The Listening Guide: A How-To Approach on Ways to Promote Educational Democracy

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Abstract

As qualitative researchers, our identities are inevitably mixed into our methodological approaches, and many of us secretly wonder about our roles and the quality of our listening. Researchers who are seeking a meaningful method of analysis that will honor the role of the researcher, and respect the voices and experiences of the human beings in their studies, will benefit from the multidisciplinary method of The Listening Guide (LG). The LG is a qualitative, relational, voice-centered, feminist methodology, predominantly used as a way to analyze interview transcripts. The LG differs from other means of analysis in that it places emphasis on the psychological complexities of humans through attention to voice. It does so through the creation and special analysis of voice poems as well as by attending to silences. The LG serves a very specific need in research analysis in the ways it honors the role of the researcher–researched relationship, the intricacies of voice and silence, and perhaps most importantly, unearthing trends which may have gone unnoticed. An explicit how-to guide does not exist. When researchers are new to a method, sometimes a more explicit how-to guide is necessary, and my intention is to share one in this article. In this article, I will share the democratic and multidisciplinary significance of the LG in how it matters right now, as well as a precise how-to guide on its utilization, and innovative examples of creative, interdisciplinary uses of the LG.

What is Already Known?

The Listening Guide (LG) is a qualitative, relational, voice-centered, feminist methodology. Predominantly, the LG is used as a way to analyze interview transcripts. The LG differs from other means of analysis in that it places emphasis on the psychological complexities of humans through attention to voice. It does so through the creation and special analysis of voice poems, as well as by attending to silences. Furthermore, the LG is distinctive in its emphasis on the importance of human relationships, and its feminist grounding provides spaces to hear those who may have previously been silenced.

What Does This Paper Add?

When researchers are new to a method, sometimes a more explicit how-to guide is necessary, and my intention is to share one in this article. Furthermore, as is often the case with the natural evolution of analytical tools, many researchers, myself included, have created different ways of approaching the LG. These newer, cross-disciplinary uses hold significance to future research. In this article, I will share the democratic and multidisciplinary significance of the LG in how it matters right now, as well as a precise how-to guide on its utilization, and innovative examples of creative, interdisciplinary uses of the LG.

Introduction

> When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen.
> —Ernest Hemingway

What would I hear if I really listened? As a researcher and educator, that question has often haunted me. How many of

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us, especially as qualitative researchers, have secretly wondered about the quality of our listening? It is only healthy and natural to contemplate the quality of our research in ways that are specific to not only the listening embedded but also the relationship with our participants and the ways we interpret stories, voice, and silence.

After more than a decade as a professor in the field of literacy, one would imagine that the questions I am asked most often pertain to literacy, yet that is not the case. Surprisingly enough, most students and colleagues I encounter are most intrigued with my work utilizing the Listening Guide (LG). The LG (e.g., Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 2015; Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2006; Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1995; Tolman, 2002; Way, 1998) is a qualitative, relational, voice-centered, feminist methodology. Predominantly, the LG is used as a way to analyze interview transcripts, although newer research has utilized the LG to unearth trends in written reflection papers (e.g., Petrovic, Lordly, Brigham, & Delaney, 2015). The LG differs from other means of analysis in that it places emphasis on the psychological complexities of humans through attention to voice. It does so through the creation and special analysis of voice poems as well as by attending to silences. Furthermore, the LG is distinctive in its emphasis on the importance of human relationships, and its feminist grounding provides spaces to hear those who may have previously been silenced (Woodcock, 2010a, p. 364; Woodcock, 2015, p. 14).

At first, I was perplexed by the keen interest in the LG. I soon realized the allure is just as present for other researchers, as it has been for me. It is with good reason. The LG serves a very specific need in research analysis in the ways it honors the role of the researcher–researched relationship, the intricacies of voice and silence, and perhaps most importantly, unearthing trends that may have gone unnoticed. Eager graduate students and professors alike, who are seeking a meaningful method of analysis that will respect the voices and experiences of the human beings in their studies, have reached out to me multiple times seeking guidance on applying the LG to their interview transcripts. An explicit how-to guide does not exist, although an excellent overview of the LG, including examples, was published by the creators (Gilligan et al., 2006). Unfortunately though, that particular publication is in a book that is already out of print. There are times when explicit how-to steps are helpful to see, beyond examples, especially in terms of how to mine and organize the data.

When researchers are new to a method, sometimes a more explicit how-to guide is necessary, and my intention is to share one in this article. Furthermore, as is often the case with the natural evolution of analytical tools, many researchers, myself included, have created different ways of approaching the LG. These newer, cross-disciplinary uses hold significance to future research. In this article, I will share the democratic and multidisciplinary significance of the LG in how it matters right now, as well as a precise how-to guide on its utilization, and innovative examples of creative, interdisciplinary uses of the LG.

Why the LG Matters Now: Research Can Strengthen Democracy

As we embark on the 100th anniversary of John Dewey's ([1916] 1944) pivotal *Democracy and Education*, I cannot help but wonder if Dewey would be both proud and shuddering a bit, if he could see our educational system today. In order for education to be democratic, *it* requires that everyone have a voice and be heard in a participatory manner.

> All communication is like art. It may fairly be said, therefore, that any social arrangement that remains vitally social, or vitally shared, is educative to those who participate in it. Only when it becomes cast in a mold and runs in a routine way does it lose its educative power. (p. 9)

In my beloved, tattered copy of *Experience & Education* (Dewey, 1938), my scribbles from nearly 20 years ago read, "But, are we promoting democracy and voice in schools? Are school voices being heard, though?" (p. 34).

Research sometimes strengthens schools, yet only when people's experiences are honored and understood. Steadily, over the last 100 years, we have begun to raise awareness of social problems and how they play a role in the perceived effectiveness of our schools. What has become abundantly clear is that we need ways for teachers to meaningfully share stories and be heard. In teacher research and in studies of teachers' work, the contributing elements of the methodology cannot be underestimated. At times, the methodology itself can play a key role in the critical engagement of the teacher, researcher, and/or teacher researcher. Teachers' voices are curiously absent from reform (e.g., Dana & Yendel-Hoppey, 2008; Woodcock, 2015). "Teacher inquiry is a vehicle that can be used by teachers to untangle some of the complexities that occur in the profession, raise teachers' voices in discussions of educational reform, and ultimately transform assumptions about the teaching profession itself" (Dana & Yendel-Hoppey, 2008, p. 2). By utilizing such methods as teacher research, autobiographical narrative, and analysis such as the LG, voices remain intact. By producing narrative, teachers are empowered by sharing stories in an organized, transformative pathway. "The potential for creating reciprocal, dialogic research designs is rooted in . . . people's self-understandings . . . . Such designs lead to self-reflection and provide a forum for people to participate in the theory's construction and validation" (Lather, 1991, p. 65).

In encouraging teachers' voices to be more present in research, it is often an educator's objective to foster agency as well. A sense of agency or autonomy may be thought of in the context of the democratic ideals of Dewey ([1916] 1944), in that education can sustain a democratic life as a set of relationships and a code of living. Central to critical literacy, especially when reading or writing from a feminist perspective, is the notion of the awakenings one experiences when discovering the powers that have held women and other marginalized powers, such as teachers, in place for centuries (Davies, 1993).

Feminist educational research is necessary to make sense of the traditionally interwoven themes of goodness and femaleness that have prevailed in several aspects of American culture. Given that the LG is feminist in nature, it was well suited to many educational research questions because the LG provides spaces for the voices of those populations that have traditionally been silenced. The LG provides ample opportunities for the researcher to systematically and constructively attend to the many dimensions and tenor of voices as well as make sense of the intertwining and complex relationships in a study.

Originally conceived in the field of psychology, the LG is a method of analysis that calls upon "voice, resonance, and relationship as ports of entry into the human psyche" (Gilligan et al., 2006, p. 253). Gilligan (2015) reminds qualitative researchers that the word "method" means way, and the LG offers a way of listening that is designed to facilitate psychological discovery. The creators of the LG utilized several theories to create this labor-intensive and involved methodology, including relational psychological theory, psychoanalytic theory, literary theory, music theory, and feminist theory (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 2015; Gilligan et al., 2006; Way, 2001). Because of some universal human traits, such as voice, silence, and communication, the method is universal in application. Notable studies utilizing the LG have been done in such fields as gender studies/sexuality (e.g., Koelsch, 2015; Tolman, 2002), women in workplace transition (Balan, 2005), life coaching (e.g., Woodcock, 2010b), education (e.g., Raider-Roth, 2005; 2015; Woodcock, 2003, 2005, 2010a, 2015), and most recently applied to data beyond interview transcripts when applied to analysis of written reflection papers in the professional field of dietetics (Petrovic et al., 2015).

Since educational researchers often highlight theorists from developmental psychology and sociocultural historical studies, the LG can be helpful. For example, as it pertains to literacy education, engagement and reflection with texts can empower girls to reexamine and trust what they think and feel (Raider-Roth, 2005). The examination of relationships has informed many disciplines, including psychology and human development; now the accentuation on relationships can yield new understandings in the field of literacy education (e.g., Woodcock, 2003, 2005, 2010a, 2015) and beyond.

How to Use the LG

The procedure behind the LG calls for each interview to be listened to at least four discrete times. In order to engage in the LG, it is essential that interviews be audio recorded. In most cases, proper permission must be obtained in order to audio record someone, such as written informed consent, or through institutional review board processes at universities. Once sessions have been recorded, they must be transcribed, so that the researcher may more closely examine his or her practice. It is recommended that the transcripts be read while listening to the audio recording, each time one engages in a listening. This process, although time consuming, allows for a deep familiarity with the nuances of the data. A color-coding process helps to organize and establish visual indicators within the data. Without the colors, it may become difficult to visually distinguish themes as ongoing, layering analysis occurs. Colors could be as traditional as colored pencils on hard copies of transcripts or color coding electronically with the transcripts appearing on a screen.

The First Listening

Listening for plot. During the first listening, the main objective is to attend to the stories that informants share. The researcher is to articulate a succinct, yet rich synopsis of the basic trends and themes emerging from the first listening, in order to hear the general scope of an informant's story (Woodcock, 2010b). As a researcher listens to and reads interviews, a gradual understanding of the informant's main story lines emerges, and this process is referred to as "listening for plot" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Raider-Roth, 2000). The first listening of the LG gives the researcher an overview of the informant's experiences. Some important elements to be aware of are the informant's stories or the "plot"; emotional resonance; repeated words, phrases, and images; information and comments that jump out at the researcher; contradictions; omissions; and revisions (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Raider-Roth, 2000, 2014; Taylor et al., 1995; Way, 1998). A researcher may carefully trace and record such details. Keeping track of such details in a color-coded fashion may help the researcher to stay organized and focused. In this way, the researcher may follow not only what is significant to the research but just as importantly what is meaningful to the informant. A researcher may also note what portions of the informant's stories necessitate further analysis (Woodcock, 2010b).

Trail of evidence. Researchers need not be shy about developing a creative, color-coded system of their choosing to organize themes that they see emerging from the data. A researcher may also consider placing stars or other markings in the margins of sections that may require further attention in subsequent listenings (Woodcock, 2010b). This purposeful rainbow of color-coded sequences allows one to create a "trail of evidence" to later support one's claims (Brown, Tappan, Gilligan, Miller, & Argyris, 1989; Raider-Roth, 2000, 2014; Taylor, et al., 1995). It is very helpful to create a master list of the themes to later examine overlapping patterns across participants or across sessions.

Silence. Next, a researcher is supposed to look for evidence of silence at any point during the interview(s). Silence may manifest itself as pauses noted in the transcript as well as instances of informants either lowering their voices or allowing their voices to trail off. "(T)ake care to note the silences and collect related evidence that might explain these moments of quiet" (Raider-Roth, 2000, p. 46). Educational research sometimes places emphasis on voice and silence because they are both deeply embedded in the intricacies of confusion, resistance, ideology, and knowledge. Although the use of this particular methodology will not lead to absolute truths or vast generalizations, it was Brown and Gilligan's (1992) intention that the LG be used to hear the voices of those populations who

have traditionally been silenced, such as educators, and to glean understandings from those informants that may be "worthy of others' attention" (p. 23).

Reader response. As researchers, we must be careful to avoid using our participants' voices to tell our own stories. LG cofounders, Brown and Gilligan (1992), cautioned researchers to utilize the first listening to pay careful attention to one's own "reader response." The first listening demands that the researcher be mindful of and take note of his or her own responses, questions, and confusions. By examining the transcripts in this honest, ongoing way, the researcher is able to appropriately learn from the tensions, the moments of feeling lost, and/or the times when connections are made with the informant (Woodcock, 2010b). Since personal agendas can potentially inhibit the listening process in this type of research (Anderson & Jack, 1991), the first listening portion of the LG affords the researcher opportunities to note all personal reactions to the research, developing a closeness to his or her own reactions to the story (Raider-Roth, 2000, 2014). These reactions and reflections are not simply noted and ignored; instead, these reactions are openly explored in the research process and used as prompts to promote thinking and analysis. This reader response feature of the method helps to strengthen validity in the ways it pays attention to personal reflexivity. As educators, we may explore how personal values and social constructs play a role in one's practice and interpretations. In addition, there is an element of epistemological reflexivity in the LG in the ways it heightens further attention to findings and implications of one's practice and research (Woodcock, 2010b).

The Second Listening

Before embarking on the second listening, it is recommended that researchers revisit their research question(s). What is the focus? The focus will determine those trends to emphasize and explore in more depth. At this stage, the researcher will place all of his or her concentration on the informant's voice of the self, which is most often expressed as the first-person "I." In this way, a researcher may meticulously attend to the thoughts, wishes, desires, needs, conflicts, and silences spoken by the informant by tracing them in a purposeful way (Woodcock, 2010b). This allows the researcher to hear a depth in the informants' stories that is not possible by just looking at basic plot and themes in transcripts (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Raider-Roth, 2000, 2014).

"I poems". Arguably, the most distinctive function of the LG is the creation of I poems or "voice poems." The rationale behind constructing voice poems is 2-fold. First, it provides a systematic way for researchers to listen to an informant's first-person voice and to attend to any distinctive patterns within it. Second, this methodical attention to voice provides us with opportunities to hear how informants speak of themselves in relationship to themselves and others (Woodcock, 2010b).

The beginning of the second listening is spent studying all of the color-coded marks that have already been made during the first listening, which denote themes. Amid the themes, are there any particularly noteworthy series of "I" statements that stand out? During the second listening, it is suggested to listen to a recording of the given interview, while reading the transcript again. A researcher may use different color-coding systems to underline phrases with "I," "me," "you," and "we." Upon completion of the listening, which were the most intriguing segments of "I"s? It is helpful to focus on just two or three of those segments at a time, so as not to become overwhelmed. Rewrite each of the phrases in their order of appearance, creating poems from each of the stories and analyzing and making notes in the margin while writing the poems. This analysis will culminate with a summary of what was found during this listening (Woodcock, 2010b).

Often, the "I" voice is intermingled with "you"s and "they"s, which may be interpreted as internal dialogues and/or dissonance within the informant. It can be enlightening to display the interspersement of "you" and "they" with "I" in order to convey and explore a person's feelings and tensions within a given theme. "The 'I poems' and 'voice poems' are central to this analysis as they draw out the internal conversations so that they are audible and the nuances can readily be seen" (Raider-Roth, 2000, p. 49).

Utilize only one identified segment of transcript at a time, so as to stay organized and cohesive. According to Gilligan et al. (2006), two rules manage the construction of an I poem. First, extract every first-person "I" within the given excerpt, along with the verb and any seemingly important accompanying information. Second, maintain the precise sequence in which the phrases originally occurred in the person's story. As the lines are extracted, they remain sequenced, but placed in separate lines, like the lines of a poem. Often, I poems capture concepts not directly stated by the informant, yet central to the meaning of what he or she has said. In any case, the I poem attends to an associative stream of consciousness carried by the first-person voice running through a narrative rather than being contained by the full structure of sentences. Focusing just on the "I" pronoun, and at times, its relation to other pronouns, brings the informant's subjectivity to the foreground, providing the researcher with the opportunity to attend just to the rhythms and patterns in the informant's relationships to himself or herself and to others as expressed in his or her narratives (Woodcock, 2010b).

The second listening focuses the self-voice of the informant; how he or she speaks about himself or herself (Brown & Gilligan, 1992), while listening to the informant speak on his or her own terms (Way, 1998). What is he or she saying when he or she refers to himself or herself? How does he or she describe himself or herself? This is often expressed by the use of "I," "me," and "you." By following the "I" statements of the informant, a researcher can listen for the informant's "thoughts, desires, wishes, needs, conflicts, and silences that are articulated in the first-person voice" (Raider-Roth, 2000, p. 47). The "sense of I" is the "psyche" of the individual that he

or she brings to the interview to each question (Gilligan, Brown, & Rogers, 1990, p. 97). What is he or she really saying/thinking? This analysis process allows the researcher to respond to the informant both emotionally and intellectually. In other words, as the researcher develops a relationship with the informant's self-voice, the researcher becomes an even more empathic and responsive listener (Woodcock, 2010b).

Although it is illuminating to explore the ways in which an informant speaks of himself or herself, it can be even more clarifying to explore the ways in which an informant speaks of himself or herself in relation to others, such as "you" or "they." In some voice poems, the interplay of "you's" and "I's" appears meaningful on different levels. At times, informants may have simply been speaking in reference to "you" or an "other." Yet other times, informants may have been knowingly or unknowingly separating themselves from a particular statement by using the pronoun "you," rather than owning the statement, and using the pronoun "I" to claim a statement. It is important to be sensitive to "you" statements and possible interpretations of them, especially considering the institutional restraints and cultural norms that potentially silence voices or constrain expression (e.g., Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Woodcock, 2015).

An example of an I poem. Here is an example from Woodcock's (2003) work with Maggie. This study sought to shed insights on the role of literacy in some young women's negotiations of gender roles. After several listenings and rereadings of the interview transcripts, it was determined through color-coding analysis that Maggie struggled with a definition of "goodness" and what she thought of as "being a modern woman." Maggie explained:

> Um, yeah, it's hard to say. But um, personally, I'm not gonna define what makes a good woman, because I think it's different for every person. What would make me feel like I'm a good person is to—just being genuine, trying to make people happy . . . . I just wanna be . . . someone somebody can always go to. Will listen to them, give them a smidgen of good advice. And for me, I want, I've always thought about having children. And I think being a good mother would make me a better person. And being a good wife, girlfriend, is very important to me. Family has just always been so huge to me . . . . I think if you're a good mother, wife, sister, cousin, friend . . . that's what makes you . . . Just to be a well-rounded person would be my, my definition of who I want to be as a woman.

In this excerpt, Maggie proclaims that she alone cannot define a "good woman" because everyone's definition is different, depending on what is valued. In Maggie's case, she values "making people happy." In this quote, she yearns to listen and to give advice. Maggie also longs for family, and her personal definition of good woman entails mothering and marriage. In order to attend to the nuances in Maggie's first-person statements, the author constructed a voice poem from the passage above. By creating a voice poem, Woodcock (2003) was able to

attend to Maggie's "I" statements, in the ways she spoke about herself in relation to others, or "Them."

I	You	Them
I'm not gonna define		
I think		
I'm a good person		
I just wanna be,		
		listen to them
		give them
I want		
I've always thought		
I think being a good mother would make me a better person.		
I think		
	you're a good mother, wife, sister, cousin, friend	
	that's what makes you	
I want to be as a woman		

From this voice poem, Maggie boldly announces that she will not define a universal truth for what makes a good person. In statements such as "I think" and "I'm a good person," Maggie's ponders the individuality of what constitutes goodness. As she proclaims, "I just wanna be," her voice helps her to understand what qualities she defines for herself as "good." The "them" statements illustrate that Maggie values the ways she relates to others, articulating such qualities as listening to others as good. In the line "give them" is a significant part of how she defines herself and how she makes meaning by relating to others. Her spirit returns again in saying, "I want" and "I've always thought," as she continues to passionately negotiate gender and adult roles.

Some lines are different in tone, so the sentence was left in its entirety for the poem; for example, "I think being a good mother would make me a better person." In this statement, one interpretation is that Maggie dismisses herself and her own goodness in saying that she would be a better person for having mothered a child. In this line, Maggie's lively, confident self is in tension with aspects of convention to which she feels she must aspire. Did Maggie believe that a woman must be a mother in order to lead a better, more fulfilling life? In her use of "you" in the poem, Maggie may have been making a generalization that a good woman encompasses this blanketed notion of goodness surrounding the various roles women play, such as mother, wife, sister, cousin, and friend. An awareness of the cultural pressures on women to dissociate themselves from their own desires and knowledge and an interest in how people construct conflicts and choices they are facing informed Gilligan's (1982, 2015) approaches to the LG as well as her discoveries in her groundbreaking book, *In a Different Voice*.

The Third and Fourth Listenings

Cofounders of the LG (e.g., Gilligan et al., 2006) refer to third and fourth listenings as contrapuntal. It is a more detailed, comprehensive way for a researcher to revisit his or her research questions by examining his or her color-coded

transcripts. Third and fourth listenings are another avenue for creating voice poems to explore the ways themes either melodiously interact or are in tension with one another. Themes were decided upon by the researcher by first listening for plot (e.g., Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Raider-Roth, 2000, 2014) and by secondly sketching a trail of evidence (Brown et al., 1989; Raider-Roth, 2000; Taylor et al., 1995). The first and second listenings pave the path for substantiating claims that those themes are indeed demonstrative of an informant's way of making meaning. Then the contrapuntal third and fourth listenings are a way to further examine the voices and how they relate to one another (Woodcock, 2015).

Contrapuntal listenings allow the researcher to focus on the various ways in which informants speak of relationships in their lives (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). The third and fourth listenings are meant to allow the researcher opportunities to bring to light insights into how the informant attends to his or her life, as a way of knowing or as a channel of discovery (Woodcock, 2010b). A key feature of these two listenings is to extract two themes of the narrative that melodiously react with one another or that are in tension with each other (Raider-Roth, 2000, p. 50). This tension or interweaving of the two themes is termed by Gilligan et al. (1990, p. 115) as "contrapuntal." The crucial aspect is to look at these two themes as being in relation to one another. Referring back to color-coded themes, one may see that colors tend to overlap at particular places. This harmony of color flashes a tangible sign that those overlying colors are the badge of a contrapuntal point for analysis and exploration (Woodcock, 2010b). When thoroughly examined, contrapuntal listenings can potentially unveil vital understandings, illustrating how the themes interlace into an elaborate measure of insight. Contrapuntal listening exemplifies the relational nature of the method because it directly lends itself to uncovering the relationships to be found in the informants' stories (Woodcock, 2010b).

How to Do Contrapuntal Listenings, With an Example

Once again, listen to the interview recording and read the transcript while underlining phrases that relate to either of the two themes that appear to overlap. It may be helpful to rewrite all that is underlined, all while analyzing and making notes in the margins. The analyses and notes from the two readings will then be summarized. Although third and fourth listenings are sometimes done separately, they are analyzed together, noting the relationship they have to each other, how they talk to each other. As a researcher, you may ask yourself, "What is this relational conversation telling me about the informant that is pertinent to the research?"

In this particular example, based on the work of Woodcock (2015), the research followed a literacy coach, Phyllis, who was about to retire and sought to share insights with newer teachers. In the study, Phyllis explained,

> As coaches, we need to be more inviting. Schools need to move beyond tolerant to hospitable.... There is a reciprocity between the roles of guest and host.... That ideal of perfection silences and

disempowers people.... Finding voices is challenging because it is uncomfortable.

Contrapuntal third and fourth listenings afford the researcher a pathway to interpret the passage as this idea of perfection perpetuating silence and disempowerment.

> Yet, the only true pathway out of that silence is voice. Having space and opportunity for voice can be uncomfortable, though. We may feel that discomfort in our bodies. We need trusting relationships in order to have our voices heard. Although voice can feel risky, vulnerability is not the opposite of strength; we need layers of vulnerability in order to be strong. (Woodcock, 2015, p. 26)

New Uses of the LG

Introduction. Obviously, the LG is one method of analysis among many. For obvious reasons, the LG is not for everybody and is not appropriate for every form of research. The LG is most appropriate for research questions that ask informants to draw upon complex, internal dialogues, which they may have never previously shared (Woodcock, 2010b). At times, a researcher requires a method of analysis that allows himself or herself to hear the intricacies and various voices in interview transcripts (e.g., Raider-Roth, 2000, p. 45). The LG is only meant for researchers who need to systematically and constructively attend to the many dimensions and tenor of voices as well as make sense of the intertwining and complex relationships in a study (Woodcock, 2010b).

The LG requires the active engagement of the researcher throughout the analysis because it is intended to be a series of steps that provide a basic frame rather than a set of prescriptive rules to be precisely followed (Gilligan et al., 2006, p. 268). As is the case with any analytical method, researchers create various ways of implementing the four listenings of the LG to fit the needs of diverse studies and types of research questions. Each researcher must make decisions on how specifically to utilize each step of the LG, based on the particular research questions, and what is unearthed during the research process (Gilligan et al., 2006). In this section, the author will share explicit examples of how the LG has been sculpted to share methodological and research-oriented insights. First, the author will share examples of how themes may be explored in voice poems using language other than "I" and "you." Second, the author will demonstrate other features of contrapuntal listenings in the form of graphics.

New voice poems. As researchers listen to interviews, we sometimes notice how an informant speaks of himself or herself, and at other times, it is even more illuminating to discover the ways in which the informant speaks of himself or herself in relation to others, such as "you" or "they." In some voice poems, the interplay of "you's" and "I's" may appear meaningful on different levels, and it is okay to explore that pathway. At times, informants may have simply been speaking in reference to "you" or an "other." Yet on other occasions, informants

may have been knowingly or unknowingly separating themselves from a particular statement by using the pronoun "you," rather than owning the statement, and using the pronoun "I" to claim a statement (Woodcock, 2010b).

To illustrate the effectiveness of this method, an example of a voice poem follows. This example comes from Woodcock's (2003; 2010a) work with Emilia. In this excerpt, Emilia was explaining the conflict of why she enjoys reading magazines, while at the same time, she refers to the magazines as a guilty pleasure:

> To me it's like a guilty pleasure because like, ok, so here's the way I'm supposed to be, and here's the way I'm supposed to dress . . . and there's that whole the do's and don'ts of relationships . . . you end up getting sucked into these articles . . . Sometimes, it makes me like, oh my god, get a grip like. You read it, and like girls write in, and you feel like oh my god. (laughs) Wow! . . . I remember it was sort of like this metaphorical thing. I was flipping through *Cosmo* and there's all these women like beautifully made up and stuff and like, the best clothes. And the one thing I kept noticing is that they have really nice hands and really nice nails and I was looking at my own hands, flipping the page. I was like, oh my god! Because my fingernails are short because I play guitar and I uh, am always like building things or something like that. And it was just sort of funny how my hands sort of like stained the whole image . . . . I don't know how I could really describe it. There's part of me that wants to do it and wants to know what other people are doing, and what the norm is up to . . . . But sometimes I find myself, like comparing? And contrasting like, what other girls are concerned about . . . . I never write anyone's feelings off, but a lot of times to me, it's sort of like, laughable? I just really feel like those aren't concerns of mine at all. And a lot of it comes from like, males. Those are concerns that I don't have because I'm not worried about impressing a man, or trying to understand a man.

By creating a voice poem, Woodcock (2003; 2010a) was able to attend to Emilia's "I" statements in the ways she spoke about herself in relation to this context. In the poem, "it" refers to the notion of guilty pleasure that Emilia addressed. "They" refers to the "other," which in this case, is "the norm" or the girls in the magazine.

I	You	It	They
		Guilty pleasure	
I'm supposed to be,			
I'm supposed to dress.			
	you end up getting sucked into		
		it makes me	
	You read it,		
			girls write in,
	you feel		
I remember			
			it was sort of like this metaphorical thing.
I was flipping through *Cosmo*			
			these women
I kept noticing			
			they have

I was looking at my own hands
I was like, oh my god!
I play guitar
I uh, am always like building

my hands sort of like stained the whole image.

I don't know

                             the norm is up to.

I find myself, like comparing?

                         what other girls

I never

                it's sort of like, laughable?

I just really feel

                it comes from like, males.

I don't

I'm not worried about impressing a man

By reading and examining the voice poem, a reader can see that the first line refers to this notion of guilty pleasure. The voice poem helps to examine guilty pleasure in depth in Emilia's own words. While guilty pleasure is often associated with indulgence in the forbidden, the researcher discovered that Emilia refers to magazines as a guilty pleasure for several, perhaps less obvious, reasons. Emilia's supposed guilt derived from her feeling of being torn between the norm, or what she is "supposed to be," and who she is becoming. While the magazine played a role in Emilia questioning herself, the questioning was not always negative, as evidenced at the end of the poem, saying "I don't, I'm not worried about impressing a man." Emilia exhibited a distinctly pragmatic way of making meaning, thereby understanding that she can be whatever she would like to be as a woman and not what the pages of a magazine tell her are the norm in order to impress another. From a complex poem such as this, much discussion and analysis can continue (Woodcock, 2010a).

By creating different forms of voice poems, a researcher can attend to an informant's language in intricate ways, even if the words do not resemble the voice poems traditionally created (e.g., Gilligan et al., 2006). Usually, voice poems highlight "I" or "you" statements; yet in Woodcock's (2015) research with Phyllis, Phyllis meaningfully referred more to "we" and "it."

Phyllis was a literacy coach embarking on retirement. Her voice was particularly anxious and apologetic during one session of the research. The tension was broken by our hearty laughter when Phyllis jokingly referred to how she had supposedly buried her dedication to "cocreate responsible partners in social living." Those were Phyllis's words when she was originally asked why she teaches. "The cocreating is taken away by the demands. Instead of thinking through a long-term vision, instead the goal of schools is marketing." Despite Phyllis's ongoing pleas for teachers to have more autonomy, even she was feeling defeated. She said, "We need to be open to nurturing the life of the student, and preserving the dignity of the individual. We take it on. We wear it. It's heavy. We feel it in our bodies" (Woodcock, 2015).

By examining the voice poem below, one interpretation is that Phyllis began to unpack her terms of "cocreating" and the
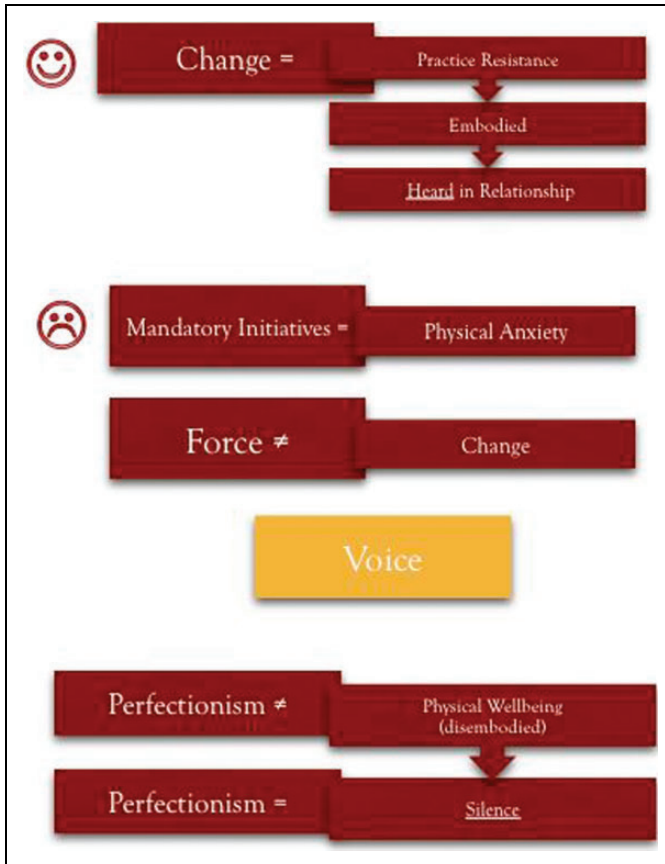
Figure 1. Visual representation of contrapuntal themes.

opposing energy force, the "demands." Under those designations, the demands become an "It" with which to be reckoned. Beneath "It," there were no "I"s or "you"s, only "we"s, which I interpret as solidarity between fellow educators (Woodcock, 2015).

Co-creating	Demands
Long-term vision	marketing
More autonomy	defeated
We need to be open	
	It
	We take it on
	We wear it
	It's heavy
	We feel it in our bodies

The original focus of the research was on how literacy coaches developed partnerships with teachers and coconstructed knowledge with teachers. With that foundation, it was vital to place a firm focus on Phyllis's language, hence the voice-centered quality of the LG, and the bridges or barriers to partnership, hence the relational aspect of the LG (Woodcock, 2015). Although the poem noted above is not what Gilligan et al. (2006) refer to as a voice poem, the purpose of constructing voice poems is 2-fold; first, it is to listen to an informant's voice to attend to any distinctive patterns

within it. Second, this methodical attention to voice provides researchers with opportunities to hear how an informant speaks of herself in relationship to herself and others. By constructing this voice poem, Woodcock (2015) and readers were provided with further insights into what "cocreating responsible partners in social living" meant to Phyllis, in such fashions as openness, autonomy, and long-term vision. Through the construction of the voice poem, it became clearer that Phyllis believed that hierarchically imposed demands get in the way of that creative freedom, since public schools have to look successful in the mainstream marketing stream, rendering teachers defeated. That defeated, disembodied "It" is expressed in the "we" statements, signifying a comradery among teachers who feel disengaged in the face of the storm (Woodcock, 2015). In short, the innovative twists on the LG's voice poems unearth understandings that may not have otherwise existed.

Graphics of contrapuntal listenings. During LG analysis, third and fourth listenings, referred to by Gilligan et al. (2006) as contrapuntal, are a more in-depth way for a researcher to revisit research questions and explore the ways themes either melodiously interact or are in tension with one another. Contrapuntal third and fourth listenings are a way to further examine themes and how they relate to one another. In Figure 1, a one may see the ways that silence and body overlapped in Woodcock's (2015) research with Phyllis, a literacy coach. This particular research had implications for the ways knowledge is (dis)embodied.

In Figure 1, the graphic helps illustrate how, according to Phyllis, positive change happens when educators may practice resistance, leading to embodiment, as experienced through being heard in a sincere relationship. Compulsory initiatives produce physical anxiety. Force does not equal change. Voiced, embodied experience gives way to real change. Perfectionism does not equal physical well-being. Lack of well-being is disembodiment, which is linked to silence. In the end, we must return to the first statement, which is that positive change happens when educators can practice resistance, feeling embodied and heard in genuine relationships. Through the assistance of Figure 1, and by taking creative liberties with the LG to see patterns in sustained, visual ways, Woodcock (2015) and readers may see how silence and body overlap, and those specific implications for the ways knowledge are embodied or (dis)embodied, which is often related to the availability of a trusted relationship.

Conclusions

The qualitative, relational, voice-centered, feminist methodology of the LG (e.g., Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2006; Taylor et al., 1995; Tolman, 2002; Way, 1998) has the potential to provide researchers with the resources and structure necessary to unearth insights to certain research questions in a comprehensive quality. For example, some researchers attribute the relational emphasis

of the method to the ways they are able to position themselves as true listeners, thus constructing a comfortable yet professional environment for informants to feel at ease in sharing personal aspects of their lives.

Informants' input, especially in member checks, can be crucial in shaping a holistic and valid piece to share with others (Woodcock, 2003). The voice-centered aspect of the LG enables researchers to hear the complexities of the informants' voices. In fact, some theorists hold the epistemological belief that voice is a way of constructing meaning (e.g., Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997).

In addition, the feminist grounding of the LG provides space for the role and voice of researcher to be evident in the research. "(A)s a researcher, I am no more, no different from the subjects of my research" (Walkerdine, 1997, p. 73). Feminist methodologies allow the researchers' involvement to have meaning and provide researchers the opportunity to uphold the significance of reciprocity between researcher and researched (Lather, 1991). In sincere democratic fashion, feminist methods such as the LG allow the researcher and researched to be active, coproducers of each work.

When Gilligan (1982) was working on her landmark text, *In a Different Voice*, she asked some of her participants, "Was there ever a time when you wanted to say something but felt you couldn't?" One of the participants in a study of girls' development responded: "All the time, that's my life" (Gilligan, 2015). This same silence often occurs in the field of teaching. Teachers should not simply be thought of as consumers of culture but as producers of it as well (Woodcock, 2015). Production theorists uphold that power and privilege are awarded to some groups and not to others, as the result of capitalism and patriarchy, and that there is a potential for change inherent in the practice of production (Holland & Eisenhart, 1990, p. 32). Cultural production is one avenue through which marginalized populations either empower themselves or unknowingly perpetuate traditional subordination. When teachers produce their own educational research, they are the authors with agency, and they require methodologies that support their unique inquiries and voices.

The qualitative, relational, voice-centered, feminist methodology of the LG (e.g., Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2006; Taylor et al., 1995; Tolman, 2002; Way, 1998) provides the resources and structure necessary to unearth insights to research questions in a comprehensive quality. The feminist grounding of the LG allows the researcher's involvement to have meaning and allows for the democratic reciprocity between researcher and researched (Lather, 1991). As Gilligan (2015) reflects on the historical implications of the LG, she inspires qualitative researchers to "create the conditions in which people can safely tell their stories to someone who is listening and who can be trusted to bring their voices into conversations about human experience" (p. 75). As qualitative researchers dedicated to sharing the stories of our participants, the hope is that the LG provides us with insights to get closer to this goal.

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