listening means to be silent; and to be actively listening means to be actively silent. I contend that students have to learn to be mindfully silent in order to be able to mindfully listen to one another. Mindful silence is a state of mind that will provide the student with the ability to be fully present in the moment and be aware of the words from the other. It will protect the listener from being distracted by his/her own thoughts and urge to answer. As Simmer-Brown (2013) summarizes: "The simple, human gesture of 'listening dangerously' provides the missing link in creating cultures of peace while inculcating a meaningful journey of human life" (p. 39). Listening dangerously means to be attentive, present, active, and conscious, which align with the elements of mindful silence.

It is intriguing to foresee implications not just in the classroom, but also outside of it. Kahane (2009) describes a primary purpose of internationalization as the development of a "meaningful and motivating sense of global citizenship" (p. 59). Engaged and critical democratic citizens arguably contribute towards a healthy global citizenship. Thus, democratic citizens need to be engaged and informed about complex issues in order to transform conflict into solutions. I believe that solutions are just the outcome of a

ramified and messy process of interactions between many diverse characters with partially contrary positions. In order to create an equal and open-minded environment of dialogic moments, we must employ listening, reflecting, and critical analysis. The principals of mindful silence can offer these needed components and prepare the individuals for mindful conversations outside the classroom. Education is a primary information source for students that should broaden, renew, or strengthen their current perspectives. In the words of Zajonc (2013) "a true education that addresses the whole human being reaches far beyond the conventional goods of learning, such as an informed citizenry or an intelligent workforce" (p. 90). As educators, it is in our hands to help students discover different possibilities and to support their development into mindful democratic citizens.

MINDFUL SILENCE: INTO THE FUTURE

Silence as a phenomenon of being and doing, is an intriguing topic that touches on many contemporary socio-political issues and concerns. For this reason, I would like to introduce ideas for future exploration concerning this subject. Firstly, it needs to be acknowledged that this thesis work offers a theoretical approach of mindful silence. The concept is built on an exhaustive search of literature and interpretive review of four contemporary pedagogical approaches. However, to develop this concept further, it is necessary to create additional methods for implementation in the classroom and to investigate their outcomes. The scholarship of contemplative and performative pedagogy can offer important elements for this specific task. While this thesis breaks the ground for an invitational concept, future research is needed to put mindful silence into practice.

In addition to applying mindful silence in practice, I suggest considering the possible influence of age, grade, and school form on mindful silence in the classroom. Future studies should engage in how mindful silence can be invited into different class grades to establish if possible adjustments need to be developed. To speculate about this approach, I propose that early learners (K-6) may be open-minded towards mindful silence because of their traditional curious characters. In addition, students in older grades (K6-12) may appreciate the possibility to explore their own voice through mindful silence and to challenge themselves with learning about new perspectives. A particular interest of mine is to view the personal and academic development of higher education students through mindful silence. In these terms, Grace (2011) brings the ultimate

purpose of higher education from the student's perspective into light, arguing that "a majority of entering students expected their college education to develop their 'self-understanding' and to strengthen their sense of the 'meaning and purpose of life.' They also hoped to become 'more loving and compassionate people'. However, the college curriculum failed in this regard. For the most part, according to follow-up data, the students' expectations of these learning goals were not met" (Grace, 2011, p. 117). I consider that scholars need to turn their attention towards an approach of teaching and learning that can address the role of education in producing active and thoughtful individuals that contribute towards a healthy global democracy. A specific focus can be on how silence can foster active critical-thinking and learning in the classroom. Future scholars could compare classes that implement mindful silence with classes that do not incorporate mindful silence. Using pre-composed measures on student learning and experience—such as the student's feeling of empowerment, the learning environment and culture, and content knowledge—progress can be considered for comparison.

In regards to implementing mindful silence in practice, it would also be interesting to consider how mindful silence can influence the relationship of power, inequality, and marginalization in educational settings. In this thesis I aim to highlight the character of mindful silence as resistant towards standardized norms. In addition, I point out its potential to empower students to engage in thoughtful dialogical moments. It is intriguing to study the student's feeling of empowerment if he or she is invited to practice mindful silence. I want to highlight at this point that the scholarship of education should increase its focus on qualitative and interpretive methods. To measure the success of knowledge mastery in forms of tests and other formative assessment strategies is

important. However, how a student engages in learning and how she or he improves as a person are important values to consider. To understand these experiences, qualitative methods, such as interviews or ethnographic practices, should be explored more. This is not meant to be a critique on quantitative educational research overall, but an invitation to consider one of the humanity's greatest assets: individuality.

This thesis work concentrates its focus on the student's relationship with mindful silence. Even though all classroom participants were partially acknowledged, it can be beneficial to further study the influence of mindful silence on the instructor. Since the instructor has a major responsibility to introduce the students to new perspectives, teach new concepts, facilitate diverse minds, and assess the student's learning process, the teacher's job can become overwhelming. Practicing mindful silence could potentially offer a break that allows the instructor to be fully present in the moment and to concentrate on the given situation. Educators could implement mindful silence into their teaching to not just give the learners a break to reflect and think, but also to allow this privilege for themselves. It should be noted, from the instructor perspective, that silence itself is not visible or distinguishable. This could produce resistance in terms of how to control and assess what the students are thinking about. However, I invite educators to be open-minded to new approaches and to build a relationship of trust and responsibility. I propose that if a classroom is built on trust, people will feel safe and welcome. Feeling safe and welcome can result in increased openness, an invitation to listen, share knowledge and accept diversity. Thus, it creates agency, voice, and inclusivity—the aims of mindful silence (and objectives across pedagogical approaches). Future research could engage in how educators feel about their implementation of mindful silence. It may be

that the classroom climate changed or that students showed more mindful engagement.

Other outcomes concerning the teacher could address positive changes in facilitating the class, engaging with students, and increasingly enjoying the process of teaching and learning.

CONCLUSION

I argue that mindful silence should become a central element in education. The concept of mindful silence invites an alternative perspective on teaching and learning, which highlights the insightful, self-reflective, and purposeful nature of silence in the classroom. Mindful silence encourages a unique way to learn for the sake of deep understanding of one's own and other's point of views. It offers a choice to participate mindfully and with intention in the classroom, which arguably can have effects on empowerment and competence. Mindful silence implements the roots of invitational rhetoric by giving it space to evolve. Inviting other perspectives into the conversation and intentionally immersing one's self to deeply understand and listen to other perspectives is a powerful opportunity.

Most teaching and learning scholarship focuses on critical thinking and analysis. However, the need remains to develop effective and useful messages that align with the norms of society, classroom culture, and standardized learning objectives. But how to process information exchanges in a way that stands for our own inclinations, experiences, and understandings in relation to others is just as important. In addition, reducing a student's knowledge to what is said in class is neglecting the information that lies underneath words. I am not advocating for a silent classroom, nor am I neglecting the uncertainties (e.g. invisibility of silence) of mindful silence. Mindful silence may not be the ultimate key to eliminating the marginalization of voices, and it will take time to implement its values in the classroom and everyday life. But, based on this research, I

want to encourage educators and scholars to trust, be patient, and give mindful silence a chance to show its possibilities. Mindful silence offers a choice to teach and learn differently; it focusses on students' abilities to be mindful, with the purpose of supporting students on their way to becoming reflective, compassionate, democratic, and critical citizens. Overall, mindful silence acknowledges the richness of a single person's voice and agency—both the silent and the spoken.

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