From Horizontal to Vertical Diversity
Creating a Dynamic Learning Field

An interview with Dr. Don Beck[1]

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Summary

In order to maximise learning Don Beck describes the need to individualise, verticalize and horizontalize. And that for learning to be effective in encouraging emergence the total learning field within the community needs to be mobilized.

To make this a possibility we need to move from horizontal diversity to vertical diversity, a diversity based on recognising true authenticity. Only then can we prevent stagnation, meet students where they are and dare to create the types of learning environments necessary to left them higher.

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1. RED and ORANGE learning

ND: In our last interview you talked about Integral Education and the purpose of education. In this interview I'd like to continue by looking more closely at the different memes. Can you begin by describing more about the I:ME:MINE memes of ORANGE and RED systems of learning in schools?

DB: Sure. ORANGE learning occurs in more of a situation trial, error, success, failure, test my abilities, get feedback, and hide my mistakes from others so that I can improve and learn from it and compete. So we use simulations when ready for ORANGE. They have to have some basic knowledge of course, but the use of games of various kinds. I don't mean playful child games, I mean business games or strategy games. Where ones successes are important and there is competition in the classroom is basically the ORANGE system. And so it's individualized, just like in the case of RED. The reason why computer learning works well in RED is that the personal dynamic with the student has to reject the teacher, or feel in control of the teacher, so the RED rejects the teacher and it's all done by a computer instead. So you're inside a room or stall of some kind and you're getting direct feedback for what you do. There's not a personal thing that puts you down, your egos not bruised. So for RED this is very good, that's why technology can rescue a lot of RED, because the computer allows the student to get instant feedback that RED has to have. So it could be set up in a way where the student working alone can activate the program and if successful gets a printout of a coupon where he can go to McDonalds and get a free hamburger right at the end of the lesson. A tangible reward system directly connected to behavior without that sense of loss of face. It's that loss of face that will often cause RED to rebel. It can't handle loss of face or being put down and disrespected. So a learning environment that avoids that is Prime [optimal] and one that gives an instant reward is also Prime.

With ORANGE it's not quite that invisible because ORANGE wants to stride, wants to show success to others, whereas RED like to hide more. A system that involves a group or competition is what pulls ORANGE into Prime, while that kind of above board competition that embarrasses RED is not on.

ND: So ORANGE it's more team orientated?

DB: Not necessary team, just social. It doesn't have to be a competitor; it can just be two people. It doesn't need a team, as we understand a team. That doesn't engage until the WE:US:OUR systems of PURPLE, BLUE or GREEN.

PURPLE learns through a team, through a tribe. You don't have the individual; you have to have the group when teaching of those in PURPLE. But in ORANGE it's success driven one on one in order to prove and even publicize success and all those things. Because ORANGE has BLUE in it, ORANGE can be motivated by a long-term reward some time in the future. It doesn't have to be instant like it does in RED. So that ORANGE is happy to earn credits that it can use later on, even psychic credits in terms of reputation. "I graduated from Yale," so that gives me bonus points later in terms of status. RED doesn't care so much about status as much as it does about something tangible. Because RED doesn't trust that the future is going to happen for it, so it wants it now.

2. GREEN learning

DB: GREEN learning is more participative, it's more affect centric. Individuals can express their feelings toward others and listen to others feelings; all different points of view are to be

represented equally. It focuses on the human dimension much more; it's more of a here and now focus. Sacrifice now for self and others to obtain now. It has to find the consensus. It has to be sure that every point of view has been expressed in order to feel satisfied, hearing everyone able to express themselves and be seen now. So what gives it reward is the now, not the future, i.e. what actually happens, getting things done. It doesn't have a good future understanding. It's not concerned about the future; it's concerned about now, resolving issues now; finding peace and harmony now. It does not sacrifice self for a future reward. It's for now.

It doesn't plan for the future like in BLUE or ORANGE. It doesn't lay-buy in store for the rainy day as BLUE does. It's basically some ORANGE consumerism in it that BLUE doesn't have.

ND: What greater good can GREEN choose to bring to teaching and education?

DB: Harmonized points of view, and to explore all different points of view equally. Be sure everything is at the table.

ND: And compared to ORANGE?

DB: ORANGE is personal success driven. ORANGE explores different points of view but it doesn't given equal weight to them as GREEN does. It will explore but find the best. GREEN isn't interested in the best it just wants all. It will not judge. It will not even allow the question, which one is the best, even to be asked. While ORANGE puts the best view in competition win - loose. You've got to prove and test yourself; which one is the best solution. BLUE looks for the right solution. RED has it's own solution. So what GREEN does in it's best is get all points of view. While at it's worst it is unable to differentiate. So anything goes. It's situationalism. It's Einsteinien relativity, everything is relative to anything else so how can we pass judgment?

3. Dynamic teaching

ND: When talking about change from a vertical perspective you often refer to the integral change equation. Matching different teaching styles and learning styles at the different memetic levels. Matching students to teachers.

DB: HOW should WHO teach WHOM to learn WHAT? Involving which students coming from where?

We tend to centre on only one of the memes and teach out of it, which suits students who are learning in that system but it rejects students who are not learning in that system. So you turn it from a horizontal pluralism to a vertical pluralism and you build learning spirals that teach people where they are, teach kids at their levels. So that you will have a mix of systems or even certain course taught in different ways. And the good sense to match the students to the way the teachers are teaching and the way teachers are teaching to the way students are learning.

4. The Quantum school

DB: Or you build a school that is, as I used to refer to, the Quantum school, the whole atmosphere of the school as apposed to just the class content. So you may have BLUE structured teaching in certain classes, you may have casino type games also going on in other

experiences. Or you have all school events. Now we have these typically in athletic completion and I think all school events in mental competition with a host of different ways of learning of things, almost like a carnival that quickly optimise the full range of learning systems and build on fun. Of course I haven't seen a school do that, but I want to talk to my wife about that. It might work very well. It looks like a carnival, with games of chance, there's competition, there's mathematical competition, there's spin the wheel where it comes up with a question, then if you answer the question you get a prize. Like a carnival, but rather than games of chance you implant strategies for learning.

ND: Stimulating the memes and different styles of learning?

DB: Yes. And maths learning for example and vocabulary like the old spelling bee. You actually have contests going on. Like, spell that word and win a point.

You create a carnival atmosphere where you even teach physics when you're teaching soccer in terms of the trajectory of the ball. So you mobilize and maximize every event to get more learning out of it than simply what it's been prescribed to do so that theoretically every class contact becomes multi. Teachers are doing more of that today anyway with films and videos and fieldtrips but that's intensified and localized to a place around a school that becomes this learning field as apposed to simply a cubical. I think really that is what is going to be happening and will really enrich education. You could have a soapbox where you have political debates going on. All those things within a carnival. So rather than simply a Halloween carnival, which is what we have at home, you have this learning field carnival. I think it world be a lot of fun and would spread widely. And by stealth we could inject a lot of things under the protective cover of an enormous school activity.

That's an example of a second tier approach that 1) individualizes, 2) verticalizes and 3) horizontalizes in terms of, for example, maximizing everyway to learn about history. A textbook, a lecture, an experience, a fieldtrip, a video, a reenactment. So you have students trying to act and talk like the culture they are living in must have done in the 17-century. So you have evolution of their society being replicated as a way of learning history. With imaginative teachers and bold thinking principals and the power of the microchip you can create scenes and events – oh my what could be done! That makes school fascinating as apposed to boring.

From the evidence we have, IQs are impacted more by the total field of a community than they are by the particular narrow confines of a class.

5. Vertical diversity, vertical pluralism

ND: I'm thinking about how to design schools in city situations that have very distinct social economic areas. Often the same teaching style is being used throughout the whole city without any concern for the vertical diversity for how students coming from different backgrounds learn best. Rather their concern is in teaching students about for example GREEN values, about finding peace and harmony regardless of how students learn best.

DB: This is how you might be able to break into that. You could certainly use this mechanism to do it. But I think the way to do this is what I called the *Summit On The Child* what I talked about earlier. I think that is how we could begin to break into the authoritarian control

exercised by the Conformity Enforcers,[2] and using more diversity generation. This means allowing more individuality, i.e. children are different. And by stealth open up some new categories or different ways to teach about GREEN. But I really believe in this Summit on the Child idea in creating the unifying field. It will challenge health and medical care, law enforcement, and others and simply ask: how are the children doing? And you use that information.

ND: This could include interviewing teachers and students and looking at the vertical diversity and variation in their answers.

GREEN in not being able to see verticality may see authoritarian teaching as being a step back instead of seeing it as a step forward, because not all kids will need this sort of teaching style. Realizing instead that a variety of different teaching styles need to be used.

DB: That's it. It's educating the whole child and children based on where they are and therefore to play the new diversity card on GREEN, because GREEN loves the word diversity. It thinks of it in terms of racial and ethic diversity – well under the umbrella of diversity we'll look at vertical diversity and an enrichment of the diversity program.

ND: Meeting the needs of the vertical diversity in the community.

DB: You really don't believe in diversity if you don't respect the individual diversities.

ND: And this is what these individuals are saying, if you respect them then these are their needs as reported in our interviews and this is what they are saying.

DB: That's right. You see I do a lot by stealth getting under the umbrella of their language system already. This is not a new program. We're not replacing a diversity program.

ND: GREEN wants children to express themselves at a very early age, because of democratic values.

DB: Yes and authentic diversity is going to the next stage of diversity, enriching diversity, diversity at a more mature level. Using all kinds of imagery around that would be very useful.

6. Left-brain (digital) and right-bran (analog)

ND: In your book *The Crucible*, you talked about education in South Africa needing to recognize this kind of authentic diversity in order to be effective.

DB: One of the things I learned in South Africa was the dominant African, if I can stereotype African, worldview and processing system is much heavier analog system right-brain. Even the languages are much more metaphoric. Unlike the Germanic languages which are very specific and detailed, I won't say rigid, but much more scientific. So if I'm trying to teach the mathematics of the First World into the right-brain languages of the Third World, particular African, those languages simply do not have the codes, categories, linguistics, and semantics for processing complex math that comes out of the well-developed left-brain digital system. So it's futile to try and do it. So what you have to do is work in two areas. One, find ways to

[2] Part of Howard Bloom's pentad, which includes: Conformity Enforcers, Diversity Generators, Inner Judges, Resource Shifter and Intergroup Tournaments.

teach maths kinesthetically and we did this in South Chicago through marching, counting while we're marching. [See interview September 25/2004]. Number two you have to boot up the analog right-brain with enriched digitizing.

ND: Can you give an example?

DB: I remember when I was a kid that we used to have nursery rhymes. "One, two buckle my shoe. Three, four shut the door. Five, six pick up sticks. Seven, eight lay them straight. Nine, ten a big fat hen." Developing what's called numeracy along with literacy, which tends to be more semantic. Numeracy, which is more mathematical and digital. So just the way that anyone learns ones numbers, because many of the tribes don't have numbers beyond ten, twenty or thirty. They didn't need them. And so the building of the language of mathematics with mathematical drills like, two plus two equals four, two times three equals six. Along with written drills in books. So there needs to be an enriched digitizing to counterbalance the fact that the home languages lack that digitizing. That's not a criticism, that's simply the adaptive nature of those languages, because out in the bush and counting the number of cows that you had that was about all you had to count. So it made no sense for those cultures to have an enriched numeracy sense.

7. Cultural taboos on males learning maths

ND: How well did the First World system of education work in South Africa?

DB: Even though many western educators and teachers tried to teach maths to the tribal kids, especially church led Lutheran, there was great frustration, the same frustration today in inner city environments in where – and this is a stereotype – it is more difficult to teach mathematics to African American kids. And one of the reasons is, and there are many that document this, that a teenage boy who does well at maths is criticized and ostracized for acting white. And so all the pressure has been on not to learn mathematics because that means you're trying to act white. I mean, how in the world can a school be expected to show significant improvement in these areas when the Lower Left culture in the four quadrants is counter to learning maths? So these poor kids had to hide their scores otherwise they get beaten up and in some cases killed. And often it's because so many of the other kids did poorly in maths and can't stand someone else looking better. And to this day I don't think many black educators realize the problem, that the home, the local community, are not just pretty flat teaching digital but pretty adverse to students demonstrating mathematical numeracy. Doing well on a maths test gets you beaten up.

The Lower left web of culture can interfere very strongly with learning ability. So what's the use what the maths teacher puts up on the board? And this also effects more males than females because females were allowed to learn maths. That's why African American females are doing much better academically, in business and in accounting because they weren't cursed with this Lower Left taboo on males learning maths.

ND: It's bizarre. It creates a barrier to emergence.

DB: And the schoolteachers are blamed for the poor maths scores, because we can't blame the black culture, because that's blaming the victim, and that's racism. It's a learning problem, it's a booting-up the brain problem, it's a cultural problem and it's a personal responsibility problem. It's the impact of the culture on learning potentials, on getting

permission to learn certain things and not other things. And that's why you have to use a 4Q8L approach, all quadrants all lines, to the problem.

So that's why a carnival type learning environment that changes the culture – that young boys are seen as champions when they learn maths in addition to the sprinters in track and athletic heroes. The maths teams are given high visibility. All these things can be done in school but it has to break out of the industrial age classroom box, which is where we live for the most part.

8. Mobilizing the field

ND: So let's say we have a community who is listening and accepts responsibility for facilitating the emergence of a vertical diversity of intelligence.

DB: It means annual summits on the child; it means redefining education to intelligences, and out of the very restrictive idea of education and mobilizing everything to educate everybody, building educational learning fields versus simply thinking only of school – that's where learning occurs.

ND: So the field is the community of stakeholders.

DB: That's right. And this is just so logical and because there are so many stakeholders that really know that we have to do better. Because business needs high tech workers to compete globally – there is all kinds of vested interest here.

ND: So wouldn't it be like rather than just the school hitting on all the memes, the whole community would be as well as the student moves through the community.

9. Speeding up human emergence

DB: Exactly. Like in Denton Texas there are two high schools, three middle schools and maybe a dozen elementary schools. Different teachers in different schools have different programs. Some better than the teachers in the other schools have. So if a students only attends Denton High versus Ryan High and forced only into that learning seat, if there is a Denton field then the way things are taught at different schools can contribute to the field. Students who geographically have to attend one high school can access that same thing as taught at the other high school. Do you see what I'm trying to say, because we are building a common Denton field of learning?

Just like MIT has put all it's course on the Internet, well all the courses in the high schools should be put on the Internet so that even students who are attending another high school who would learn better about that topic from this teacher from another high school can in a sense boot-up and get extra by looking at the course designs and even participate in course activities while physically and geographically attending another school. I just though of that possibly! Wouldn't that be wonderful?

So now you are providing your average student the maximum opportunity in the field that's not at a particular geographic school building. That could be a revolution. And the other advantage is that parents could participate along with students as coaches. Because they could see the course outlines, they can see what's going on, they could be better helpers of their students because they could go on the site with them. We've got to write this up. This is revolution we just created right here! That could happen now!

Furthermore in Texas, it's called the Robin Hood law, where the rich schools districts have to share their tax revenue with the poor school districts elsewhere in Texas. When I first came there I was working in Plano which is a very advanced First World community with many high-tech corporations. I said, if we are going to short change Plano from advancing in its technology because we are going to give money to some poor school in the south of Texas wrestling with Hispanics flooding into it, then why don't we find a way for Plano to build courses that could be used all over the state. Because if we retard the First World system, i.e. we redistribute and take from the rich and give to the poor with the idea to make things equal and we keep the first world advanced cutting edge system from continuing to do this, then we may have destroyed the very mechanisms that make possible community upliftment. Now if we apply that in education then how we can quickly bring entire nations and the planets learning ability up quickly. Let's stop wining and blaming and get things done. So here's a real challenge to the Nordic countries – to create for the globe. Get off your behinds, and from your very advanced positions in learning, and not just consume these resources in the GREEN system but further develop them. That's one of the goals for the Copenhagen Center for Human Emergence (www.humanemergence.org). How do we speed up Human Emergence?

If the future is here but not equally distributed, then how do we further distribute the future?

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