

Seeking a Brain, Heart and Courage: On Becoming a Holistic Teacher

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Abstract

This paper uses the story of the Wizard of Oz to help explain and understand the vital characteristics and capabilities of a holistic teacher: knowledge, caring and courage. It explores the process of human development as an outcome of developing these faculties and explains their interrelationship so that educators and their students might better understand and realize their potentialities.

Like most children of the Boomer generation, I grew up watching the Wizard of Oz annually on TV. It is a classic story for this generation of Americans. As I look back on my life and my thirty some years in education, I find my story, and the story of many of the teachers and teachers to be I have worked with can be told or understood as our own journeys to Oz and finding our way home. Each of the primary characters, Dorothy, the scarecrow, the tin man, and the lion represent aspects of our selves that need to be developed in order for us to become truly whole as individuals and teachers. As we develop these capacities we can more effectively share them with others and help others develop them themselves. Until teachers find their authentic voices they will be of limited success in the business of educating. After all, “we teach who we are” (Palmer, 1983, 1998).

The story The Wizard of Oz provides an archetype for helping aspiring teacher candidates find the brains, heart and courage they will need to be successful teachers, even when they are unaware of it. This search for truth, love and inner fortitude is a journey down the yellow brick road to becoming a teacher (Metcalf & Smith-Shank, 2001; House 2000). Like the Wizard, we do not actually give our students brains, heart and courage, rather we help them to realize and develop these capacities in themselves.

As teachers become more truthful, loving and audacious, they develop personally and professionally. Like Dorothy, who helped her friends each find their unique voice, dedicated teacher educators can help their teacher candidates to seek for and develop the qualities needed to be flourishing educators. Truth, the goal of the tin man’s search, love, the scarecrow’s ultimate aim, and courage to do good, the lion’s desire, are all aspects needed to find Dorothy’s home of authentic self. As knowledge, feelings and volition are used in service to further develop their brains, hearts and courage, it better enables them to make healthier choices that contribute to the greatest good for the greatest number.

Through the trials and tests along life’s path, we overcome our immature limited identities which are based on external, superficial or physical conceptions of who we are. One of the great challenges on the journey is to not become a slave or captive to these external forces. Once we have fallen under the spell of our imagined selves, it takes great heart and courage to free ourselves from being dominated and controlled by them. Our development is dependent on finding and using our brains, hearts and courage in search of the true self.

At the beginning of our individual yellow brick road as a small child, we are often guided by magical or mythical thinking, feeling and willing with limited awareness of causality. Without

sufficiently developed brain, heart and courage, we are dependent on others for our welfare. Gradually, we learn that some actions result in positive consequences and others, negative repercussions. As we learn to properly direct and control our responses to the circumstances of life, we further our progress on the yellow brick road of development. With experience comes increased understanding and autonomy. As we overcome the challenges of life and become a more adept, we develop more effective repertoires on how we think (brain), feel (heart) and act (courage). When we do not adequately use these capacities, or when we use them irresponsibly, we bring suffering on ourselves and others. In the tin man, scarecrow, lion and Dorothy’s efforts to attain their goals, they each encounter problems facing the witches, flying monkeys, bad apple trees, fields of poppies and other obstacles and hurdles along their journey. They needed to develop fortitude, vision, hope and persistence to overcome their limitations. As we work through faulty or distorted theories, values, needs and desires, our views become more aligned with reality. We are better able to access and work on our inner world of purely personal and subjective states, sensations, thought and feelings.

As we make good choices, develop more capacity and gain a more accurate knowledge of how the world works, we draw closer to the home of our true selves. Each challenge successfully overcome further motivates us and increases our courage to advance down the road toward Oz. As we learn to meet our needs in a legitimate, responsible, moral and honest manner we develop greater self mastery, autonomy and happiness. When we do not, we fall into diversions, dependencies and addictions to escape the suffering we experience and become prey to impulses and desires we find difficult to resist, which can rob us of the freedom, happiness, brain, heart and courage we seek.

We develop as we learn to delay gratification, control our impulses, strive to gain a victory over our own selves, correct our views of reality and ourselves, understand the problems we cause ourselves and others, take responsibility for our actions and fulfill our needs in a healthy manner.

Developing Perspective: The Road to Oz

All of this develops in stages or markers along the road, variously described in the literature. Table 1, *The Road to Oz in Four Developmental Stages*, very briefly gives a simplified overview of cognitive, affective, social, moral and other developmental theories related to brain, heart and courage. These theories and stages will be explored in this section.

Developmental Stages	Infancy/Early Childhood	Childhood	Adolescence	Adulthood
Self Center/ Identity	Physio/ Bio centric	Ego/Role centric	Ethno centric	World centric
Perspective (Cook-Greuter)	none	1 st -2 nd person Preconventional	3 rd person Conventional	4 th and on person Postconventional
Self Sense (Cook-Greuter)	Presocial, symbiotic, impulsive	Self-protective, rule-oriented, conformist	Self-conscious, goal-oriented conscientious	Individualistic, autonomous, ego-witnessing
Self stages (Loevinger)	Symbiotic/ Impulsive	Protective	Conformist/ Conscientious	Individualistic/ Autonomous/Integrated

Moral (Kohlberg)	Pre moral	Pre conventional	Conventional	Post conventional
Moral (Gilligan)	Pre moral	Selfish	Care	Universal Care
Socio-emotional (Erikson)	Trust , Autonomy	Initiative, Industry	Identity	Intimacy, Generativity, Integrity
Needs (Maslow)	Physiological	Safety	Belongingness	Esteem/actualization
Logical mode (Baldwin)	Prelogical	Quasi-logical	Logical	Extra-logical (hyper-logical)
Ego Types (Graves)	Autistic, magical animistic	Egocentric	Sociocentric, multiplistic, relativistic/individualistic	Systemic (integrated)

Table 1. The Road to Oz in Four Developmental Stages (Adapted from Wilber, 2000)

These developmental stages can be divided into four chronological and hierarchical phases of an individual’s life:

Developmental Stages	Infancy/Early Childhood	Childhood	Adolescence	Adulthood
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Our brains, hearts and courage, like our stories, inner values, intelligences, conceptual schemas, frameworks and worldviews, change and evolve as we grow through these phases. From these changes emerge the surface differences for beliefs and behaviors we can use to better understand both individual and collective development.

Our moral development involves our brains, hearts and courage. These stages of development have been well studied by Kohlberg (1981) and others and their findings are strongly supported by cross cultural studies (Wilber, 2000). Gilligan (1982) has framed these stages from a female perspective of caring. Whereas Kohlberg tends to locate moral development in the brain in terms of justice, Gilligan uses terms that relate more to the heart, such as caring which is further described by Noddings in relation to its application to teaching (1986). Others talk about moral development in terms related to action and courage (Hatcher, 2000). We can see moral meaning in simple things and draw value from our daily interactions. Courage, a quality of will, generates greater intentionality--the willingness and desire to act.

Moral (Kohlberg)	Pre moral	Pre conventional	Conventional	Post conventional
Moral (Gilligan)	Pre moral	Selfish	Care	Universal Care

In our earliest years, our identity is centered in our physical bodies and needs. In other words, our brains, hearts and courage all are driven or guided by our bodily instincts, desires or needs. Our bodies tell us what to think, feel and do which can be described as autistic or animistic (Graves,) focused on our physiological and survival needs (Maslow, 1971). As we grow into childhood our brains, hearts and courage shift from being mostly physiologically determined to

being more influenced by our ego and role identities. In adolescence we are shaped more by our culture, and, if we are able to transcend that limitation, can develop a larger outlook, much needed in our present global community. This can be simply charted as such:

Self Center/ Identity	Body centric	Ego/Role centric	Ethno centric	World centric
Ego Types (Graves)	Autistic, animistic	Egocentric	Sociocentric, multiplistic,	Relativistic, Systemic (integrated)
Needs (Maslow)	Physiological	Safety	Belongingness	Actualization, transcendence

We primarily feel our subjective reality, perceive concrete reality and conceive abstract reality. We do not normally separate these processes, but experience them as a seamless whole; therefore it takes great effort and insight to distinguish among them. Initially, our self is just as much a mystery to us as any other aspect of reality. We do not have spontaneous knowledge of our capacities or an understanding of the structure of objective reality. As only the self can have access to its subjective states, it is better to act so as to increase our knowledge of our true capacities and limitations.

As our identities grow, so do our perspectives and sense of who we are (Miller and Cook-Greuter, 1994; Loevinger, 1977). We first think, feel and act through an ego centric first person perspective. We do not know, care or act as if anyone else matters, because we have not yet developed a perspective that can consider anyone besides ourselves. As we mature we can begin to see, feel and behave with a second person perspective, and, as we develop, to see with added perspectives. We develop the awareness that others may see, feel and behave differently, and with some pain and a little help, begin to even see, feel and behave in ways that account for these differences. In so doing, our own ability to understand, to care and do the right thing increases. As we move through these pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional perspectives, our sense of who we are also grows as described in the following:

Perspective	none	1 st -2 nd person Preconventional	3 rd person Conventional	4 th and on person Postconventional
Self Sense (Cook-Greuter)	Presocial, symbiotic, impulsive	Self-protective, rule-oriented, conformist	Self-conscious, goal- oriented conscientious	Individualistic, autonomous, ego- witnessing
Self stages (Loevinger)	Symbiotic/ Impulsive	Protective	Conformist/ Conscientious	Individualistic/ Autonomous/Integrat ed

Our actions and motivations are determined by our inner beliefs, stories or models we construct about our reality, which reflects the current state of the perceptions, conceptions and emotional attitudes derived from the sum of all our interactions and our understanding of causality. To the degree our inner model, our theory of life, accurately reflects reality and causality; we can anticipate what will happen. If what we predict happens, then our theory is confirmed, if not, then we must adjust our theory which is either faulty (incorrect) or incomplete (inadequate). As our brains grow, we develop logic roughly as follows.

Logic (Baldwin)	Pre-logical	Quasi-logical	Logical	Extra-logical
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In defending our self image, we believe we are defending ourselves because we do not view ourselves as a mosaic of true and false, real and unreal. We see only the seamless, undifferentiated whole of “I” or “me.” The result is that we begin to bind up more and more of our mental and emotional energy in the defense of our self image with such things as rationalizing, justifying, deceiving, fear, anger, jealousy or aggression.

Another theorist, Eric Erikson (1950, 1959), conceptualized our journey to Oz as a series of crises and victories that result in social and emotional development. Just as the characters in the Wizard of Oz go through a series of challenges and tests on their road to finding their brain, heart and courage, so do we as individuals. Pain and suffering are unpleasant and should not be sought out, but are, however, an inevitable part of life, and, when necessary, should be accepted as part of the process of growth. Seeking only pleasure while avoiding hardships will not increase our consciousness and development. These hierarchical stages roughly relate to the phase of life as shown below:

Socio-emotional (Erikson)	Trust , Autonomy	Initiative, Industry	Identity	Intimacy, Generativity, Integrity
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Human behavior tends to oscillate between the individual/inner world and the group/external world. The individual attempts to come to peace, seeks independence and express self in the group. The group attempts to change individuals asking them to sacrifice self for interdependence. These foci or forms of action are referred to as the orthogonal processes of differentiation and integration (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 2004).

As some evolutionary biologists and complexity theorists have suggested, the things we value tend to involve the combination of two orthogonal processes: *differentiation* and *integration*. The simultaneous presence of both is referred to as complexity. When we talk of evolution, or progress, we usually refer to systems, ideas, behaviors, and technologies that are more complex than those that existed before. At the societal level, integration (or order, congruence) without differentiation leads to deadening conformity, just as differentiation without integration leads to chaos. (2004, p.342)

At the individual level, complexity is manifested in two forms: the intrapersonal, and the interpersonal. In terms of the first of these two forms, a complex person is one who has fully developed his or her potentialities in terms of thoughts, feelings, and motives (thus is differentiated), while at the same time being able to align these potentialities at the service of personal goals (and is thus internally integrated). (2004, p. 342)

The development of the basic human capacities is a series of differentiation, integration and generalization of our brains, hearts and courage, what are referred to as the cognitive, affective, psychomotor and conative domains in psychology. Each needs to be developed and balanced with the others to result in holistic and health development. The story of the Wizard of Oz can serve as a way to explore these concepts that may enable us to create a conceptual framework for and achieve deeper insight into human nature and development.

Conclusion

Teachers and teacher educators play an influential role in individual and social development. An increase in self knowledge that allows us to give up our faulty or incomplete views is the first step in growth and instantly releases those negative energies bound up in trying to maintain the false self concept.

When we help others develop a truer picture of their real selves, including strengths and weaknesses, and have helped them develop their brains, hearts and courage, a new reservoir of energy is freed up which results in an increase of these capabilities. When we act, our brains, hearts and courage become visible to others. Therefore, we affect not only our selves, but our environment, which can begin a cycle of growth that affects both ourselves and others. This feedback can create new motivation and lead to better ways to think, feel and act.

The Wizard of Oz can help explain and understand the vital characteristics and capabilities of a teacher: knowledge, caring and willpower. The scarecrow, the tin man and the lion can represent the process of human development as an outcome of developing our knowing, loving and willing faculties. Dorothy found her way home to her true self by helping the tin man, scarecrow and lion find their true selves. In one sense, the teachers are in the role of Dorothy as they reach out to those along their path to help them fulfill their dreams and ambitions. As we help them, we ourselves are helped along our journey. In another sense, all of the characters are different aspects of ourselves and our lives. The interplay between the brain, heart and courage in becoming a teacher and helping our students develop their potential, to get home, is a complex, unfolding and ongoing story. On our way to the gleaming Emerald City of Oz, which we think holds all our answers, we discover that much of what we think is real is but an illusion (pay no attention to that little man behind the curtain!) and that which is real is only to be found inside.

Teachers need strength to overcome the resistance, self doubt and deficiencies of the characters that inhabit the inner and outer stories of their lives. Dorothy is at her bravest and best when fighting for others. It is by doing good that we are able to overcome the evil that exists in our world and in our students' lives. When Dorothy puts out the fire on the scarecrow by throwing a bucket of water on him, she inadvertently destroys the wicked witch. Like Dorothy, teachers face evil, trickery and adversity all around them. By the teachers' qualities of brain, heart and courage students are inspired to find their own. As teachers help students to find their own gifts, talents and selves, they find their own. We find self actualization by transcending ourselves through helping others.

Like Dorothy, by developing greater authenticity (brain), altruism (heart) and autonomy (courage) through overcoming the challenges of life, teachers can progress along the road to Oz and the home of the true self that lies within each of us. As Dorothy overcame her limited authenticity, altruism and autonomy in helping others she was able to transcend these limitations and find her own way home. By believing in the capabilities of others she was able to make up her own mind and find her own voice, spirit and courage. Teacher educators can use these three fundamental capacities in human development to help their teacher candidates so they can in turn help their students realize their own potential. Through an ongoing dialogue within ourselves and

with the tin men, scarecrows, lions, witches, wizards and others that we encounter in our lives, we will come to realize, appreciate and embrace the truth that there is “no place like home”.

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