



Our Voices Tell Our Stories

Exploring the Importance of
the Human Voice in Life
Stories, Oral Social Histories,
Tales of Resistance, Survival
& Reconciliation
An Online Course

Our ability to tell our story in our own voice is central to our autonomy.

In the transmission of intergenerational knowledge hearing the teller's voice is as vital to our understanding as the sharing of memories and experiences. Knowing & telling 'stories of place' builds belonging, appreciation of & respect for environments and landscapes. These oral stories confirm 'customs of place', celebrations and share collective wisdom held within communities.

Preserving oral histories provides records & voices of resistance during times of oppression and uncertainty.

Storying together means we discover difference & uniqueness, discover our humanity-in-common, inclusivity, respect, truth-telling & narratives of reconciliation. We experience and learn to honour the silences of the unrepresentable within survivor, witness and bystander stories, and we learn how the folktale or myth can speak softly where the individual story has lost its 'voice'.

This online course explores the unique and powerful affect, the inspiration and immediacy our human voice creates when we tell our stories, especially our family or life stories, but also oral histories, national historic narratives and the narration of counter narratives that create the full spectrum of voices, inclusivity, respect, truth-telling and possibilities of reconciliation. Only our human voice can hold the silences of the unrepresentable (violence, abuse, genocide, etc.) held within survivor, witness and bystander stories. The telling of traditional folktales or myths allow us to speak softly through this imagery where the personal becomes 'lost for words'.

Voice is here exclusively used in the sense of oral human utterance and oral expression.

Why bother? Collective storying creates and accumulates communal wisdom and supports individual autonomy while cultivating empathy and mutual understanding. Storytelling is a collaborative art form that builds community resilience. Sharing our experiences, weaving our memories, transmitting storied knowing between generations, are an act of wisdom sharing and relationship building to place, culture, kith and kin, where the human voice of the teller is as vital as the content being told.

Accounts of genocides and persecution, however painful, create and preserve oral History; a record and voice of resistance during times of oppression and pathways of transformation. Learning to tell these stories is in itself a process of empowerment leading to the ability to narrate our own lives in our own voice.

We will explore the relationship between the human voice and paralinguistic elements that cannot be encapsulated in a written form without diminishing their expressive power: interjections, postures, gestures, breath and voice modulation, tempo changes, crying and weeping, laughter and silences. We will explore the human voice and silence, silence and story, and silence imposed by trauma.

This course is of particular importance and highly beneficial to educators working in upper-middle to high school, those working professionally in Youth- and Social work, Community, Health, Death- & Aged Care, Rehabilitation, Correctional Services, and Cultural-Social Arts. The course is designed to support those interested in to provide ways for people of all ages in all circumstances to find and develop 'their voice', to learn how to tell their story, but also to learn how to listen to, understand and respect the stories told by others.

Online Course content:

Sessions are held from 3:00 - 5:00 (dates on request). All participants receive written notes. Sessions are not recorded.

Topic 1 Liminal Space: Public Liminality; Holding 'Space' for One Another

Topic 2 Sharing Experiences—Weaving Memories—The Act of Transmission I: Family Stories

Topic 3 Oral Histories versus National History; Spectrum of Voices, Respect, Truth-telling, Reconciliation

Topic 4 Experiencing Difference, Discovering Common Humanity: The Key is Taking Time

Topic 5 Orality—Silence and Story; Overcoming Abstraction, Depersonalisation and Distance—Transforming the Bystander

For Professional Development participants

Estimated Workload: 40 hours

Online (group): 24 hours

Independent research, writing, practice and preparation: 14 hours

Cost: \$400; Early Bird \$360

Bio: Iris Curteis is a highly accomplished storyteller and presenter; her background includes Visual Art, Speechformation and Dramatic Art (Europe), B.A. and B.A. hon. (creative writing), Ph.D. Storytelling and Community building (Australia).

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