

THE EDUCATIONAL CENTER METHOD: ISSUE-CENTERED + LIFE-CENTERED

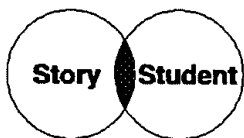
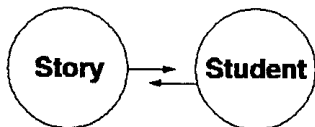
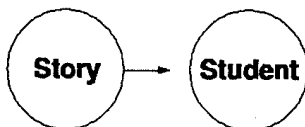
Adapted from *Awakening the Fire Within: A Primer for Issue-Centered Education* by William L. Dols

From the core, numinous matters and ideas rise up through the person who experiences “being filled by something not I.” Many artists carry their ideas and matters born of ego to the edge of the core and drop them in, sensing rightfully that they will be returned newly infused or washed with the core’s remarkable psychic sense of life. Either way, this causes a sudden and profound awakening, changing, or informing of the senses, mood, or heart of the human. When one is freshly informed, one’s mood is changed. When one’s mood is changed, one’s heart is changed. That is why the images and language that arise from that core are so important. In combination, they have the power to change one thing into another in a way that is difficult and tortuous to accomplish by will alone. In this sense the core Self, the instinctual Self, is both healer and life-bringer. ¹

The Educational Center’s methodology and publications employ the concept of maieutic or “mid-wife” teaching which assumes a mysterious core at the center of each of us. This core is a source of healing and life-bringing, a “womb” from which true wisdom is born. A maieutic teacher is a story-bearer, who imbues the student with the courage to awaken the yearning fire fueled by the knowing that is waiting in the core. When this happens, the student becomes the teacher and is empowered to teach themselves from the inside out.

Socratic questioning inexorably forces the learner to separate the particulars of experience from the search for more universal and more profound truth—to arrive at wisdom. An examination of Plato’s *Dialogues* clearly shows that in Socrates’ view, understanding and wisdom are not the result of occasional insightful ideas, or “immediate happenings” pedagogy but only come through carefully planned, systemic, and unrelenting teaching activity. The maieutic method introduces tension into the instructional process since this teaching process deliberately loosens the learner from the perceived security of his cognitive (and sometimes dogmatic) anchorages and places him in state of perplexity and bewilderment. Maieutic teaching requires courage on the part of the learner. ²

Our story-telling based questioning meet the student where they live. It is all about transmission, transaction and transformation:



In the first image the messenger is telling a story. Information and data are being transmitted.

In the middle image information is being transacted. The student has insight and understanding. They probably have the answer and may know the outcome.

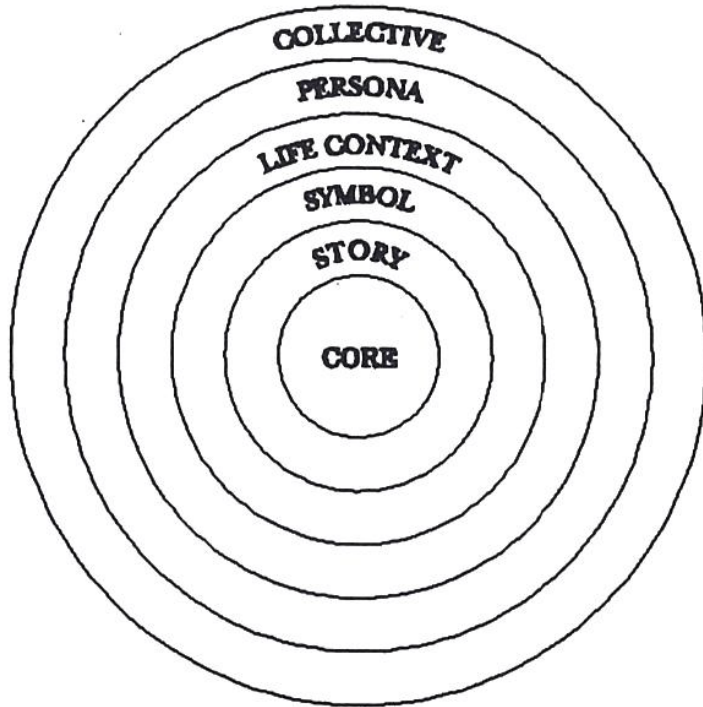
In the final image the story meets the student where they intersect. They do not have the answers but change and new creation is taking place as the student explores the story’s questions.

¹ Clarissa Pinkola Estes, *Women Who Run With the Wolves*, (Ballantine Books; Reissue edition, 1996).

² James Michael Lee, *The Content of Religious Instruction: A Social Science Approach*, (Religious Education Printers, 1985).

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Experiencing the text, is a higher value than talking about it. It is in “living the story” rather than hearing it that the core is touched, the pattern awakened, mood, heart, and lives changed. Be prepared to be surprised, challenged, confused, in disagreement, maybe angry, but above all, encouraged and motivated to explore the truth of the theory that may bubble out of you. Be patient. It does not all have to fit or make sense. It is an unfamiliar journey for most of us through our knowledge to the core.



Another way to consider moving towards the core is illustrated at left.

This Personal Paradigm outlines the six layers of the individual:

1. Collective
2. Persona
3. Life
4. Symbol
5. Story
6. Individual Core

In order to arrive there,
To arrive where you are, to get from where you are not,
You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy.
In order to arrive at what you do not know
You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.
In order to possess what you do not possess
You must go by the way of dispossession.
In order to arrive at what you are not
You must go through the way in which you are not.
And what you do not know is the only thing you know
And what you own is what you do not own
And where you are is where you are not. —T. S. Eliot ³

³ T.S. Eliot, Excerpt is from “Part II: East Coker” which is from the much longer poem “Four Quartets.”