

Quality of presence

A focus on how we are in a situation: on our breathing, posture, emotions, bodily sensations.

Short intro what is this

The voice, the body, the presence of the educator are her main tools, everything she does is mediated through her presence. The word presence inevitably evokes a double perspective: internal and external, presence perceived and seen. We have an internal sensation about our body, and at the same time it makes a visual impression on others. The same is true for our voice, our emotional landscapes and our self-presentation strategies. Our video-based method will help bridge this apparent gap between the internal and the external, helping you to be able to use the inner sensations as feedback in a more mindful way, with a little bit of more awareness.

Presentation of categories

- Use of voice: verbal and para-verbal communication

Our voice reaches us through a different channel than it reaches other people, which means that in everyday circumstances we'd never hear it as others do, we'd never know what we actually sound like. The items referring to the voice will help you map your vocal profile (rhythm, segmentation, accentuation, tonality, melody) and identify what aspects are completely in line with your self-image, what are aspects that you are ready to assume and what are aspects which you'd wish to change. (Guimbretière 2014:25).

- Use of body: non-verbal communication

Our bodies communicate all the time, even when we are not aware of it. Our movements can serve the clarity of our message or intentions but can also undermine them. Non-verbal communication encompasses all these aspects: postures (how we stand), facial expressions, gestures, proxemics (distance relative to other people), use of objects (such as clothes and equipment), movement vs. immobility, the rhythm of movements

and physical contact. Each of these aspects contribute to meaning, in fact in specific contexts any element can alone send a complete message (e.g. turning our back to someone who asked as a question). How we use these elements is a consequence of our cultural socialisation as well as our personal dispositions, but often we are not aware of how this actually happens. In terms of the functions of the gestures, Muller distinguishes three types: imitative gestures will illustrate what is being said, punctuation gestures will try to add emphasis to certain parts of the message and "parasitic" gestures are involuntary and are not directly connected to the verbal message, they are sometimes attributed to embarrassment and stress (Muller 2005 :196).

- Felt sensations and emotional states

Up to the present it seems that there are relatively few resources for teachers / trainers on their own emotions (rather than the emotions of the learners) despite the fact that regulating their emotions is a key factor in decision-making and teaching effectiveness (Sutton 2004). Regulating is not the same as hiding or suppressing, rather it means to become aware of them, labelling them and being able to understand their sources. This conscientisation helps to avoid reacting on the emotion in an involuntary way and to address what may have caused the emotion. Evidence also suggests that manifesting positive emotions can contribute to teaching effectiveness (Sutton 2004).

- Self-presentation strategies used

Self-presentation refers to all that we do trying to control the impressions we make on other people, and to our efforts of making others accept the images that we claim for ourselves. If at first self-presentation may seem a fairly superficial concern, its close connection to some of the very basic motives such as belonging, understanding and –especially in the 'West'– self-enhancement indicate that it touches on deeper layers

of who we are. The first comprehensive model of the different self-presentation strategies was proposed by Jones and Pittman (1982). He identified five strategies each characterised by a desired attribution: how we want the other to perceive us, and what are the emotions we would like to generate in the other. Ingratiation, or appearing nice focuses on appearing likeable and pleasing others. Self-promoters would like to appear competent and be respected. Intimidation wishes to inspire fear establish power hierarchy and seize control.

Supplication – sometimes connected to ‘strategic incompetence’ - calls for nurturance and seeks an obligation to help. Finally, exemplification wishes to expose one as an example of moral superiority. Though at first sight you may feel inclined to state that some strategies are more adapted to the teaching context than others, our aim here is merely to raise awareness of the strategies we tend to use most, and see to what extent they are aligned with how we think of ourselves.