Raising and Educating Good and Wise People

Darcia Narvaez
Moral Psychology Lab
University of Notre Dame
Good News

We now know what babies and children need for positive development
EVOLVED DEVELOPMENTAL NICHE (EDN)

- TOUCH: Epigenetics for anxiety (Meaney)
- RESPONSIVITY: HPA axis (McEwan), Vagal tone (Porges)
- BREASTFEEDING: Intelligence, health
- ALLOMOTHERS: Greater openness, greater maternal responsivity (Hrdy)
- PLAY: More self control, social skills (e.g., Panksepp)
- SOCIAL SUPPORT: Greater health and wellbeing
- NATURAL CHILDBIRTH: Sociality, intelligence, immunity

Narvaez, 2013, 2014; Narvaez, Gleason et al., 2013; Narvaez, Wang et al., 2013
Bad News

Babies and children are not getting what they need to develop positively.
EVOLVED DEVELOPMENTAL NICHE (EDN)

• **TOUCH**: Held or kept near others constantly
• **RESPONSIVITY**: Prompt responses to fusses and cries
• **BREASTFEEDING**: Nursed frequently (2-3 times/hr initially) for 2-5 years
• **ALLOMOTHERS**: Frequently cared for by individuals other than mothers (fathers and grandmothers, in particular)
• **PLAY**: Enjoy free play in natural world with multiage playmates
• **SOCIAL SUPPORT**: High social embeddedness
• **NATURAL CHILDBIRTH**
Stress changes gene expression which alters synapses

Right Hemisphere and Prefrontal Cortex

Underdevelopment

- Self-regulation
- Intersubjectivity and social pleasure
- Emotional intelligence
- Empathy
- Beingness
- Self transcendence
- Higher consciousness
- Receptive intelligence

(Allan Schore; Narvaez)
Brain system development with good care

**Protoreptilian**
- **Survival systems:** anger, fear, panic (fight, flight, freeze, faint)

**Mammalian**
- **Social:** care, play

**Human**
- Executive controls and neocortex interact with survival and prosocial systems
Brain system function with early under-care:

- **Protoreptilian**
  - Survival systems: anger, fear, panic (fight, flight, freeze, faint)

- **Mammalian**
  - Social: care, play

**Toxic Stress leads to self-protection disposition**

**Executive controls Learning affected**

**Control Stress Reactivity controls**
Ethical Development in Our Studies

Learn Self-Calming

- Self-Protectionist ethics, anxiety, depression increased in children and adults WITHOUT EDN

Learn Social Joy

- Social Engagement ethics, social capacities increased in children and adults WITH EDN

Build Communal Imagination

- Imagination, Greater reflective capacities in adults with EDN
The Sustaining Classroom Provides

• Self-Calming
  o Deep breathing
  o Mindfulness
  o Meditation

• Social Pleasure
  o Free play with peers
  o Social dance, song art

• Communal Imagination
  o Group attachment
  o Us and Us
  o Ecological attachment
More is needed for ethical character
Development through RAVES

Relationships (classroom & wider community)
Apprenticeship (modeling, guidance)
Virtuous models
Ethical skills (sensitivity, judgment, focus, action)
Self authorship
Apprenticeship

- Modeling
- Guidance
- Focused, extensive practice
Virtuous models

- Multiple examples
- Opportunities to imitate
- Practice, practice, practice
- Generosity
- Respect
- Kindness
- Compassion
- Forgiveness
- Humility
Ethical Skills

- Ethical Sensitivity
- Ethical Judgment
- Ethical Focus
- Ethical Action

Ethical Process Skills to Embed in Classroom Instruction
Ethical Sensitivity Skills: NOTICE!

- Notice the need for ethical action
- Feel empathy
- Put yourself in the other person’s shoes
- Imagine possibilities
- Determine your role
Ethical Sensitivity Skills: NOTICE!

Understand Emotional Expression
Take the Perspectives of Others
Connect to Others
Respond to Diversity
Control Social Bias
Interpret Situations
Communicate well
Ethical Judgment Skills: THINK!

- Reason about what might be done
- Apply your code of ethics
- Judge which action is most ethical
Ethical Judgment Skills: THINK!

- Reason Generally
- Reason Ethically
- Understand Ethical Problems
- Use Codes & Identify Judgment Criteria
- Understand Consequences
- Reflect on the Process and Outcome
- Coping & Resiliency
Ethical Focus Skills: AIM!

- Make the ethical action a priority over other needs and goals
- Align ethical action with your identity
Ethical Focus Skills: AIM!

Respect Others
Cultivate Conscience
Act Responsibly
Be a Community Member
Find Meaning in Life
Develop Ethical Identity & Integrity
Ethical Action Skills: ACT!

- Implement the ethical action by
  - Knowing what steps to take
  - Getting the help you need

- Persevere despite hardship
Ethical Action Skills: ACT!

Resolve Conflicts and Problems
Assert Respectfully
Take Initiative as a Leader
Planning to Implement Decisions
Cultivate Courage
Persevere
Work Hard
Success requires all processes!

Notice
Think
Aim
Act
Ethical skills

- Sensitivity
- Judgment
- Focus
- Action

Relationships, Apprenticeship, Virtuous models, Ethical Skills, Self-authorship

RAVES
Self authorship

• Scaffold to independence
• Mentor until mentoring not needed
Ethical Character Development through RAVES

R - Relationships (classroom & wider community)
A - Apprenticeship (modeling, guidance, practice)
V - Virtuous models
E - Ethical skills (sensitivity, judgment, focus, action)
S - Self authorship
Ethical Culture

Community attention to basic needs

Adult wellbeing and wisdom

Companionship child raising

Good physio-neuro-social biology
Who needs help?

- You and me too
We must sustain ourselves

- **Self-Calming**
  - Deep breathing
  - Mindfulness
  - Meditation

- **Social Pleasure**
  - Free play with peers
  - Social dance, song, art

- **Communal Imagination**
  - Group attachment
  - Us and Us
  - Ecological attachment
If anybody asks you who we are, who we are, who we are, If anybody asks you who we are, Tell them we are children of Earth.
For more information

- Darcia Narvaez: dnarvaez@nd.edu

- Notre Dame webpage: http://www.nd.edu/~dnarvaez/
  Or
  http://DarciaNarvaez.com

- My blog at Psychology Today: Moral Landscapes

Thank you!