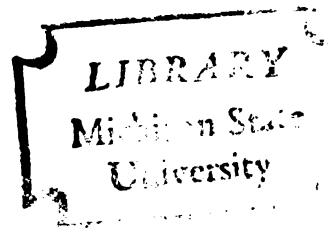


THE LEARNING EXCHANGE:
AN EXPERIMENT IN ALTERNATIVE
EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

THE LEARNING EXCHANGE: AN EXPERIMENT IN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

By

Gregory Douglas Squires

The Learning Exchange is an educational matching service, in the Chicago metropolitan area, modelled along the lines of the learning webs or networks proposed by Ivan Illich and Everett Reimer as replacements for schools. The service began in May, 1971. It operates in the following manner. Anybody who wants to teach, learn, or discuss any subject area, skill, or interest can locate other people with the appropriate matching interest by contacting the Learning Exchange. The service provides callers with the names and telephone numbers of previous callers who have indicated a similar or complementary interest. The Learning Exchange is strictly a matching service. It provides names, telephone numbers, and any pertinent information relating to people's background and interest in their stated subject area which they choose to give. The service offers no courses, provides no classroom space, does not charge a fee, and does not grant any kind of diploma.

This study examines the experiences of the Learning Exchange in its first year of operation. After the first year, a telephone

survey was conducted in order to find out how successful people had been in locating others with matching interests and to determine what kinds of people were using the service. Approximately 1,000 people were registered with the Learning Exchange at the time, and 504 of them were interviewed.

The basic objectives of the Learning Exchange were to open up opportunities for those who were unable to meet their educational needs in traditional schooling institutions, and to make use of educational resources throughout the community which were not being utilized. It was assumed that there were many people in the community with knowledge and skills they would be willing to share with those who wanted to learn, but prior to the establishment of this service there was no mechanism to bring these people together. One conclusion of this study is that the Learning Exchange is accomplishing these objectives.

The Learning Exchange population in its first year was predominantly a white, well educated, professionally employed group of people. The elitist nature of those who contacted the service can be largely explained by the fact that the office is located in an upper-middle class neighborhood, and that most of the publicity, particularly in the first three months, was aimed specifically at that neighborhood. Steps are being taken to attract more people throughout the Chicago metropolitan area and to attract a clientele which is more representative of the total community.

The Learning Exchange was well received by the community. Few people had any complaints about the service and many said they had recommended it to friends. The local and national media provided consistently favorable coverage and several public officials made public

statements and sent letters of commendation expressing their support of the concept. Whereas 1,000 people were registered after one year, over 7,000 people were registered after two years. And similar models have been started in other communities in the United States and in other nations.

Illich, author of Deschooling Society, and Reimer, author of School is Dead, are not the only critics to seriously question the viability of schooling institutions as a means for educating a nation. Others have made similar assessments concerning the state our schools are in and the functions they perform for society. This study examines some of these arguments and concludes that schools may not be as stable and secure a part of our society as most of us tend to think. The networks and webs proposed by Illich and Reimer may well not be the answer. But, in light of the many problems facing schools in recent years, we might find that the shape of education is radically changed within our own lifetime.

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By

Gregory Douglas Squires

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A PERSONAL NOTE

The Learning Exchange has not been just an academic concern or a research project for me. I was one of a small group of people who started the service, and for over a year and a half I worked with three close friends in directing its operation. Although I have not actively worked with the Learning Exchange since August, 1972, I still feel a close attachment to the Learning Exchange and to the individuals who currently direct it. I still feel partially responsible for its successes and the praise it receives as well as for its shortcomings and any criticism directed towards the service.

In evaluating this analysis the reader must naturally take into account the author's relationship with the object being studied. One might conclude that because of my personal involvement, a certain bias has influenced my conclusions. Whether this has happened or not, I can only say that throughout, I have tried to set aside such feelings, and I have sought fairness and objectivity.

The reader must also keep in mind certain advantages that I have had because of my relationship with the Learning Exchange. Having a thorough understanding of the model helped me, and two other co-founders, in constructing the questionnaire. We wanted to find out what was right and what was wrong with the model. We were aware of certain benefits the model had to offer and some of the problems it might face,

or even create, which an outsider might not be aware of. Therefore, in writing questions which would provide information on these matters, we were in an advantageous position.

Two of the three who wrote the questions, including myself, also administered them. Again, our understanding of the model and the intention of each question, enabled us to explain any ambiguities to respondents, and to interpret the answers which were given. The validity of any analysis is enhanced the more the analyst understands what the respondents meant when they answered a question.

This study has both theoretical and practical objectives. I hope the findings will help the Learning Exchange in Chicago, and others which have been started in other communities. My intention, however, is not to serve as a public relations agent. I do invite those who are interested in the Learning Exchange concept to read this document, and I hope it provides them with useful information. I also invite others who question this analysis or who have doubts about the value of such concepts as the Learning Exchange, to re-examine my data or to collect new data from other models, and to offer their conclusions.

INTRODUCTION

Schools have long been criticized from a variety of sources. Students, teachers, parents, politicians, and just about everybody else appear to have something bad to say about schools. And many suggestions have been made, often contradicting one another, in hopes of solving the problems in our schools.

Some want community control and decentralized school systems while others look to the state and federal governments to solve the problems. Judges order cross district busing while motorists display their "Happiness is Walking to Your Neighborhood School" bumper stickers.

New techniques and strategies such as team teaching, individualized instruction, headstart programs, open classrooms, classrooms without walls, and voucher systems are just some of the ideas which have been proposed. Most of them have been experimented with, and some have been incorporated into several public schools.

Despite the seeming variety of reforms which have been proposed, almost all of them share one basic premise. They assume that the school is the proper domain in which the function of education is to be carried out. Indeed, the words "schooling" and "education" are practically synonymous in the United States today. Few challenge the notion that schooling is essential if we are to provide people with

the skills, knowledge, and credentials which are needed to operate successfully in our society. Even most advocates of experiential learning want to implement their non classroom education under the auspices of some schooling institution. Today, an educated person is a schooled person.

Ivan Illich has proposed a radically different approach to meeting the educational needs of a society. To Illich, schools cannot provide the kind of education needed in today's world. If we want to make significant improvements in the way we educate, and if we want to improve the quality of life in general, Illich claims we must dis-establish our schools.

Along with Everett Reimer, Illich observed the manpower shortages and educational problems of Latin American countries. Together, they projected the costs involved in providing the kinds of schooling needed to meet the manpower requirements of these nations. They concluded that the costs were completely beyond the economic capacities of those countries. In addition, they studied the failures of education in the United States and they began, in 1967, a systematic analysis of schooling. Although their conclusions were basically the same, they each published their own document concerning the problems of schooling and recommendations for what a better educational system would be. Illich's Deschooling Society was published in 1970 and Reimer's School is Dead came out in 1971.

Both essentially call for dismantling our present school systems and replacing them with a series of webs or networks that individuals could use as they see fit for their own learning. There would be no state laws requiring anything in the way of attendance or

participation in any kind of schooling or educational activity.

The deschooling argument does share several assumptions with other educational philosophies. The free schools which have mushroomed during the past decade, the progressive education movement in the first half of this century, and other similar educational movements dating back at least to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, embody many of the same principles as does the deschooling philosophy. Assumptions about human nature, the learning process, and the rights of individuals versus the needs of society represent some of the common threads underlying these philosophies. The deschooling argument has also been criticized for many of the same reasons as have these other schools of thought.

This study will examine what has happened during the first twelve months of operation of the Learning Exchange. The Learning Exchange, located in the Chicago metropolitan area, is an educational matching service, modelled along the lines of Illich's learning web proposals. It began serving the Chicago area in May, 1971, and the data for this study were collected in the summer of 1972.

Following this introduction, I will describe, in greater detail, the arguments Illich and Reimer have made for disestablishing schools. I will also further explore some of the arguments others have made for giving learners greater control over their education than students have in most school systems. Then I will examine some of the major arguments which have been made against these educational philosophies.

After looking at these theoretical propositions, I will briefly describe the concept of the Learning Exchange and the history

of the particular model operating in Chicago. From the data that was collected in the summer of 1972, I will then analyze what kind of an impact the Learning Exchange had on the community.

In conclusion, I will discuss some of the potential implications of the deschooling critique and educational services like the Learning Exchange, in light of more recent developments in schools and more recent criticisms of schooling, for the future shape of education in the United States.

THE DESCHOOLING ARGUMENT

The Institution of Schooling

The deschooling proposal advocates the disestablishment of schooling institutions. Schools, according to Illich¹ and Reimer,² are institutions which require the full time attendance of a specific age group, in a teacher supervised study of an obligatory graded curriculum. They argue that the functions of education can be carried out more effectively, more efficiently, and more equitably, by replacing schools with different kinds of arrangements. But more important than reforming education, deschooling is also a prerequisite for creating a more democratic social order. Illich and Reimer view our present society as one of domination of the masses by the privileged few. If we are to eliminate this unjust domination, we must disestablish our schools.

Illich's advocacy for deschooling lies within his framework of what he envisions as a need for an institutional revolution. To Illich, the United States, and other industrially advanced capitalist societies, have developed a culture in which individuals have become increasingly dependent upon and controlled by large institutions.

¹Ivan Illich, Deschooling Society (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970), p. 38.

²Everett Reimer, School is Dead (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1971), p. 29.

People accept institutional values and they have become addicted to the consumption of the commodities produced by those institutions. Institutions, rather than individuals, define human needs and the manner in which they can be satisfied. For example, transportation has come to mean automobiles, health care is defined as that treatment which is available through hospitals, and learning is defined as schooling.

What has evolved is a life style of competitive consumption. With the able assistance of the advertising and public relations industries people have become dependent, passive consumers rather than self-reliant, self-determining actors. Institutions tell people what their needs are, the commodities they must consume to meet those needs, and that they must constantly consume greater amounts of those commodities. Educational institutions provide a classic example. People need to be educated. It is only through schools that a legitimate education is available. And the number of years of schooling required in order to be considered adequately educated has increased tremendously in the past few decades.

Schools are the principle instrument used to indoctrinate people into accepting this consumption orientation and the legitimacy of institutional definitions of reality. Schools are not merely a reflection of the larger society, or a dependent variable determined by some larger social force or specific interest group. To Illich,

School . . . is the major component of the system of consumer production which is becoming more complex and specialized and bureaucratized. Schooling is necessary to produce the habits and expectations of the managed consumer society. Inevitably it produces institutional dependence and ranking in spite of any effort by the teacher to the contrary. It is an illusion that schools are only a dependent variable -- an illusion which,

moreover, provides them, the reproductive organs of a consumer society, with their immunity.³

In this manner, schools take on the characteristics of institutions which are manipulative or right wing, in Illich's terminology. Reimer uses the term "dominating institutions" to describe the same phenomenon. The alternative institutional form, and in the minds of the deschoolers a better form, is what Illich calls left wing or convivial, and Reimer calls democratic.

The basic characteristic of left wing or democratic institutions is that they offer a service to all people without exploiting them. In Reimer's words,

Democratic institutions offer a service, satisfy a need, without conferring advantage over others or conveying the sense of dependence that institutions such as welfare agencies do. They take the form of networks rather than production systems -- networks that provide an opportunity to do something rather than make and sell a finished product. Public communication and transportation systems are examples, as are water works and sewers, electricity and gas distribution systems, and general markets that facilitate the flow of various kinds of goods. Public utilities are democratic institutions if they are truly public and provide something really useful.⁴

Illich says left wing institutions are, distinguished by spontaneous use . . . Telephone link-ups, subway lines, mail routes, public markets and exchanges do not require hard or soft sells to induce their clients to use them. Sewage systems, drinking water, parks, and sidewalks are institutions men use without having to be institutionally convinced that it is to their advantage to do so.⁵

³Daniel U. Levine and Robert J. Havighurst (Editors), Farewell to Schools??? (Worthington: Charles A. Jones Publishing Company, 1971), p. 37.

⁴Reimer, loc. cit., p. 77.

⁵Illich, loc. cit., p. 79.

In describing dominating institutions, Reimer says,

They tend to be production systems rather than networks . . . Access is limited, and access costs are frequently high. Once on, it isn't easy to get off; participation is often either obligatory or addictive . . . There are important diseconomies of scale. At some point, extension of the service to new clients becomes a dis-service to former clients. The needs served are not basic but at least partly induced. Once induced, however, these needs are open-ended and can never be fully satisfied. Surfeit leads to excess rather than satisfaction . . . The managers of dominating institutions must take and maintain the initiative. Clients must be seduced, manipulated, or coerced. True initiative or choice on the part of clients tends to disrupt the maintenance requirements of dominating institutions.⁶

Illich adds,

Right-wing institutions tend to be highly complex and costly production processes in which much of the elaboration and expense is concerned with convincing consumers that they cannot live without the product or treatment offered by the institution . . . The manipulative institutions of the right are either socially or psychologically 'addictive.' Social addiction, or escalation, consists in the tendency to prescribe increased treatment if smaller quantities have not yielded the desired results . . . Right wing institutions, as we can see clearly in the case of schools, both invite compulsively repetitive use and frustrate alternative ways of achieving similar results.⁷

Most manufacturers of consumer goods are examples of right wing institutions. The automobile industry, according to Illich, manipulates public taste and creates a demand for its products. Not only do the various auto makers encourage people to buy their particular model, but the industry as a whole has manipulated the public in such a way that transportation is now defined as automobiles.

Schools appear to be left wing institutions because theoretically they are open to everybody. But schools, in Illich's

⁶Reimer, loc. cit., p. 78.

⁷Illich, loc. cit., p. 80-81.

words, are false public utilities. In fact, schools are more open to the wealthy, particularly at the college and professional school level, but they are paid for by the entire tax paying public. Also, in the same manner that the automobile industry has manipulated the public into equating automobiles with transportation, schools have perpetuated the notion that schooling is equivalent to education. Schools confer and maintain the advantaged position of the rich and the public accepts the institutionally induced notion that education is schooling. Therefore, schools are right wing, not left wing, institutions.

Being a right wing institution, schools foster the competitive consumption orientation and institutional dependence characteristic of modern society. Through the ritual of schooling, what Illich and Reimer call the hidden curriculum, people are indoctrinated to treat education as a product to be consumed. By accumulating course credits and schooling certificates and degrees, one becomes educated by a process of consumption. People are also taught to believe that true learning is the result of teaching, and that what one learns in the classroom is vital knowledge, but what one learns outside the classroom is not so important in terms of the process of becoming educated.

Everywhere the hidden curriculum of schooling initiates the citizen to the myth that bureaucracies guided by scientific knowledge are efficient and benevolent. Everywhere this same curriculum instills in the pupil the myth that increased production will provide a better life. And everywhere it develops the habit of self-defeating consumption of services and alienating production, the tolerance for institutional dependence, and the recognition of institutional rankings.⁸

⁸ Ibid., p. 106.

Reimer adds,

The hidden curriculum of school is dangerous, because it bolsters belief in a sick society -- a society dedicated to competitive consumption, which assumes that man wants principally to consume and that in order to consume endlessly he must bind himself to the wheel of endless production. The whole theory of schooling is based on the assumption that production methods applied to learning will result in learning. They do result in learning how to produce and consume -- so long as nothing fundamental changes. As means of learning to adapt to changing circumstances, production methods are ridiculous. The need to distinguish these two kinds of learning is kept from our attention mainly by our participation in the scholastic ritual.⁹

This kind of manipulation which takes place in schools is just the start of this syndrome.

Once a man or woman has accepted the need for school, he or she is easy prey for other institutions. Once young people have allowed their imaginations to be formed by curricular instruction, they are conditioned to institutional planning of every sort . . . This transfer of responsibility from self to institution guarantees social regression, especially once it has been accepted as an obligation.¹⁰

If we are to break through this competitive production-consumption orientation and the acceptance of institutional values and definitions of reality, we have to disestablish the right wing institution which starts it all, the schools. In their place, according to the deschooling argument, we need left wing institutions. Rather than funnelling education through schools, we must create learning webs or networks. Such arrangements will be discussed in greater detail later in this section.

⁹Reimer, loc. cit., p. 46.

¹⁰Illich, loc. cit., p. 56-57.

The Myth of Equal Educational Opportunity

Another myth perpetuated by the institutional perspective of education, according to Illich and Reimer, is that schooling institutions can deliver equal educational services to all people. They maintain that it is economically unfeasible to provide equal educational opportunities as long as education is carried out through obligatory schooling institutions.

Data collected in 1969 by the U.S. Office of Education suggested that it would cost eighty billion dollars to provide adequate schooling for all students at the grammar school and high school level.¹¹ At the present time thirty-six billion dollars are spent on these services.¹² In addition, the costs of college and professional schooling are much greater than the costs of grammar school and high school. If we are to talk about equal education through equal schooling, these costs must also be considered. Therefore, Illich and Reimer conclude that equal schooling is an absurd concept, just from the economic perspective.

A brief look at the present allocation of educational dollars indicates the unequal distribution of educational resources in our schooling institutions. Again, using data collected by the U.S. Office of Education, Reimer states,

The children of the poorest tenth of the United States population attend school for an average of less than five years. The schools they attend, at this grade level, spend no more than five hundred dollars per pupil per year. These children cost the public, in schooling,

¹¹Reimer, loc. cit., p. 4.

¹²Illich, loc. cit., p. 12.

less than twenty-five hundred dollars each over a lifetime. The children of the richest tenth of the population finish college and a year of graduate school, which costs about thirty-five thousand dollars. Assuming that one third of this is private expenditure, the richest tenth still get ten times as much of public funds for education as the poorest tenth.¹³

Schools, therefore, rather than serving as an equalizing influence in society, actually constitute a form of regressive taxation. The rich tend to stay in school longer than the poor. Since most schools are publicly funded, the rich utilize more public education dollars than the poor do. When one considers the greater expense of a year in a university compared to a year in grammar or high school, this disparity is much greater than just the difference the number of years spent in school would indicate.

Despite these financial realities, schools are still looked upon as a major source of upward mobility for the poor. Although equal educational opportunity is a desirable and a feasible goal, to equate this with obligatory schooling is, in Illich's words, "to confuse salvation with the Church. School has become the world religion of a modernized proletariat, and makes futile promises of salvation to the poor of the technological age."¹⁴

Schools, in essence, promise what they systematically deny. They use the rhetoric of equal opportunity in order to perpetuate the existing social order. We live according to the myth that schools are available to anyone, and that all people are limited only by their individual dedication and abilities. Through schools anyone can

¹³Reimer, loc. cit., p. 5.

¹⁴Illich, loc. cit., p. 15.

achieve the occupation and social role which his individual qualities will enable him to achieve. In fact, however, one's opportunities are largely determined by his family's socio-economic position. Individuals do not enter school on an equal footing, and the opportunities to obtain the rewards available to those who succeed in school are limited to a privileged few. It is economically unfeasible to provide college and graduate training for all. But even if this could be done economically, higher levels of schooling would be required to obtain the few privileged positions available in our society. So while schools appear to offer equal opportunity, they serve to assist other institutions in selecting out the few for whom more opportunities will actually be available.

Schools, therefore, have long appealed to both the privileged and to the deprived. "For the latter, they held the promise of equal opportunity; for the former, the promise of orderly progression under control of the elite."¹⁵ In the final analysis, "Schools . . . promise the world and then become the instruments of its denial."¹⁶

While schools play an important role in perpetuating the existing social order, they constitute just one of the institutions which performs this function. Reimer summarizes the role schools and other institutions play in modern society in the following statements.

¹⁵Reimer, loc. cit., p. 55.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 61.

Modern institutions have assumed the burden of maintaining and justifying a continuing hierarchy of privilege. Among these institutions, the school plays a central role. It initiates each generation into the myths of technological production and consumption, the ideas that what is to be consumed must first be produced and that what is produced must be consumed. Not only goods, but services and knowledge itself become commodities. It celebrates the rituals that reconcile the myths and realities of a society that merely pretends to be for all. It prepares men for specialized roles in specialized institutions, selecting and shaping them in terms of both skills and values. By its own hierarchical structure, it accustoms men to accept a single integrated hierarchy of power and privilege.

School qualifies men for participation in other institutions and convicts those who do not meet the requirements of school, of not deserving desirable roles in other institutions.¹⁷

Learning Webs and Networks

What needs to be done is to replace schools with a series of educational webs or networks. Or, in the deschooling terminology, replace the existing right wing, manipulative, dominating institutions with left wing, convivial, democratic ones.

These new educational institutions should be planned according to the needs of learners, not according to the needs of professional educators, administrators, or a specific class of people.

Illich says,

A good educational system should have three purposes: it should provide all who want to learn with access to available resources at any time in their lives; empower all who want to share what they know to find those who want to learn it from them; and, finally, furnish all who want to present an issue to the public with the opportunity to make their challenge known.¹⁸

¹⁷Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁸Illich, loc. cit., p. 108.

He then advocates the establishment of four networks or learning webs that should do the job. One such network would be a series of reference services for educational objects. Libraries and museums are two examples. Laboratories, factories, showrooms, airports, farms, etc. could all be made available to those who wanted to learn about a particular activity.

Skill exchanges should be set up to permit people to list their skills and the conditions under which they would be willing to teach them. No certification would be required in order to teach a skill to someone who wanted to learn it.

Peer matching networks should be organized to enable people to seek out others who want to pursue the same activity. A person could register his name and interest, and then be put in contact with others who have indicated the same interest.

The fourth type of network would be reference services for educators-at-large. In a manner similar to the skill exchange, professional educators, paraprofessionals, and free lancers would list their services and the condition under which they would offer these services. The kinds of educators that will be required will differ from the kinds of educators needed to run our present school systems. Those whose skills are in the areas of hiring, supervising, public relations, curriculum making, textbook purchasing, maintenance of grounds and facilities, the supervision of interscholastic athletic competition, baby-sitting, lesson planning, and record keeping will not be in demand. Three types of skills will be required: architects and administrators of these networks, counselors who can guide learners in the use of these networks, and those who have a certain body of

knowledge or expertise that others want to learn.

A variety of strategies could be devised to finance these networks. Those suggested by Illich and Reimer call for distributing money for education directly to private citizens rather than to state institutions. What Illich calls edu-credit, an educational credit card, and Reimer refers to as educational accounts, could be provided for each person at birth. The amount of each allocation could be determined by one's family background, in order to achieve a more equitable distribution of educational resources.

Individuals would use their allotment as they saw fit. The resulting competition would make those who wanted to be professional educators accountable to their students, not to some professional association or state institution. One's skill as a teacher, as determined by his clients, rather than the number of credentials he has accumulated, would determine his worth as an educator.

What Deschooling Would Accomplish

Designing educational institutions as networks rather than as production lines and financing the networks in this manner will, according to Illich and Reimer, accomplish several beneficial objectives. First, the meaning of education will be expanded significantly, and the monopoly which schools have over education will be broken. Theoretically, the entire world will open up as the domain in which education takes place, rather than just in the classroom. Individuals will be allowed to teach and learn as they see fit for their own needs, without the interference of certificates, attendance laws, and all the other bureaucratic trappings which characterize school today.

Education will also be carried on in a more equitable manner than it is through schools.

Most importantly, people would learn more relevant truths about the world in which they live. They would eventually grasp a clear understanding of how most of our present institutions, particularly the schools, are used by the privileged minority to dominate the rest of society and to perpetuate an unjust social order. Reimer envisions a definite revolutionary role for education.

True education is a basic social force. Present social structures could not survive an educated population even if only a substantial minority were educated. Something more than schooling is obviously in question here. People are schooled to accept a society. They are educated to create or re-create one.

Education has the meaning here that deep students of education and of human nature have always given it. None has defined it better than Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator, who describes it as becoming critically aware of one's reality in a manner that leads to effective action upon it. An educated man understands his world well enough to deal with it effectively. Such men, if they existed in sufficient numbers, would not leave the absurdities of the present world unchanged.¹⁹

Illich emphasizes the importance of becoming self-reliant actors rather than passive, addicted consumers. Reimer emphasizes the importance of becoming aware of the way institutions are used for purposes of domination. Both see the disestablishment of schools as a vital and inevitable step towards their vision of a better world.

But there are dangers involved in what Illich calls the rash and uncritical disestablishment of schools. Other changes must be made along with the disestablishment of schools, if this better world is to be realized.

¹⁹Reimer, loc. cit., p. 121.

The first step should be a law which parallels the First Amendment to the United States Constitution which prohibits the creation of an established church. There should also be no established education or educational ritual obligatory for all people.

There should also be a law requiring equal sharing of public educational resources. According to Reimer, the only feasible way to establish this is through a system of individual accounts.

There must also be a law which prohibits discrimination in hiring based on schooling credentials. Performance tests which are job related would, of course, constitute legitimate criteria upon which one could hire. But a person's employment possibilities should not depend on the schooling credentials he has or has not received, particularly when there is no relationship between what he did to obtain a given certificate and the nature of the work involved on the job he is seeking. Even if one's schooling is job related, he should be shown no favoritism over someone else who may have learned the same skills outside of the classroom. Discrimination on the basis of prior schooling should be illegal.

Deschooling could easily lead to even more subtle forms of social control if there is no "simultaneous disavowal of the very idea that knowledge is more valuable because it comes in certified packages and is acquired from some mythological knowledge-stock controlled by professional guardians."²⁰ If deschooling were to lead to some other form of credential accumulation, then other types of certifying

²⁰ Alan Gartner, Colin Greer, Frank Riessman (Editors), After Deschooling, What? (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1973), p. 15-16.

agencies would take the place of schools. The educational monopoly presently held by schools would be taken over by other agencies which, by their power of certification, would take over the social selection functions now performed by schools and they would be used by the wealthy to protect their privileged positions. In short, deschooling would have accomplished nothing. Therefore, we need legislation to prevent the monopoly of education by any institution.

New criteria for preferential employment and promotion practices might develop which could prove to be more insidious methods of perpetuating the existing social order than grades and schooling credentials. Unless job relevance is the only criterion for employment, and all ritualistic screening devices are ruled out, then deschooling will do nothing in the way of shaking the privileged from their position of dominance.

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Disestablishing schools, as stated earlier, is more than just a method for reforming education. To Illich and Reimer, deschooling is an essential first step in creating a just social order. In their minds, we have created a world in which the privileged few dominate society by controlling a series of manipulative institutions. By accepting the legitimacy of those institutions, the majority of the population operates according to certain myths which serves to perpetuate the existing hierarchy of privilege.

The decision of whether or not we disestablish schools is part of a larger question concerning what kind of world we want to live in. Illich says,

I believe that a desirable future depends on our deliberately choosing a life of action over a life of consumption, on our engendering a life style which will enable us to be spontaneous, independent, yet related to each other, rather than maintaining a life style which only allows us to make and unmake, produce and consume--a style of life which is merely a way station on the road to the depletion and pollution of the environment. The future depends more upon our choice of institutions which support a life of action than on our developing new ideologies and technologies. We need a set of criteria which will permit us to recognize those institutions which support personal growth rather than addiction, as well as the will to invest our technological resources preferentially in such institutions of growth.²¹

To Reimer,

The choice ultimately is between two completely different styles of life. One is egalitarian, pluralistic, and relatively sparse in the kinds of products and services it provides. People have to do things for themselves, but have time and freedom to do what they want. The other kind of life is based on a unified hierarchy of privilege maintained by international, interclass, and interpersonal competition. The kinds of competition are limited and highly structured, but the prizes are relatively glamorous, at least on the surface.²²

Schools are instrumental in shaping our society as it is.

Illich and Reimer believe a better world is possible. To realize that better world, we must first disestablish our schools.

Deschooling and Other Educational Philosophies

The deschooling argument, as proposed by Illich and Reimer, shares several assumptions about the nature of learning, the

²¹Illich, loc. cit., p. 75-76.

²²Reimer, loc. cit., p. 79.

relationship of the individual to society, and human nature in general, with other educational philosophies that have advocated allowing students to have greater control over their own education.

When Illich and Reimer advocate the establishment of learning webs or networks and educational accounts which individuals can use as they deem appropriate for their own education, without any interference from the state or an institution of the state, they imply a faith that individuals are capable of making wise decisions concerning their education. A central tenet of the free school philosophy is a firm belief in the inherent wisdom and natural curiosity of man which will lead individuals to seek out those educational experiences which are important to their own personal growth. By allowing the natural inclinations and interests of people to dictate their education, without any interference from the adult world, they will develop their fullest capabilities.

Jean Jacques Rousseau, generally considered to be the first advocate of the free school philosophy, emphasized that man, in his natural state, is inherently good. It is only through interaction with other men and institutions that he becomes corrupt. "Everything is good as it comes from the hands of the Creator; everything degenerates in the hands of man."²³ Therefore, he concluded, one should be educated with as little interference from other people as possible. The closer we are to the state of nature, the less corrupted we will

²³ Jean Jacques Rousseau, His Educational Theories Selected From Emile, Julie, and Other Writings (Woodbury, Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1964), p. 55.

be by our fellow man, and the better educated we will be. Rousseau said, "There is no original corruption in the human heart: there is not a single vice to be found there of which one could not say how and by what means it entered."²⁴ From this philosophical belief he concluded that the best education is negative. "It consists, not in teaching virtue or truth, but in guarding the heart from vice and the mind from error."²⁵

A. S. Neill stated, "My view is that a child is innately wise and realistic. If left to himself without adult suggestion of any kind, he will develop as far as he is capable of developing."²⁶ He claims a child needs love and approval rather than discipline. To Neill, punishment and the demand for obedience and discipline are often expressions of hate. If we want children to develop to their fullest potential, they must be shown love and approval for their actions, rather than the various expressions of hatred we often use in attempting to educate.

George Dennison reinforces this belief in the inherent goodness of man when he urges that we,

show some little faith in the life principles which have in fact structured all the well-structured elements of our existence, such principles as our inherent sociability, our inherent rationality, our inherent freedom of thought, our inherent curiosity,²⁷ and our inherent (while vigor lasts) appetite for more.

²⁴Ibid., p. 97-98.

²⁵Ibid., p. 99.

²⁶A. S. Neill, Summerhill A Radical Approach to Child Rearing (New York: Hart Publishing Company, 1960), p. 4.

²⁷George Dennison, The Lives of Children (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), p. 246-247.

Free school advocates share Illich's and Reimer's contempt for most of society's institutions. If man is to develop his fullest capabilities, his natural inclinations and interests must lead the way, with as little interference as possible from other people and from institutions. The primary reason for this, as Rousseau and others have argued, is because of the corrupting influence of institutions.

In Dennison's words,

The issue is precisely that of the effect of the institution upon the individual. The institution, the educational system in all its branches, is corrupting to the individual, and though the corruption may in many cases take the form of considerable expertise, the fact remains that competence is destroyed.²⁸

The autonomy of the learner must be protected and the rights of individuals must reign supreme over the needs of the state. Rousseau spoke in terms of a social contract. "Every man, on coming of age and becoming his own master, has a right, which nothing can abrogate, to renounce the contract that binds him to the community, by quitting the country in which it is established."²⁹

Illich clearly indicates where he stands on the question of individual rights and the needs of the state when he says,

The learner must be guaranteed his freedom without guaranteeing to society what learning he will acquire and hold as his own. Each man must be guaranteed privacy in learning, with the hope that he will assume the obligation of helping others to grow into uniqueness.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid., p. 276.

²⁹ Rousseau, loc. cit., p. 260.

³⁰ Gartner, Greer, Riessman, loc. cit., p. 21.

The deschooling and free school advocates also share a strong bias against the bureaucratic trappings of most schooling institutions. Tests, grades, age, specific classrooms, course requirements, mandatory attendance laws, credentials, diplomas, etc., are all seen as extraneous to the learning process. It is one thing to perform the various rituals of schooling and earn schooling diplomas; it is quite another thing to participate in learning experiences and to become an educated person.

The deschooling and free school advocates also emphasize the education of the entire person, not just the education of the mind. Healthy people, not well adjusted citizens, should be the objective of education. Neill claims that "the aim of life is to find happiness, which means to find interest. Education should be preparation for life."³¹ He claims that schools place too great an emphasis on knowing and not enough emphasis on feeling. Yet it is just as important to develop emotionally in order to become a happy, healthy person who is interested in life. Neill says, "Books are the least important apparatus in school. All that any child needs is the three R's, the rest should be tools and clay and sports and theatre and paint and freedom."³²

Rousseau also endorsed the concept that education means more than just developing the mind, and he had this rather cynical

³¹Neill, loc. cit., p. 24.

³²Ibid., p. 25.

comment to make about books. "Too much reading only makes presumptuous ignoramuses. In no age of literature has there been so much reading as in the present, and in no age has there been less learning."³³

Illich and Reimer say little about one's emotional development, but they certainly express a need for an educational system that would involve much more than the academic training of the classroom. Rather than creating well adjusted citizens, they see deschooling as vital in order to educate people so that they will not become adjusted to the existing political and social realities, but so they will actively seek to change them. One might say they view a good education as one which will create citizens who are not well adjusted to our present society.

The ideal kind of learning, according to the free school philosophy, is that which results from active involvement in, and exploration of the ongoing events and daily routines of our world, or, more simply, learning by doing. Rousseau said, "Let him know nothing because you have told him, but because he has discovered it himself; he must not learn science, but find it out."³⁴ He went on to say, "lessons to the young should consist of actions rather than of words; let them learn nothing from books which they can learn from experience."³⁵

The networks envisioned by Illich and Reimer would provide precisely this kind of learning. For example, learners could find

³³Rousseau, loc. cit., p. 257.

³⁴Ibid., p. 149.

³⁵Ibid., p. 199-200.

apprenticeships in various activities from the skill models who would be registered with the skill exchange. And the reference service to educational objects could be used to learn about the operations of a factory, airport, or any other routine operation in our society.

The progressive education movement also embodies several of the principles of the free school and deschooling theories. The progressive education advocates were also concerned with the education of the entire person, not just the intellectual development. And learning by doing, or in the progressive terminology, "in the continuum of experience," was also essential to a proper education.

Progressive educators also believed in allowing the natural inclinations of the learner to guide his education. Whereas the free school and deschooling proposals talk in terms of non-interference from adults or institutions, the progressive educators expressed a similar concept when they spoke in terms of teachers serving as guides or resource persons for the students to use according to the students' particular needs, rather than as the authoritarian figures teachers were in most schools.

An essential characteristic of education, as stated by progressive educators, was the concept of personal growth. Rather than the inculcation of a specific set of facts or body of knowledge education should be the personal growth of the individual. To John Dewey, "The criterion of the value of school education is the extent in which it creates a desire for continued growth and supplies the means for making the desire effective in fact."³⁶ An experience

³⁶ John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1916), p. 62.

was educational if it opened a person up to further learning. If an experience killed the desire for future learning, then it was mis-educative. Dewey claimed public schools were miseducative because they stifled the desire for future learning.

There are many theoretical and ideological similarities among the free school, deschooling, and progressive education philosophies. This should not, however, be interpreted to mean that these are just different terms for the same philosophy. Some distinct differences do exist. For example, the progressive educators believed in universal schooling as the principle means for democratizing society and for curing most social ills. The deschoolers advocate just the opposite approach, disestablishing the schools, in order to achieve the same ends.

When compared with the principles which guide most of our public schools, the similarities of these three philosophies far outweigh the differences. Most of the shared beliefs, values, and assumptions underlying these philosophies radically conflict with the concepts upon which most public schools have long been governed. Faith in the inherent goodness and wisdom of people, the de-emphasis of academic and intellectual development, and the belief that one's education should be designed according to the interests and concerns of the individual, as determined by the individual, rather than according to certain institutional requirements, are all notions which most of our schools have not accepted.

The various spokesmen for the educational philosophies discussed here have criticized schools, education, and society in general from several different perspectives, and they have proposed a variety

of solutions for the problems they have discussed. In a similar kaleidoscopic manner, the critics of these philosophies have addressed themselves to a large number of issues. In the following paragraphs I will focus on the two predominant points of criticism.

Criticism of Deschooling and Related Educational Philosophies

One criticism of such educational arrangements as free schools and the learning webs proposed by the deschoolers is that they are, or would turn out to be elitist. When the burden of education is placed on the individual rather than on some kind of centralized institution, it is feared that those who are wealthy and well educated will accumulate far greater educational resources than those who are poor and uneducated. The result will be a higher degree of polarization between the haves and have nots than presently exists in our society.

In discussing the elitist nature of deschooling, Robert J. Havighurst says,

It is impossible for this writer to understand how the children and adults and communities who need education most could get a fair deal in this kind of nonsystem. On the contrary, those who are best able to take care of their own education would make the best use of the four networks, while those disadvantaged by illiteracy and poverty would be neglected. Eventually, people with a social conscience would work through political and economic measures to set up educational institutions to serve the disadvantaged people better, and a school system would emerge again, as it did in the nineteenth century in the present developed countries.³⁷

Judson Jerome believes that not only will the well educated be able to more effectively educate their children, but that power and privilege will accumulate into the hands of a few, even more than it

³⁷Levine and Havighurst, loc. cit., p. 89-90.

has today.

Laissez-faire education runs the same risks as laissez-faire economics. Power and privilege accumulate like an avalanche. There must be safeguards, regulations, guarantees of opportunities, and these themselves perpetuate the system. Compulsory education was invented to help equalize opportunity, to even the score, to prevent exploitation. To some extent it has done so, but at the same time it has created deadening standardization, artificiality, and, as Illich often points out, a new system of hierarchy and privilege as oppressive as the one it was meant to displace.

If we simply closed down the schools, oppression would increase, as the prosperous and ambitious would accumulate more and more power and those less fortunate or those numbed by their social background would be trodden under."³⁸

Max Rafferty describes Summerhill as an excellent example of an elitist institution. To him, the success of Summerhill can be attributed to the high socio-economic background of its students and the fact that there is a student/teacher ratio of ten to one. In Rafferty's artistic words,

any educational philosophy can be implemented with fair results if the school is able to supply one teacher for every ten pupils. With that kind of tutorial staffing and with above average intellects to educate, Neill should be able to teach his kids to do everything except levitate.

In his book, he (Neill) brags that Summerhill graduates succeed in later life. But how could they fail? With their background, their wealth, and their brains, they would probably have done well if they had been educated in the Himalayas, with yaks as instructors.³⁹

A second point of criticism often voiced is that these educational arrangements are too anarchistic. There is a general feeling that there must be some kind of centralized or institutionalized planning of education so that future generations will be provided

³⁸ Gartner, Greer, and Riessman, loc. cit., p. 105.

³⁹ Summerhill: For and Against (New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1970), p. 19.

with appropriate educational experiences. Whether the objective of education is to eliminate social problems, to train people so they will have marketable skills, or to socialize people so that they will fit into society, it must be done through some kind of controlled planning. These critics claim deschoolers and free schoolers are too idealistic when they talk about inherent wisdom or a natural curiosity and desire to learn.

Some educators maintain that one of the most important functions of education is the socialization of young people. This function will not be properly performed in free schools or in educational arrangements like the networks proposed by Illich and Reimer. Louise Bates Ames says she would not send her child to Summerhill because, among other reasons, "young people must know what the adult standards are."⁴⁰ She believes students will not learn such standards in a free school. Eda J. LeShan says, "The civilizing process won't happen without adult guidance, without the imposition of reasonable limits, and without realistic demands and expectations."⁴¹ And Maxine Greene poses the question, "Is there a teacher anywhere outside the radically 'free' schools, who does not realize that the job of educating in part involves initiating -- into the prevailing way of life, some discipline or another, sensitivity to the arts?"⁴²

Arthur Pearl states that although he agrees with Illich

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 81.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 128.

⁴² Gartner, Greer, Reissman, loc. cit., p. 131-132.

about the goals of a desirable society, he believes no steps can be taken to realize that society without institutions. "Try to deinstitutionalize education as a symbol and the beginning of deinstitutionalization of everything and you reinstitute the law of the jungle -- which quickly breaks down into a new set of oppressive institutions."⁴³

Several people have attacked the de-emphasis of academic and intellectual training espoused by these educational philosophies.

Fred M. Hechinger says,

The history of reforms is strewn with wreckage caused by kindly emotions defeated by lack of intellectual rigor . . . To uplift the poor and deprived requires more than heart and sympathy; it calls₄₄ for effective strategies of social and economic reforms.

Arthur Bestor, in his criticism of progressive education, stated that the ultimate purpose of education is intellectual training. Only through systematic intelligence can man hope to solve the problems which beset him. Through training in the basic academic disciplines man would cultivate the ability to think and to effectively deal with his problems.⁴⁵

The advocates of greater freedom for the individual learners are often criticized for expressing an unsubstantiated, romantic vision of human nature and the learning process. Philip W. Jackson summarizes what the deschooling advocates think students will do when schools are closed, and what he thinks of such a vision. Jackson says,

⁴³ Ibid., p. 116.

⁴⁴ Summerhill: For and Against, p. 42.

⁴⁵ Lawrence A. Cremin, The Transformation of the School (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), p. 344-345.

it is assumed that school-age children, free from the artificial demands of the classroom, will be enthusiastically engaged in learning through contact with real-life situations. Guided by nothing more than natural curiosity and an instinctual love for learning, our children will presumably wander over the streets and fields of our land, gathering rosebuds of wisdom along the way. Adults, gladdened by the sight of these wandering scholars, will hail them as they pass and will invite them into the shops and factories and offices and hospitals, where they will become apprentices and learn at the feet of their elders those skills and trades that will equip them to take a productive place within our society.

Of course, no self-respecting critic would accept this caricature of the postschool era, but the romantic idealism contained in such an image is strongly evident in the imagination of many who criticize our current educational scene. However, when they begin to muse how this Whitmanesque ideal might be achieved, something very much like the structure of our present schools, or at least the best of them, begins to emerge.⁴⁶

Mortimer Smith's criticism along these same lines is even harsher. "The notion that the way to improve our lot is to abolish our institutions is, in my view, Utopian, sentimental, and the ultimate copout."⁴⁷

One problem shared by both the advocates and critics of deschooling is the lack of empirical data. Because we live in a schooled society, data on what our society would look like if schools were non-existent, is not available. However, a few educational services resembling the webs or networks proposed by Illich and Reimer have been created. The following sections of this paper represent an initial effort to examine such an educational service, and the deschooling proposal, empirically.

⁴⁶Levine and Havighurst, loc. cit., p. 63.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 75.

In the following pages I will describe the Learning Exchange and a survey that was conducted in order to evaluate its effectiveness. I will focus the analysis around two basic questions. First, did the Learning Exchange provide a useful service for the Chicago community? Secondly, if any services were provided, were certain segments of the population better served than others?

The answer to these questions will, in turn, accomplish two objectives. First, they should shed some light on the theoretical questions concerning deschooling and the effects of allowing individuals total control over their learning in an educational organization. Secondly, they will indicate what the Learning Exchange in Chicago, and others like it which have been started, might do in order to improve their services to their respective communities.

THE LEARNING EXCHANGE

What it is

The Learning Exchange is a free educational matching service in the Chicago metropolitan area. Anyone who wants to teach, learn, or discuss any subject, skill, or topic of interest, can find others with the appropriate matching interest through the Learning Exchange.

For example, if a person wants to learn to speak Spanish, he can call the Learning Exchange and indicate his interest. The Learning Exchange will then give that caller the names and phone numbers of previous callers who have offered to teach Spanish. It is then the responsibility of that person to call those Spanish teachers and work out arrangements with one, or any number of them, which are mutually agreeable. If there are no teachers registered in the topic a caller wants to learn, his name and interest are registered, and when someone calls who would like to teach that particular subject, that later caller is given the name of the learner. Then, it is the responsibility of the teacher to contact the learner. If a caller cannot find an appropriate match when he first calls the Learning Exchange, he can also call back in a few weeks, or whenever it is convenient for him, in order to find out if any new callers have registered his appropriate matching interest.

Organizations, as well as individuals, can and do use the services of the Learning Exchange. For example, if a school needs a teacher for a particular subject, it may be able to locate one through the Learning Exchange. Also, if an organization is offering courses or is sponsoring some kind of ongoing function, it can register those events and this information will be passed on to those who are interested in the subject areas with which those courses or functions are concerned.

The Learning Exchange has no control over the kinds of arrangements people make. Its services are restricted to putting people in contact with each other. It provides no classroom space, no teachers, no grades or certificates, and charges no tuition or fee of any sort. Its matching services are free to anyone who has access to a telephone, the postal service, or is able to visit the Learning Exchange office. Individual teachers, however, may charge a fee for their services. The Learning Exchange has no control over whether or not teachers charge a fee or the amount a fee might be.

When people contact the Learning Exchange they can register in the teacher, learner, or interest match classifications. They may register in as many different classifications in any number of subject areas as they desire. For example, a person could register as a teacher, learner, and interest match in one subject area, or in any number of areas. The term "exchange" often confuses people. In order to learn from someone through the Learning Exchange, a person does not have to offer to teach something in return. Although there are many individuals who are registered as both a teacher and a learner, and there are cases where two people have been matched with each person

teaching a subject to the other, a person can register as just a learner.

A teacher is defined as anyone who is willing to share his knowledge with others who may want to learn what he has to offer. The only requirement involved in being allowed to register as a teacher, is that the person wants to teach. No credentials, certificates, or previous experiences of any kind are required. The Learning Exchange plays no role in evaluating teachers. If the person so desires, the Learning Exchange will describe his experience and credentials to future callers who may request such background information. But this information is not required. It is the learners who determine if the services of the teachers are acceptable or not. And learners have the right, as do teachers, to terminate their relationship at any time. They are also able, and encouraged, to call the Learning Exchange back for other names if their first experience does not work out.

A person who registers as a learner is, simply, somebody who wants to learn about something. No matter what the interest may be, a person can register as a learner and he will be provided with the names and phone numbers of teachers in that area, if there are any teachers registered in that particular area.

The interest match classification is for those who want to meet others who have a similar interest and would like to pursue it in some way, perhaps in a series of discussions or by participating in some kind of activity of mutual interest. For example, people have met to discuss books they particularly enjoyed. Some want to maintain their fluency in a foreign language so they meet and hold discussions in that particular language. Others have found tennis, handball, and

bridge partners. A science fiction club was started by individuals who registered in the interest match classification.

The Learning Exchange consists of five full-time, minimally paid staff members, around 100 volunteers, four file boxes (one for teachers, one for learners, one for interest matches, and one for the mailing list), four telephones, an office donated by a church, and over 7,000 people in the Chicago area who are registered to use the service. At the time the interviewing for this study began, people were registered in over 450 topic areas. Today people are registered in over 1,300 areas which include academic subjects, mechanical skills, fine arts, religious philosophies, and a number of other areas. Some of the specific subjects are: anthropology, auto mechanics, boxing, Chinese culture, computer programming, Esperanto, Kenwood-Oaklawn community problems, macrame, radio broadcasting, sociology, lion taming, and Karma. Every three months an updated catalogue is sent to those who are on the mailing list. This list includes all the people who have registered in a subject area and others who have not registered a specific interest but want to keep informed about the Learning Exchange.

The Learning Exchange does have one regulatory function. If it is discovered that someone is abusing the service (e.g. using the Learning Exchange to meet women and then manipulating them into uncomfortable situations) that person's name will be removed from the file. It is expected that some people will develop friendships through the contacts they are provided, and that these people who met originally because of a specific interest will develop fuller relationships. But if the Learning Exchange is informed of any individual who

had no intention of participating in the activity he registered, and his interests prove to be threatening or uncomfortable in any way to those with whom he was put in contact, the Learning Exchange will no longer serve that person and his name will be removed from the file. So far, the Learning Exchange has not had to exercise this regulatory practice.

The Learning Exchange reflects the educational needs and interests of those who use it. The participants themselves determine what kinds of subjects are taught and what kinds of activities are participated in through the Learning Exchange. The variety of topics available, and the extent of its services are limited only by the extent of the interests and the willingness to participate of the people in the Chicago area.

How it Started

During the early winter months of 1971 Denis Detzel, a graduate student at Northwestern University, participated in a series of education seminars at the Center for Intercultural Documentation (CIDOC) in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Some of the other participants were Edgar Friedenberg, Paul Goodman, and Ivan Illich. One of the purposes of these seminars was to devise educational models which would be effective, inexpensive, and accessible to rich and poor alike. One of the results of these discussions was the development of the Learning Exchange model.

Detzel brought the idea of the Learning Exchange back to Northwestern, and after a few meetings with three other students, a Northwestern professor, and a few other members of the Evanston

community, the Learning Exchange was founded on May 26, 1971.

In the first week of operation, over 1,000 leaflets describing the Learning Exchange were distributed throughout Evanston, and three people responded. However, in the next few months posters were distributed, radio stations broadcasted public service announcements about the Learning Exchange, members of the volunteer staff were interviewed on several radio and television shows, and articles were written about the Learning Exchange in the Chicago Sun-Times, the Chicago Tribune, the Chicago Daily News, Chicago Today, and several neighborhood and suburban newspapers. By June, 1972, approximately 1,000 people were registered .

For the first twelve months the Learning Exchange was run by volunteers. In addition, many local businesses and community groups contributed valuable services and equipment which enabled the Learning Exchange to exist with virtually no money of its own. (Willard Hall, a girls' dormitory at Northwestern, contributed \$25 to the Learning Exchange). The United Community Services of Evanston donated office space, a telephone, and helped cover the mailing costs for the catalogues during most of the first year. The Learning Exchange was also given paper, and printing and duplicating services from various sources.

In June, 1972, the Learning Exchange received its first foundation grant. Since then, money raised through foundation grants and private donations, and further contributions in the form of materials and services from various sectors of the community have been sufficient to keep the service going. Based on the donations received from those who have used the service, and the projected number of

people who will be using the Learning Exchange in the future, the Learning Exchange should be self-supporting within three years. The service is, and always will be, free. However, donations will be requested, and based on previous money generated from its users, indications are that the Learning Exchange will be able to operate without having to charge a fee or having to raise money from external sources.

Why it was Started

Several people were involved in starting the Learning Exchange. There are probably as many reasons why it was started as people involved in starting it. Some felt that this model might eventually replace public schools. Others saw this as an opportunity to expand upon existing adult educational opportunities. Some indicated that they were looking for volunteer work in an organization they believed was contributing something to the community.

The over-riding purpose for creating the Learning Exchange was to open up educational opportunities for those who want to pursue a particular interest, or set of interests, but are unable to do so satisfactorily in the existing educational institutions. It was assumed that in any large community there are many people with skills and knowledge they would be willing to share with those who want to learn. But there is no mechanism for bringing the potential teachers and learners into contact with each other. Hopefully, the Learning Exchange would be the vehicle that would bring these people together. In this manner, the Learning Exchange would recycle existing human resources and open up educational opportunities for the community.

The Learning Exchange has grown substantially in its two and one-half years of service. And the Learning Exchange concept has attracted much interest throughout the United States and other nations. There are at least twenty other educational services similar to the Learning Exchange operating in the United States. (See Appendix D.) Similar services have also been started in Canada, England, and Australia. Based on inquiries received by the Learning Exchange, there are people in many more communities who are interested in starting such a service. Bob Lewis, director of the Learning Exchange, claims it is feasible that 1,000 Learning Exchanges could be operating by 1980.

Mechanics of the Study

During the months of June and July, 1972, a telephone survey of the Learning Exchange population was conducted in order to assess the impact of the service on the Chicago community. A questionnaire was constructed and pre-tested with 133 Evanston residents who had registered with the Learning Exchange before May, 1972. Based on the results of the pre-test, the questionnaire was modified slightly for the survey itself. (See Appendix A for a copy of the instrument used in the study.)

As of June 1, 1972, when the interviewing of the total sample commenced, approximately 1,000 people were registered. A total of 504 people were reached during the two months in which the interviewing was conducted. This survey did not include the 133 Evanston residents interviewed for the pre-test, but it did include the Evanston residents who registered after the pre-test was conducted.

Most of those who were not interviewed had either moved without leaving a forwarding phone number, were on vacation and would not be back until August or September, were deceased, or did not register a phone number with the Learning Exchange and were not listed with directory assistance.

I can only speculate about what differences, if any, there would have been in the data collected if all the participants had been interviewed. It is possible, for example, that many of those who were on vacation and would not be returning for several weeks may have been students or teachers who were not in school during the summer months. Had these people been interviewed, the occupation data may have been slightly altered. Perhaps this would have also caused a change in the education and income data. If those who were not interviewed because they were on vacation were primarily students or teachers, they may have had more years of schooling than the average number of years of the remainder of the sample.

It is possible that a lower percentage of those who were not interviewed were successfully matched compared to those who were interviewed. If they failed to register a telephone number, then someone who called the Learning Exchange after these people did could not have contacted them, even if they had potentially matching interests. Those who moved, without notifying the Learning Exchange, may not have had the degree of interest in the service displayed by others, which might have resulted from their lack of success in locating matches. If the Learning Exchange had difficulty reaching some of those who were registered, it is quite possible that any participants attempting to contact these people also had difficulty.

In evaluating the Learning Exchange, I will rely on the data that was collected, but it is worth keeping in mind the possible distortions in the data due to the non-response rate.

In the following section I will examine what happened through the Learning Exchange in terms of how many people were supplied with contacts, how many met with those contacts, and how successful those meetings were. The effectiveness of the service will be evaluated in terms of the objectives it was created to accomplish.

WHAT THE LEARNING EXCHANGE HAS DONE

When people are introduced to the Learning Exchange concept, one of the basic questions which consistently arises is, will it work? More specifically, will anybody call such a service? If so, what kinds of people will call and what kinds of interests will they have? Even if interests can be matched, are people willing to meet with total strangers that they contact in this manner? And how successful are such meetings likely to be?

In order for the Learning Exchange to serve an individual he usually must go through five steps. First, he must become aware of the existence of the service. Secondly, he must contact the Learning Exchange and register an interest. The third step is to be provided with the name of a previous caller with an appropriate matching interest. If there is nobody registered at the time of the call, then that person must wait for someone to contact him. Fourthly, once the person receives a name, or if a later caller is provided with his name, the people must contact each other and arrange to meet. Finally, they must work out arrangements for follow-up meetings. Usually, a person must proceed through each step in order to benefit from the Learning Exchange. In this survey people were asked about what happened at each step so that in those cases where people were not successfully matched, it could be determined where they "dropped out" and why.

It is difficult to estimate how many people were aware of the Learning Exchange. No reach or frequency data were compiled for the various sources of publicity and no public opinion polls were conducted to determine its exposure. But after twelve months of operation, approximately 1,000 people did call and register with the Learning Exchange. This study focuses primarily on the 504 people who were interviewed in June and July, 1972.

The reasons people called were quite varied. Table 1 on the following page is a breakdown of the 504 people who were interviewed according to their reasons for calling.

As one might expect when a free education service is introduced, most of the callers either wanted to take advantage by learning something, or they wanted to find out more about the service itself.

This presents the problem of finding enough teachers for all the learners. Again, as one would expect, more people who want to learn something are likely to contact a free educational service than people with the knowledge, skill, or desire to teach. Table 2 shows how many people registered as teachers, learners, and interest matches. It also shows what percentage of the callers registered in each classification. Because 65 of those interviewed did not register any interests with the Learning Exchange, the percentages shown in Table 2 are based just on those 439 respondents who did register as either a teacher, learner, interest-match, or some combination of the three, in some interest area.

TABLE 1
WHY PEOPLE CONTACTED THE LEARNING EXCHANGE

Reasons	No. of People	% of the 504 interviewed
To learn - seeking knowledge in some skill or subject area for themselves, a friend, or a member of the family	205	40.7%
Curious - wanted to learn about the Learning Exchange itself or what might be available through the Learning Exchange	152	30.2%
To meet people with similar interests	62	12.3%
Desire to teach	34	6.7%
Organization making its services available through the Learning Exchange or seeking services of the Learning Exchange	20	4.0%
To make money - either by teaching for a fee, or by learning or improving upon a marketable skill	9	1.8%
Other	16	3.2%
No data	2	0.4%
Do not recall	4	0.8%
Total	504	100.0%

TABLE 2
TEACHERS - LEARNERS - INTEREST MATCHES*

Classification	Number	% of those who registered one or more interests
Teachers	135	30.8%
Learners	306	69.7%
Interest-Matches	93	21.2%

*Since some people did register in more than one classification, the total number of teachers, learners, and interest-matches is larger than 439. Each percentage, however, is based on a total of 439.

When the service began, it was feared that many more learners than teachers would register. The above table indicates that a substantial proportion, 30.8% of those who registered one or more interests, did register as teachers. Naturally, there are still some areas where there are learners registered but no teachers, and there are also some areas with teachers registered but no learners. As the Learning Exchange grows, however, the proportion of people who cannot be matched should decrease.

At the time of this survey people were registered in over 450 different subjects. Originally, it was thought that the nature of the subjects for which people would seek out the Learning Exchange would reflect the interests of what is commonly thought of as the counter-culture. As it turned out, people have registered a wide variety of interests which cannot be attributed to any one clearly

defined segment of the population.

The subject areas were categorized, and Table 3 on the following page shows how many people registered in subjects within each category.

The most popular subject areas appear to be the arts, foreign languages, recreational activities, mechanical skills, and what has been defined as the awareness category. Whether the Learning Exchange concept is particularly well suited to meet these specific interests, or if this is just a reflection of what is not satisfactorily available in more traditional educational institutions is a provocative question which cannot be completely answered here. However, those who registered as foreign language learners frequently mentioned the expense of most foreign language classes as one reason why they turned to the Learning Exchange. Others registered in foreign languages said they were just looking for someone to converse with, in that language, in order to maintain their fluency. This kind of service apparently was not available elsewhere.

Several of those who registered in recreational areas said they were looking for people with whom they could play bridge, ping-pong, handball, tennis, or some other sport, and the Learning Exchange seemed like a logical place to look. Similar comments were made by some of those who participated in writers' workshops, jam sessions, dance classes, and in several other meetings which grew out of the Learning Exchange.

TABLE 3
SUBJECT AREAS REGISTERED WITH THE LEARNING EXCHANGE

Subject Category	No. of people	% of those who registered one or more interests
Art - painting, pottery, dance, drama, music, macrame, etc.	117	26.6%
Foreign languages	97	22.1%
Recreation - sports, travel, pet care, etc.	80	18.2%
Mechanical skills - auto repairs, carpentry, photography, printing, etc.	68	15.5%
Awareness - occult, ESP, mysticism, witchcraft, astrology, yoga, etc.	63	14.4%
Language arts - English, writing, reading, etc.	51	11.6%
Social sciences, social movements, politics	50	11.4%
Professional skills - medicine, law, architecture, accounting, education, etc.	41	9.3%
Physical sciences	34	7.7%
Domestic Skills - cooking, sewing, knitting, gardening, etc.	31	7.1%
Religion and philosophy	19	4.3%
Clerical skills - typing, shorthand, etc.	9	2.0%
Other	10	2.3%

Again, the base figure is 439 and each percentage is a percentage of the 439 respondents who registered one or more interests.

The mechanical skills and awareness subjects are not topics which can readily be pursued in most schools. The interest shown in these topics by many Learning Exchange respondents indicates, at least, that they were unable to pursue such interests through more conventional educational resources.

The Learning Exchange does offer a unique service. The nature of the subjects registered with the Learning Exchange indicates that it serves a wide variety of interests.

After calling the Learning Exchange and registering an interest, the next step is to be provided with a match. This can be accomplished in two different ways. Either the person can be provided with a name when he first calls, or he may be contacted at a later date by someone who calls with a matching interest.

Of the 439 who registered one or more interests, 303 (69.0%) were supplied with at least one name when they called. And 236 (53.8%) were supplied with two or more names. One hundred sixty (36.4%) of those who registered one or more interests were contacted at a later date by someone who received their names through the Learning Exchange.

Altogether, 355 (85.4%) of those who registered one or more interests were provided with at least one contact. These 355 people either received a name when they called or were contacted by someone at a later date, or both.

The next step is to arrange the first meeting. Again using 439 as a base, 102 (23.2%) held a first meeting. Of the 355 people who were provided a contact 28.7% proceeded to have a first meeting.

The final step in this progression is to establish some kind of regular, ongoing arrangement. Seventy-six people were involved in regular meetings. This means that 17.3% of those who registered an interest, and 71.0% of those who held a first meeting, proceeded to meet regularly. Those individuals who met more than once were defined as being involved in regular meetings.

The following table shows the number and percentage of people who reached each of these last three steps.

TABLE 4
LEARNING EXCHANGE CONTACTS AND MEETINGS

	% of 439 people who registered 1 or more interests	% of 355 people who were pro- vided with a contact	% of 102 people who had a first meeting
Total No. of people who regis- tered 1 or more interests 439	-----	-----	-----
No. of people who were provided a contact 355	85.4%	-----	-----
No. of people who had a 1st meeting 102	23.2%	28.7%	-----
No. of people who met regularly . . 76	17.3%	21.4%	71.0%

The seventy-six people who were involved in regular meetings were asked, "Do you feel that these meetings are (were) successful?" The only criterion for success was whether or not the respondents defined their experiences as successful. Sixty-eight said their

meetings were successful. Two said some were and some were not. Therefore, 70 (92.1%) of those involved in regular meetings had at least some successful meetings and were, therefore, successfully matched by the Learning Exchange. There were also five people who never met with their contacts because they claimed their needs were met during the first phone conversation. These five are considered to have been successfully matched. In addition, eight people had a first meeting, but no follow-up meetings because they said their needs were met in the one meeting. These eight are also considered to have been successfully matched. This makes a total of eighty-three people who were successfully matched through the Learning Exchange.

The meetings which resulted from contacts provided by the Learning Exchange varied in size and form, as well as in content. The following six paragraphs briefly describe some of the groups that were started.

One Chicago girl tutored another girl in statistics. They met once or twice a week during the term.

A priest and a factory worker met once a week to play handball. At the time of the interview, they had just met, and had played only twice, but they planned to continue their games in the future.

Four people, registered as science-fiction interest matches, got together and started a science-fiction club. After two months they had recruited twenty-one more members. Anyone could join the club if they paid the club dues which was a contribution of ten science fiction books to the club library.

A group of guitar interest-matches met weekly to play and learn from each other.

A free school in Chicago located a photography and an arts-and-crafts teacher for one term. Both offered their services free of charge.

An insurance investigator, with a Ph.D. in philosophy began teaching a course in philosophy. Classes take place in his home during the evening.

The groups took seven basic forms. The following table shows how many people were involved in meetings of each form.

TABLE 5
FORMS OF MEETINGS

Form	No. of people	% of people who participated in meetings
One-to-one, student-teacher instruction	32	42.1%
Teacher led group discussion or activity	12	15.6%
One-to-one discussion (not instructional)	6	7.8%
Group discussion (more than two people)	14	18.4%
One-to-one artistic or skill development (i.e. two people meeting to play tennis)	5	6.5%
Group therapy (i.e. session in transactional analysis)	3	3.9%
Group interaction in artistic or skill development	3	3.9%
Other	1	1.3%
Total	76	100.0%

The services of the Learning Exchange are free, but the Learning Exchange has no control over whether teachers charge a fee. However, only eighteen (23.7%) of those involved in regular meeting groups reported that any fee was charged. Of those who charged a fee, most charged around \$3 or \$4 per hour. The highest reported fee was

\$5 per hour.

Unfortunately, not everybody who called the Learning Exchange was successfully matched. As indicated in Table 5, many of those who were provided contacts never met with those contacts. And some who met once never followed it up.

Table 6 on the following page gives a breakdown of the reasons given for those who never met with their matches.

Those who met just once offered similar reasons for not participating in any follow-up meetings. (See Table 7.)

Logic alone, would indicate that as more people register with the Learning Exchange and as the concentration of Learning Exchange clients within a community increases, the number of successful matches will increase. The reasons given for not having a first meeting or for not following up on the first meeting further support this hypothesis.

Clearly, in the case of those who never met because of a distance or transportation factor, the major problem was that an appropriate match could not be found close enough to home. In a city as large as Chicago, this is not an unlikely situation. There are still some neighborhoods where only two or three people have registered with the Learning Exchange. Obviously, it is not likely these few people will have matching interests. And if a person is provided with contacts who live thirty miles away, this is going to discourage him from participating.

TABLE 6
REASONS FOR NO FIRST MEETING

Reason	No. of people	% of those who were provided with a contact, but never met
Communication or scheduling problem - person was never home, phone was busy, no return call, time or place could not be agreed upon	72	28.1%
Too busy - no longer had time for activity, lost interest	62	24.2%
Distance or transportation problem - person lived too far away	43	16.8%
Improper match - people were interested in different aspects or levels of a subject	36	14.1%
Fee - did not know teacher could charge a fee or the fee was too high	11	4.3%
Needs met during first telephone conversation, no need for meeting	5	2.0%
Other	21	8.2%
No Data	4	1.6%
Do not recall	2	0.8%
Total	256	100.0%

TABLE 7
REASONS FOR NO FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS

Reasons	No. of people	% of those who met only one time
Needs met at first meeting, no need for follow up	8	27.6%
Improper match - people were interested in different aspects or levels of a subject	7	24.1%
Too busy or interest change - no longer had time or lost interest	3	10.3%
Communication problem - never heard from person again	3	10.3%
Fee was too high	2	6.9%
Other	2	6.9%
No data	4	13.8%
Total	29	100.0%

The cases where people were improperly matched also can be solved by an increase in the number of people. Naturally, not every individual will find someone with his specific interest. But a higher percentage will as more people use the service.

The communication problem can also be reduced as more people register. If a person can be provided with several names, he does not have to spend too much time trying to reach someone who never seems to be home or who does not return his calls. Also, if a person is not provided with a name when he calls, but does receive a phone call some

time in the future concerning the interest he had registered, it is quite possible that, at that particular point in time, he may not be able or interested in something he was able and interested in doing when he registered. If enough people had been registered at the time the person originally called, he may have been able to benefit from the service.

The pre-test conducted in Evanston provided conclusive evidence that the higher the concentration of people registered with the Learning Exchange, the more successful matches there will be.

As mentioned earlier, 133 of the people who contacted the Learning Exchange were interviewed for the pre-test. Of this pre-test sample, 108 registered one or more interest. Thirty-three percent of those 108 met at least once with a contact provided by the Learning Exchange. This figure compares to the 23.2% of the larger sample who had a first meeting. Of those who registered one or more interests, 27.8% of the pre-test sample and 17.3% of the larger sample participated in regular meetings. Also, of those who had first meetings, 83.0% of the pre-test sample and 71.0% of the larger sample proceeded to have regular meetings.

There are other factors besides the numbers and concentrations of people which might have contributed to the higher percentage of successful matches in Evanston. Evanston is an education conscious community. Northwestern University is located there and Evanston Township High School seems to be at or near the top of every rating of public high schools. And Evanston residents are probably more community conscious and politically active than other suburbs which are characterized as middle or upper middle class communities.

However, the predominant factor which accounted for the higher percentage of successful matches in Evanston was the greater availability of conveniently located matches.

Based on these findings, the logical thing to do to improve the effectiveness of this service is to let more people know about it. These data show that most of the people who registered an interest (85.4%) were provided with at least one contact. And it appears that if the people can arrange to meet once, they are likely to develop a successful, ongoing relationship. The major breakdown occurs at the fourth step in this progression. Arranging the first meeting appears to be the difficulty. The problem is not that people's interests do not match. The problem is that people do not have access to enough appropriate matches so that they can find one near by, or so they can try a second person if the first one is never home, or so they can be matched at the time they want to pursue their interest.

Unlike many organizations, the efficiency of the Learning Exchange increases as it grows larger. More people means more contacts can be provided. And more contacts means more people can be successfully matched.

Reception of the Learning Exchange in the Community

Almost everyone who was informed of the existence of the Learning Exchange spoke favorably about it. Those who registered with the Learning Exchange, members of the various local and national media who did a program or story on it, and other members of the Chicago community provided much assistance in terms of money, supplies, services, and moral support.

Even though a majority of those who contacted the Learning Exchange were not able to locate a successful match, this did not appear to discourage them from wanting to stay registered. When asked, "Do you want to remain listed with the Learning Exchange?" 449 out of 504 interviewed said yes. Only forty-nine said they did not want to remain listed. (There was no data available on this question for six respondents.)

Of the forty-nine who did not want to remain listed, twelve (21.9%) said they were moving out of town. Twenty-four (43.6%) said they would no longer have time for the activity they registered because of some major unforeseen change in their lives such as illness or death in the family or a new job which would take more of their time. Only three people referred to the Learning Exchange itself as their reason for not wanting to remain listed. Two referred to the lack of structure in such arrangements and one said he had not gained anything in one meeting he had and he saw no reason to stay listed.

The extent of the favorable word of mouth advertising is another indication of the community's positive reaction to the Learning Exchange. When asked, "How did you hear about the Learning Exchange?" 105 people (20.8% of the 504 interviewed) said they heard about it from a friend. And when they were asked, "Have you recommended the service of the Learning Exchange to any of your friends?" 343 (68.1% of the 504 interviewed) said yes. More than two-thirds of the people interviewed said they had recommended the Learning Exchange to someone. And 51% of those who did not want to remain listed said they had recommended the service to friends.

Even the nature of the complaints offers further evidence of the community's positive attitude. When asked, "Do you have any complaints about the service you have received from the Learning Exchange?" only forty-three (8.5% of the 504 interviewed) said yes. The following list is a breakdown of these complaints.

TABLE 8
COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE LEARNING EXCHANGE

Complaint	No. of people	% of the 43 who registered a complaint
Disorganization - operator appeared disorganized, never received the mailing I was promised	18	41.9%
Frustration - could never find a match in my subject or near my home	19	44.2%
Received a call totally unrelated to subject I registered	2	4.6%
Did not know teacher could charge a fee	3	6.9%
No data	1	2.3%
Total	43	100.0%

There is evidence that even those who registered a complaint were generally satisfied with the services they received. Thirty people (69.8%) of those who registered a complaint still recommended the Learning Exchange to their friends. And not one person who made a complaint asked to be removed from the Learning Exchange list. Forty-two of the forty-three who registered a complaint stated that

they wanted to remain listed. No data were available on this question for one person who registered a complaint.

Based on the data collected in this survey, there appears to be a very favorable attitude towards the Learning Exchange. Even those who were not successfully matched and those who had a complaint appear to think of the Learning Exchange as a valuable public service for their community.

There is also much evidence from other sources which indicates that the Learning Exchange concept was received as an exciting idea and as an important public service by those who were aware of its existence.

From my experience with the Learning Exchange there was consistent informal feedback of a complimentary nature. Callers often said they thought the service was an excellent idea and occasionally some mentioned that they wondered why such a service was not implemented a long time ago. Other volunteers who spent a few evenings answering telephones have had similar experiences.

During the first year, meetings were held once a week in order to discuss the operation. The public was welcome, and almost every week there would be two or three new people who would volunteer some time. Whenever a new catalogue was to be mailed out, there was little difficulty in recruiting ten or fifteen people to help stuff and address envelopes.

As mentioned earlier, the local businesses contributed to the operation by offering services or supplies for free or at cost. One of the local printing and duplicating firms typed and printed the Learning Exchange mailings free of charge for several months.

The girl who managed the office said she had taken German lessons from a teacher she located through the Learning Exchange and she was glad to help out by donating the firm's services.

After the first year, the Learning Exchange had to move into a larger office. The telephone number had to be changed, which meant an answering service was required to provide those calling the old number with the new one. I called a telephone answering service to find out what such a service would cost. I was informed that the service we needed cost \$22 per month. When I mentioned that I was calling for the Learning Exchange, we were given the service free.

The local and national media were also receptive to the Learning Exchange concept. In addition to the many interviews and programs on local radio and television stations, and the articles which appeared in the four major daily newspapers and in most of the neighborhood papers, the Learning Exchange was favorably written up in Reader's Digest, the Christian Science Monitor, Time Magazine, and the Wall Street Journal. (See Appendix B.)

The Learning Exchange also received endorsements from Governor Dan Walker of Illinois, Senator George McGovern, and Senator Charles Percy. Percy has placed two entries into the Congressional Record on the Learning Exchange. (See Appendix C.)

Effectiveness of the Service

Being well received by the community, however, does not mean the same thing as effectively serving that community. The above statistics tell us that 85.4% of those registering an interest were provided with a contact, that 28.7% of those provided a contact had

at least one meeting, and that 71.0% of those who had a first meeting proceeded to have follow-up meetings. We also know that eighty-three (16.5%) of the 504 people interviewed were successfully matched. The total number of people who benefitted from the service is unknown. It is not known, for example, how many students were in the classes taught by the two teachers who volunteered their time at the free school. And there are other cases where organizations located people through the Learning Exchange to serve the members or clients of their organization, and it is unknown how many people were involved.

But evaluating the effectiveness of the service in terms of these statistics is difficult, particularly since there are no similar models with which it can be compared. (There are other Learning Exchanges, but none that have been around as long or are as well developed as the one in Chicago. Also, to my knowledge, there is no data available on their activities.) The most valid measure of effectiveness is whether or not the objectives of the Learning Exchange are being achieved.

As stated earlier, the primary objectives of this experimental educational delivery system were to open up educational opportunities for those who were unable to satisfactorily pursue their interests or meet their needs in the existing educational structures and to utilize educational resources in the community that were not being used. It would achieve these objectives by bringing together those with a willingness to share their knowledge and skills with those wanting to learn. In this manner, human resources previously going to waste could be recycled into productive channels.

The evidence clearly indicates that the main objectives are being met. People have located resources through the Learning Exchange that are not readily available in schools. Those wanting to periodically converse in a foreign language to maintain their fluency, for example, could not locate the necessary resource, people who spoke the same foreign language, elsewhere. Human resources which had been lying dormant have come alive again. A prime example is the insurance investigator who is teaching the philosophy course.

Some might argue that the number of people who registered with the Learning Exchange is too small to be of any significance. If only 1,000 people in a community of over five million utilize a service, one might conclude that such a service is not effective or useful to the community as a whole. And even if every one of the 1,000 people were dissatisfied with the opportunities available in the traditional educational institutions, one might argue there is no reason to be concerned about those institutions.

But the actual number of people who used the model in Chicago during its first year is not as significant as the growth in terms of the number of people using this particular model and the number of similar models which have been started in other communities. As of June, 1973, one year after this survey was conducted, over 7,000 people were registered with the Learning Exchange. And much of this growth resulted from word of mouth advertising. In addition, Learning Exchanges have been started in more than twenty-five other cities.

Over 40% of those who registered indicated that their reason for doing so was to learn more about a particular subject area.

At least some people are turning away from traditional schooling institutions in order to find the educational resources they need. In the Chicago metropolitan area, the Learning Exchange is helping a continually increasing number of people in this process.

The next question to be considered is, who is benefitting from this service. In the following section I will examine the demographic characteristics of the Learning Exchange population.

WHO HAS USED THE LEARNING EXCHANGE

Much of the controversy over the current state of education in our country centers on the question of equality. Americans may not believe that every child must be able to compete on an equal footing when they leave school, but we do voice a general consensus on the vague notion of equality of educational opportunity. That is, we may not think every child has the ability to become a doctor, but every child should have the opportunity to become a doctor if he or she has what it takes. Yet, as has been reasonably well documented, there are many inequalities and injustices in our society, reflected in our school systems, which allow some people more opportunity than others.

The specific objective of many proposed changes in education is to create a system that will meet the educational needs of our country in a more equitable manner. Illich and Reimer have stated that in order to eliminate injustice and oppression throughout society, schools must be eliminated altogether. The networks they propose will, in their minds, create an educational system that is accessible to all and which benefits all people on a more equitable basis. As mentioned earlier, the deschooling proposal has been criticised on the basis that it would do just the opposite, that it would increase the existing polarization and inequality. These critics argue that if the burden of education is placed on the individual student or his family, those

who are already well educated and well off socially and financially, will take much greater advantage of the available educational resources.

The Learning Exchange is one example of an educational network in which learners do have complete control over their education. In this section I will look at what kinds of people have been attracted to the service, and what kinds of people have actually benefitted from it. The demographic characteristics of the Learning Exchange population, when compared with those of the total Cook County population, will show who was attracted to the service in its first year. The specific characteristics I will examine are race, occupation, education, income, and age. From these data it will be possible to determine if the Learning Exchange attracted an elite clientele in its first year.

Race

Table 9 on the following page clearly shows that the percentage of minorities in the Learning Exchange population was smaller than the percentage of minorities in the Cook County area. And of those who were successfully matched, minorities made up an even smaller percentage.

In addition, a smaller percentage of non-whites who registered were successfully matched. Of the 424 whites who registered, 17.4% were successfully matched while only 12.5% of the fifty-six non-whites were successfully matched.

TABLE 9
RACE: LEARNING EXCHANGE VS. COOK COUNTY

	White	Non-White	Total
Learning Exchange Population	424 (88.3%)	56 (11.7%)	480 ¹ (100.0%)
Those who were successfully matched by the Learning Exchange	74 (91.4%)	7 (8.6%)	81 ² (100.0%)
Cook County ³	4,240,896 (77.2%)	1,251,473 (22.8%)	5,492,369 (100.0%)

¹Total does not include twenty-four Learning Exchange respondents who refused to answer, or for whom no data were available.

²Total does not include two successfully matched Learning Exchange respondents who refused to answer, or for whom no data were available.

³The data for Cook County were taken from:
Table 34

1970 Census of Population, General Population Characteristics
U.S. Department of Commerce
Bureau of the Census
Illinois

Occupation

The percentage of professional and technical workers was higher for the Learning Exchange population than for Cook County. The occupational breakdown for those sixteen years of age and older is shown in the following table.

TABLE 10
OCCUPATION: LEARNING EXCHANGE VS. COOK COUNTY

Occupation	Learning Exchange	Cook County ¹
Professional or Technical	160 (51.6%)	331,103 (14.6%)
Sales	15 (4.8%)	169,051 (7.4%)
Blue Collar	43 (13.9%)	814,662 (35.9%)
Clerical	52 (16.8%)	530,617 (23.4%)
Service or Domestic	14 (4.5%)	253,291 (11.2%)
Other	26 (8.4%)	170,959 (7.5%)
Total	310 (100.0%) ²	2,269,683 (100.0%)

¹The data for Cook County were taken from:
Table 122
1970 Census Population, General Social & Economic
Characteristics
U.S. Department of Commerce
Social & Economic Statistics Administration
Bureau of the Census
Illinois

²Total does not include those who refused to answer, were students, retired, housewives, or unemployed.

There was no particular occupation that the Learning Exchange was clearly most successful in providing successful matches. Although none of the retirees, sales, service, or domestic workers were successfully matched, the remaining occupational categories had almost the same percentage of successful matches. The following table shows how many people, and what percentage of people, in each category had successful matches. This table includes people of all ages.

TABLE 11
SUCCESSFUL MATCHES BY OCCUPATION

Occupation	No. of people in that occupation	No. and percentage of people in that occupation who were successfully matched
Student	64	14 (21.9%)
Professional or technical	173	31 (17.9%)
Blue Collar	43	7 (16.3%)
Clerical	54	8 (14.8%)
Unemployed	28	10 (35.7%)
Housewife	52	8 (15.4%)
Other	32	5 (15.6%)

Education

Most of the people who contacted the Learning Exchange had completed more years of schooling than the average Cook County resident. Of those people twenty-five years of age and older, 89.3% of the Learning Exchange population, compared to 51.7% of the Cook

County population graduated from high school.⁴⁸ From this same age group 68.2% of the Learning Exchange and 22.1% of Cook County had completed one or more years of college. And 42.7% of the Learning Exchange, compared to 10.9% of Cook County had completed four or more years of college.

Almost three-quarters (72.3%) of the people successfully matched by the Learning Exchange had completed at least one year of college. And 90.4% of the successfully matched people were high school graduates. Of those who completed high school, 18.2% were successfully matched while 11.3% of those who did not graduate from high school were successfully matched. Clearly, the Learning Exchange attracted people who had already completed many years of school, and it proceeded to serve them better than those with fewer years of schooling.

Income

The median family income for Cook County was \$11,642.⁴⁹ Of the 371 Learning Exchange respondents who reported their family income,

⁴⁸ The education data for Cook County were taken from:
Table 120
1970 Census of Population, General Social & Economic
Characteristics
U.S. Department of Commerce
Social & Economic Statistics Administration
Bureau of the Census
Illinois

⁴⁹ The income data for Cook County were taken from:
Table 124
1970 Census of Population, General Social & Economic
Characteristics
U.S. Department of Commerce
Social & Economic Statistics Administration
Bureau of the Census
Illinois

the median was between \$5,000 and \$9,999. While 61.1% of the families in Cook County reported an income over \$10,000, only 43.6% of the Learning Exchange population reported an income over \$10,000. Students were not included in the income calculation. The following table is a breakdown of those who were successfully matched by their incomes.

TABLE 12
SUCCESSFUL MATCHES BY INCOME

Income	No. of people in that income bracket	No. and percentage of people in that income bracket who were successfully matched
0-\$4,999	86	20 (23.2%)
\$5,000-\$9,999	123	25 (20.3%)
\$10,000-\$14,999	106	13 (12.3%)
\$15,000-\$24,999	41	4 (9.7%)
\$25,000+	15	1 (6.7%)
Refused	51	8 (15.7%)

The above income data indicate that the average income for the Learning Exchange population is lower than the average income for Cook County. Also, the Learning Exchange appears to more effectively match those in the lower income brackets.

Age

The seeming discrepancy indicated by the predominance of whites, the high occupational status, the above average years of

school completed, but low income levels can be explained by two factors. First, those people with incomes in the higher brackets are usually middle age or older. The percentage of the Learning Exchange population forty-five years of age or older was 21.8% whereas the comparable figure for Cook County was 31.1%.⁵⁰

A second factor which explains this discrepancy is the nature of the professionals registered with the Learning Exchange. Many of the professionals who contacted the Learning Exchange were in occupations that are generally considered to be low paying professions. Although the exact number is not available, around half the professionals were teachers, social workers, and community organizers. In addition, the age of many of the professionals registered with the Learning Exchange indicates they were just beginning their careers, so they were at the lower end of the pay scale. Of the 160 professionals for whom age data were available, 56.2% were under thirty-five years of age.

Elitism and the Learning Exchange

Based on the above demographic data, one can safely conclude that the Learning Exchange did attract an elite clientele during its first year of operation. One might be tempted to conclude that the Learning Exchange, if not the deschooling theory in general and any

⁵⁰The age data for Cook County were taken from:
 Table 35
1970 Census of Population, General Population
Characteristics
 U.S. Department of Commerce
 Bureau of the Census
 Illinois

model which evolves from it, is an elitist concept. Such a judgment, however, would be premature without examining other factors which contributed to the characteristics of the Learning Exchange population.

Two such factors are the location of the Learning Exchange office and the nature of the publicity during the first year. During the first two months of operation, the service was called the Evanston Learning Exchange and the publicity consisted of posters and handouts distributed in the Evanston area along with word of mouth advertising on the part of the volunteers running the service. As mentioned earlier, almost all of the people associated with the Learning Exchange lived in or near Evanston.

The first sources of mass media publicity were the Evanston newspapers and Northwestern University publications. Eventually, the major newspapers, television stations, and radio stations serving Cook County also covered the Learning Exchange. However, of the people who were exposed to the service by these media, those living in or close to Evanston were more likely to contact the service because of their geographic location. To call Evanston from Chicago or from any suburb which does not border Evanston is a toll call. If for no other reason, this would account for a higher concentration of callers who heard about the Learning Exchange through the mass media to be from the Evanston area.

The 504 people interviewed in this survey did not include most of the Evanston residents. They were interviewed for the pre-test. But it did include those living in neighboring communities such as Skokie, New Trier Township, Rogers Park (a neighborhood in the north side of Chicago which borders Evanston), and some living in Evanston.

Residents of these communities contributed a large portion of the Learning Exchange population during the first year. Of the 484 people whose addresses were known, 27.5% were from Evanston or a neighboring community. Like Evanston, these neighboring communities are populated by a higher percentage of white, well educated professionals compared to most of the other neighborhoods in Cook County. The fact that the Learning Exchange attracted a group of people who were well educated professionals, and a large percentage of whom were white, is not surprising in light of where it was located and how it was publicized during the early months.

If the Learning Exchange is to serve a more pluralistic population, the key, again, is to expose more people to the fact that the service exists. But just more advertising and publicity is not the entire answer. The kind of advertising, in addition to the amount, will determine whether or not the Learning Exchange will continue to serve an elite group.

In order to get any message across to a community of over five million people, the mass media appear to be the most effective and efficient means. The radio proved to be particularly effective for the Learning Exchange. When asked, "How did you hear about the Learning Exchange?" 49.6% said their source was the radio. But just more publicity through the mass media will not attract the pluralistic clientele the Learning Exchange would like to serve.

Since the mass media publicity was not aimed at any specific neighborhood, like the posters and handouts were, examining the demographic characteristics of those who heard about the Learning Exchange from newspapers, radio or television broadcasts, or magazine articles,

will lessen the effect of the geographic location of the office in attempting to determine what kind of people were attracted to this service. This will also give some indication on the kinds of people mass media publicity will attract in the future.

The demographic characteristics of the 332 people who heard about the Learning Exchange from one of the four mass media mentioned above (newspaper, radio, television, and magazine) indicate that they too were an elitist group, but not quite as elite as the entire Learning Exchange population. Of the 321 in this group who responded to the question on race, 12.5% were non-white. This compares to 11.7% of the total sample of 504 who were interviewed. Of the 332 people in this group, 82.2% graduated from high school and 29.5% completed four or more years of college. For the total sample, 82.7% graduated from high school and 34.5% had completed at least four years of college. Of the 332, 31.9% were professionals compared to 34.3% of the total sample.

The incomes reported by this group of 332 were generally higher than the incomes reported by the total sample. Of those for whom income data were available, 45.5% of the 332 compared with 43.6% of the total sample reported incomes over \$10,000. Again, age is an important factor in accounting for this income data. Where 23.6% of the 332 were 45 years of age or older, only 21.8% of the total sample were in this age bracket.

The above statistics indicate that those who heard about the Learning Exchange from sources which were not directed to any specific geographic area constituted an elite group. This group was not as elite, however, as the total sample. This provides further evidence

that the location of the Learning Exchange office and the nature of the early publicity was, at least partially, responsible for the elite clientele of the Learning Exchange in its first year.

Even when examining those people who heard about the Learning Exchange from the mass media, the effect of the geographic location is not completely eliminated. As stated earlier, even among those who heard about the service from the mass media which were not directed to any specific neighborhood in Cook County, those who live in or near Evanston are more likely to respond.

The Learning Exchange will attract more people if it advertises itself more. But just greater quantities of advertising will not guarantee that a more pluralistic clientele will be served. The advertising must be aimed specifically at the segments of the population it wants to attract. During the first year, the Learning Exchange sought out any publicity it could get. There was no strategy involved in the publicity efforts and no specific advertising objectives were set. Today, professional market research consultants are donating their services and the Learning Exchange is taking a more systematic approach in order to attract more people and a more pluralistic group of people.

The directors of the Learning Exchange are particularly interested in better serving racial and ethnic minorities, and steps are being taken towards this end. Community organizations in minority neighborhoods are being contacted in order to further publicize the service and to encourage greater minority participation.

The Learning Exchange did attract an elite clientele during its first year of operation. But, as we have seen, several factors contributed towards this occurrence. Efforts are being made, taking these factors into consideration, in an attempt to serve a larger and more representative portion of Cook County.

The manner in which the Learning Exchange was presented to the public played an important role in determining who would use it. The kinds of people who were attracted to the service, in terms of race, occupation, education, and income, resulted largely from the location of the office and the way the service was publicized. The service itself may have greater appeal to white, well educated professionals. The Learning Exchange may eventually prove to be elitist. But the experience of this particular model in its first year of operation cannot be offered as final proof that this concept is, in fact, elitist.

DESCHOOLING AND THE LEARNING EXCHANGE

Illich and Reimer have proposed a radical alternative for the restructuring of education. As indicated earlier, their philosophy shares many assumptions with the free school movement and the progressive education movement earlier in this century. The deschooling proposal, however, calls for an entirely different solution.

Whether disestablishing schools would result in accomplishing what Illich and Reimer believe it would accomplish is a theoretical question which cannot be proven, one way or another, at this point in time. But their assessment of the present state of schools is not purely theoretical. There is evidence to support their central criticism of schooling, and they do not stand alone in their attack on the institution of schooling.

Few people would disagree with the statement that schools do not serve all people on an equitable basis. The data collected by the U.S. Office of Education which Reimer referred to is just one source of documented evidence that some people benefit from our schools more than others. And the evidence also indicates that those who are wealthy and well educated tend to accumulate a disproportionately high share of the available educational resources for their children than those who are poor and uneducated.

Illich and Reimer have argued that not only are schools presently serving their clients unequally, but that the institution of schooling is inherently unequal and that it serves to perpetuate the existing class structure. Schools are bureaucratically organized production systems which perpetuate what they refer to as the existing hierarchy of privilege. The rhetoric of equality maintains the legitimacy of schools in the minds of the poor who still see schools as the step ladder to success while in fact schools serve to deny the very opportunity they promise. Although equal educational opportunity is possible, equality under our present system of schooling is not.

Other social scientists have more recently made similar arguments concerning the function of schools. Michael Katz has argued that the reason why the bureaucratic form of education became and remains the dominant form in the United States is precisely because of the emphasis placed on the inculcation of values and the need to preserve the existing social order. In reference to schooling institutions Katz wrote,

In their own way, they are imperial institutions designed to civilize the natives; they exist to do something to poor children especially, now, children who are black or brown. Their main purpose is to make these children orderly, industrious, law-abiding, and respectful of authority. Their literature and their spokesmen proclaim the schools to be symbols of opportunity, but their slitted or windowless walls say clearly what their history would reveal as well: They were designed to reflect and confirm the social structure that erected them. . . .

The purpose has been, basically, the inculcation of attitudes that reflect dominant social and industrial values; the structure has been bureaucracy. The result has been school systems that treat children as units to be processed into particular shapes and dropped into slots roughly congruent with the status of their parents. There is a functional relationship between the way in which schools are organized and what they are supposed to do. That relationship

was there a century ago, and it exists today. This is why the issues of social class and bureaucracy are central to understanding the public school.⁵¹

Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis have emphasized the role that economic needs have played in determining how the educational system would function to maintain the social order.

Mass education made its beginning in the cities and towns where the dominant industries required little skill -- and far less cognitive ability -- among the work force. The towns in which the skill-using industries located were the followers, not the leaders, in the process of mid-nineteenth-century educational reform and expansion. . . .

Thus the growth of the modern educational system did not originate with the rising cognitive requirements of the economy. Rather, the birth and early development of universal education was sparked by the critical need of a burgeoning capitalist order for a stable work force and citizenry reconciled, if not inured, to the wage labor system. Order, docility, discipline, sobriety, and humility -- attributes required by the new social relations of production -- were admitted by all concerned as the social benefits of schooling.⁵²

The inequality of our schooling institutions cannot be viewed as merely a contemporary phenomenon. As the above references indicate, class consciousness was built into the schools when mass education was just beginning. Yet, as Colin Greer has argued, we live according to the myth that schools were largely responsible for our nation's ability to absorb the poor and various racial and ethnic minorities in the past, so the schools should be able to do so again.⁵³

⁵¹Michael Katz, Class, Bureaucracy, & Schools (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc.. 1971). p. xviii.

⁵²Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, "I.Q. in the U.S. Class Structure," Social Policy, (November/December, 1972 January/February, 1973), p. 79.

⁵³Colin Greer, The Great School Legend (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1972).

The facts, according to Greer, are that we have never incorporated large numbers of the poor and minorities into the middle classes, and that those who did make it did so despite, not because of, the public schools. Living under such a myth enables many of us to live comfortably with the notion that those who do not succeed in school have only themselves to blame. The longer we accept such a myth, the longer we will avoid recognizing certain truths about our society, one of which is the function performed by our schools.

According to Illich and Reimer, it is the hidden curriculum of schools, or the values and behavioral characteristics they teach, which enables them to reinforce and perpetuate the class structure. The hidden curriculum, according to Illich, inculcates a consumption-production orientation towards life, and it fosters a tolerance for institutional dependence and acceptance of institutional values and rankings. People are taught to believe that increased production of goods and services by hierarchical bureaucratic institutions is benevolent and should be encouraged. This, in turn, encourages increasing, self-defeating competitive consumption of those goods and services.

Education, in terms of schooling credentials and diplomas, is sought in a competition which people accept as fair and just. Even the poor and minorities who, over the years, have been labelled as failures by schools and therefore unqualified for most jobs and an opportunity to participate in the mainstream of American life, have accepted this game. Once people have accepted the legitimacy of an educational system based on production methods, and once they accept education as a competition for the consumption of schooling credentials, Illich maintains they are well conditioned to participate in a society

characterized by the continuous production and consumption of institutional goods and services.

The hidden curriculum is similar to Bowles' and Gintis' discussion of how schools prepare students for the society they will enter when they leave school.

To get a job at any particular level in the hierarchy of production one has to meet two tests: first, one must be able and willing to do the work; and second, one must be of appropriate race, sex, age, education, and demeanor so that his or her assignment to the job will contribute to the sense that the social order of the firm is just. Thus criteria of worker adequacy reflect more than the employer's desire that workers be hardworking and capable. They reflect as well the need for acquiescence to the employer's monopolization of power.⁵⁴

According to Bowles and Gintis, there are four sets of non-cognitive traits which employers examine so that the social order will not be questioned or upset in any way. The four sets are: ascriptive traits which are acquired at birth, credentials which are acquired in the schools, and work related personality characteristics and modes of self presentation which are acquired through the social relations of schooling and of family life.

Since the social relations of schooling correspond to the social relations of production, one is well prepared for his slot in the social order at his place of employment when he leaves school.

The school is a bureaucratic order with hierarchical authority, rule orientation, stratification by 'ability' (tracking) as well as by age (grades), role differentiation by sex (physical education, home economics, shop), and a system of external incentives (marks, promise of promotion, and threat of failure) much like pay and status in the sphere of work. Thus schools are likely to develop in students traits corresponding to those required on the job.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Bowles and Gintis, loc. cit., p. 82.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 87.

So although schools were explicitly established to teach the cognitive skills needed in order to function in our society, they also teach non-cognitive skills which enable them to re-create, within the classroom, the social class structure that exists outside the classroom. And often cognitive ability is evaluated in terms of non-cognitive characteristics.

Ray C. Rist conducted a study⁵⁶ in which he observed a kindergarten teacher determine, within eight days, who the fast and slow learners were. These decisions were based solely on information about the students' socio-economic backgrounds and the behavior they exhibited during the first eight days of school. Although no testing of their cognitive abilities had been done, these students were quickly grouped, supposedly according to their ability to learn.

The kindergarten teacher assigned the students to three tables. According to Rist, those at table number one were articulate, clean-cut, and well dressed. The children assigned to tables number two and three were less articulate and not as well dressed or as clean-cut, and they had darker skin color. A higher percentage of the children at tables two and three came from broken homes. The parents of the children at table number one had more education, and a higher percentage of their fathers were employed. The teacher proceeded to pay more attention to, and to provide more encouragement and support for the children at table number one. Clearly, in this teacher's mind, the students at table number one were the fast learners.

⁵⁶ Ray C. Rist, "Student Social Class and Teacher Expectations: The Self-fulfilling Prophecy in Ghetto Education," Harvard Educational Review, (August, 1970).

Rist followed this particular group of children through second grade. The seating arrangement implemented in the first eight days of kindergarten emerged again in the first and second grades. By evaluating these children's cognitive ability strictly according to the values and behavior of the teacher's normative reference group, the children were labelled as fast and slow learners in their first eight days of school. Then, by acting on the assumptions made in those first days, the pattern did emerge. By the second grade, the group which sat at table number one in kindergarten was now scoring better on the cognitive tests which the students had, by now, taken.

Whereas our conventional wisdom tells us that schools serve to ameliorate inequality in our society, Rist's study is one example of how social class distinctions are brought into the classroom, and how schools serve to reinforce the existing class structure.

Whether Illich's and Reimer's conceptualization of the hidden curriculum is correct may be debatable, but the importance schools place on non-cognitive development cannot be denied. There is evidence, such as the Rist study, which illustrates how students are evaluated and placed into tracks or ability groups according to criteria which are unrelated to their actual ability to learn. And, as Bowles and Gintis argue, people learn to accept certain values and behavioral characteristics in school and in the home which they need when they enter the job market. Whether one refers to the hidden curriculum, the social relations of schooling, or non-cognitive development, the conclusion is that schools teach and reward certain modes of behavior and, through this process, serve to perpetuate the

existing class structure.

Few people have concluded that schools should be disestablished. But Illich and Reimer hold no monopoly over the perspective that schools, as bureaucratically organized systems, are inherently unequal and serve to maintain the existing hierarchy of privilege.

Illich and Reimer began their analysis of the institution of schooling when they determined that the costs of schooling necessary to meet the manpower needs of most Latin American nations were beyond the economic capabilities of these nations. One does not have to be an alarmist to view the escalating schooling credentials required for more and more jobs, along with the growing financial difficulties facing several major metropolitan area school systems to consider the possibility that, in the not too distant future, the United States might not be able to afford the schooling its manpower needs require.

Teacher strikes have occurred much more frequently in recent years, and they have lasted longer into the school year than before. In addition to costing school boards, and ultimately the tax paying public, more money in salaries, such strikes often bring out into the open the many problems in our schools. Not all teacher strikes are just salary disputes. The working conditions and the conditions under which we expect children to learn are often central issues in such disagreements.

In recent years, major city school systems have had to look more often to the state legislatures for more money, just to maintain services at present levels. The Chicago school system, for one, has

contemplated cutting back on its art and music classes in order to save money, and to keep the schools open. We have approached the point where it is a struggle for some schools to stay open long enough so that students can meet the state attendance requirements.

Patchwork solutions, such as a loan from the state, a cutback in the programs offered by the schools, or a reduction in the number of days students must be in class will not, in the long run, solve the problems of the schools. Disestablishing schools and replacing them with learning webs or networks may not be the answer, but it is becoming more apparent that some kind of vast reorganization in the delivery of educational resources is necessary.

Perhaps the Federal government could, overnight, double the amount of money spent on schooling. Although such a financial commitment would solidify the economic situation of many schools, merely an increase in funds would not alter the inequality which is built into schools. As long as education is organized and paid for in the present manner, it will continue to serve the vested interests of the upper classes.

The recognition of the growing crises in our schools, the social class bias of our schools, and the need for some kind of reorganization of education served as part of the motivation for the establishment of the Learning Exchange. If such a model would accomplish nothing else, it was hoped that the service would be an indication that the process of education can be organized around different principles than those which govern our schools.

The basic assumptions of the deschooling theory concerning what a deschooled society would look like remain primarily theoretical issues. Any assumptions about such a society, based on the experience of the Learning Exchange, would be questionable for two principle reasons.

The first, and most important reason, is that the Learning Exchange exists in a schooled society. The Learning Exchange is a supplementary service. Those who have used it had completed several years of schooling and they looked to the Learning Exchange to supplement what they already had. In most cases, people used the service to pursue a hobby, to improve upon a skill they had previously developed, or to learn about a subject they were interested in more as a matter of curiosity or interest than essential need. The Learning Exchange was something to be used to enhance one's leisure time more than a source of vital knowledge or skill acquisition. This does not mean that this service could not be used for more essential purposes. And some people were looking for training in a skill that would enable them to find a better job. But the predominant use of the Learning Exchange was for leisure time activities. If the Learning Exchange was the predominant source of educational resources, or if it competed equally with other educational services like the public schools, the users may have been different people and they may have used the service more extensively and for different purposes. However, few people recognized the Learning Exchange as an alternative or potential replacement for the public schools.

Another reason why it is difficult to project from the Learning Exchange to a deschooled society is that the deschooling

theory calls for change in more areas of society than just education. According to Illich there must be legal changes which accompany the disestablishment of schools. Laws prohibiting any obligatory educational activity for everybody, and laws which forbid discrimination in hiring based on prior participation in some schooling or educational program would have to be passed. The entire concept of credential accumulation from officially recognized certifying agencies as proof of knowledge or ability must also be prohibited. Unless job relevance is the only criteria for hiring and promotion practices, then deschooling will have accomplished nothing. Since such laws have not been passed in Cook County, the Learning Exchange does not represent a test case of a deschooled society. But it is an experiment in the kinds of educational services that would be available in such a society.

The question of what happens when the burden of education falls on the individual rather than on the state or some institution also remains a theoretical issue. Whether such learning arrangements are elitist cannot be determined from the empirical findings on the Learning Exchange.

The Learning Exchange did attract an elite clientele during its first year, but as stated earlier, this was largely a result of the location of the office and the nature of the publicity, particularly in the early months. As more people are exposed to the availability of the service, and as the number of participants increases, a better determination of the kinds of people who are attracted to such a service can be made. But no matter how many people use the service, and no matter how elitist or pluralistic the population may become, it would be

difficult to draw any conclusions about the overall deschooling theory or what a deschooled society would look like, as long as the Learning Exchange operates in a schooled society and is perceived as an ancillary educational service.

One conclusion which can be drawn, based on the available empirical data, is that the Learning Exchange is providing a valuable service to the Chicago metropolitan area. And its utility increases as each day goes by. Whereas approximately 1,000 people were registered at the time this data was collected, over 7,000 people were registered one year later. Although no follow up study has been conducted, it is probable that many more people have been successfully matched, and that a higher percentage of those who have called the Learning Exchange have been successfully matched.

As a public service, independent of the deschooling issue, the Learning Exchange has succeeded in achieving its primary objectives. Educational opportunities have opened up for people who were unable to satisfactorily meet their needs elsewhere. Also, educational resources, in terms of skills and knowledge possessed by individuals, which had previously been lying dormant, have come to life again and others have benefitted because of it.

The service has been extremely well received by the community. Those who registered with the Learning Exchange but were unable to locate a match as well as those who tangibly benefitted from the service spoke very favorably of it. Word of mouth advertising has been an invaluable source of publicity. The media coverage has consistently been of a positive nature. The number of people registered

with the Learning Exchange has grown at a much faster rate than expected, and similar models have been started in other communities throughout the world. One would have to conclude that a nerve in the social system has been struck.

Future Study

The data collected in this study, in addition to the informal feedback which has been received, indicates the direction that future research should and, hopefully, will take.

First, there is much to be learned from the impact that this particular model in Chicago will have on the Chicago community in the immediate future. Certain questions are just begging to be answered. Will the number of people registered with the Learning Exchange continue to increase? What publicity vehicles and advertising strategies will prove to be the most effective? Will the demographic characteristics of the Learning Exchange population change as more people hear about the service? If so, what kinds of changes will they be? Will the percentage of successfully matched people increase with an increase in the number of people registered? If so, by how much? What kinds of meetings will result from contacts that are made through the Learning Exchange? Will the Learning Exchange have any effect on other, more traditional institutions and services, particularly educational ones? As the Learning Exchange obtains greater exposure, how will it be viewed by the general population and by certain interest groups such as professional educators?

It will also be valuable to document the growth in the number of other models as well as the rate of attrition. The impact that each

of these services has on their respective communities should be documented. Naturally, it is expected that some will have more success than others and some will last much longer than others. The reasons behind such successes and failures can indicate whether such services can serve a valuable function over a long period of time, or whether they represent little more than a fad.

Personal, in-depth interviews with users of Learning Exchanges may reveal certain attractive characteristics or implications of the service of which the founders are completely unaware. Perhaps there are certain personality traits common to those who would call such a service, that a telephone survey would not uncover. How the Learning Exchange is perceived by the public, particularly in terms of how it relates to other educational services, might be better determined through personal interviews.

Many of the above questions could be answered by replicating the telephone survey that was conducted in the summer of 1972. Some questions, quite clearly, would require different research designs. The answers to all of these kinds of questions have serious implications for the Learning Exchange as a public service, for education in general, and quite possibly for the public's attitudes towards large scale institutions and the future shape of those institutions.

Conclusion

Schools are generally accepted as an integral part of our society. We observe the vast changes and technological advances going on around us and one natural response is to demand more schooling. Almost every parent wants his or her children to get as much schooling

as possible so that they will be able to get a decent job and live a decent life. Few people advocate less schooling as the direction we should take to meet our educational needs.

Yet, the growing financial difficulties alone facing schools indicate that the institution of schooling may not be as permanent as we think. And even if we should find a way to financially bail out our schools, there are a few voices which question if society is beneficially served by such large scale bureaucratic educational delivery systems. Most of these voices come from within those systems. Schools, at least in their present form, may not be the stable, secure institutions we view them to be.

Education in the future may well take radically different forms. The learning webs and networks proposed by the deschoolers, or some other equally unfamiliar form of education may become as familiar to future generations as schools are to ours.

There is much debate over what needs to be done to improve our nation's education. Most of this debate centers around what we should do to improve our schools. Whether we want improvements within our schools, or if we want to create alternative educational delivery systems, or both, we need to experiment with the proposed changes and to document the results of such experimentation. This study represents an initial phase in the kinds of research needed in order to test empirically, one kind of alternative which, up until now, has been a subject for little more than debate.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN THE LEARNING EXCHANGE SURVEY

LEARNING EXCHANGE: METROPOLITAN CHICAGO STUDY

1

INTRODUCTION: Hello, this is _____ from the Learning Exchange. We are conducting a study in order to determine who is using the Learning Exchange and how the Learning Exchange is serving the people who use it. Could I have a few minutes of your time to ask you some questions? Yes _____ No _____ (REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE) Call back _____ Time _____

Name _____ Address _____
Phone _____

IDENTIFICATION

(1) How did you hear about the Learning Exchange?

- (1) Poster (2) Friend (3) Radio (4) Newspaper (5) TV
(6) Handout (7) Speech, Lecture (8) Magazine
(9) Other _____

HOWHEAR

Notes: _____

(2) Why did you decide to contact the Learning Exchange?

YCONTAC

(3) When did you first contact the Learning Exchange?

- (1) May, 1971 (2) June (3) July (4) August (5) September
(6) October (7) November (8) December (9) January, 1972
(10) February (11) March (12) April (13) May (14) June
(15) July

WHEN

(4) Have you called in since then?

No (Blank) Yes _____

CALSINS

(5) If yes, how often? _____

(6) Do you remember why you called back?

YCALSIN

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

(7) How many entries have you placed? _____

NENTRYS

(8) List the topics and Learning Exchange categories.

- (1) Teacher (2) Learner (3) Interest Match

TLICATS

() _____ () _____

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

() _____ () _____

4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

() _____ () _____

7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____

SUBJECT:

() _____ () _____

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

() _____ () _____

4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____

LEARNING EXCHANGE: METROPOLITAN CHICAGO STUDY

2

- (9) When you called the Learning Exchange were you supplied with any people to contact? (1) Yes (2) No

CONTSUP

- (10) If yes, how many?

NCONSUP

- (11) Did you call them? (1) Yes (2) No

CALATT

- (12) If yes, what happened? If no, why not?
(Discuss each case separately)

CATTWH

1. _____

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

2. _____

4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

3. _____

7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____

4. _____

10. _____ 11. _____ 12. _____

5. _____

13. _____ 14. _____ 15. _____

6. _____

NATTWH

7. _____

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

8. _____

4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

9. _____

7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____

Notes: _____

10. _____ 11. _____ 12. _____

13. _____ 14. _____ 15. _____

- (13) Did anyone contact you through the Learning Exchange?
(1) Yes (2) No

NCONREC

- (14) If yes, do you remember how many?

NCONREC

- (15) What happened during the phone conversation?
(Discuss each case separately)

CONREWH

1. _____

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

2. _____

4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

3. _____

7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____

4. _____

10. _____ 11. _____ 12. _____

5. _____

13. _____ 14. _____ 15. _____

6. _____

LEARNING EXCHANGE: METROPOLITAN CHICAGO STUDY

3

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

Notes: _____

- (16) Did you ever meet with any of the people that you contacted (who contacted you)? (1) Yes (2) No
(Include as a positive response those individuals who call or write each other regularly as a result of Learning Exchange participation and describe this form below)

MEETING

1. _____ 4. _____
2. _____ 5. _____
3. _____ 6. _____

- (17) (If yes, describe the first meeting in the space below)

WHENDAT

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____
7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____

- (18) When did you meet?

Date: _____
Time of Day _____

WHENTIM

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____
7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____

- (19) Where did you meet?

WHEREMET

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____
7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____

- (20) How long was the first meeting? _____
(No. of hours)

METTIME

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____
7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____

- (21) How many people were in the group? _____

NOPEOP

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____
7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____

- (22) What happened during the first meeting?

METFORM

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____
7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____

LEARNING EXCHANGE: METROPOLITAN CHICAGO STUDY

4

- (23) Do you now, or did you ever meet regularly? (1) Yes
(2) No

REGMET

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____
4. ____ 5. ____ 6. ____

- (24) If yes, how many regularly meeting groups do you (did you) participate in? ____
Where do (did) these meetings take place?

NREGMET

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

WHEREMET

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____
4. ____ 5. ____ 6. ____
7. ____ 8. ____ 9. ____

- (25) When do these meetings take place? (Time of day)

WHENTIM

Time of day. 1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____ 4. ____ 5. ____

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____

Day of week. 1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____ 4. ____ 5. ____

4. ____ 5. ____ 6. ____
7. ____ 8. ____ 9. ____

TIMEDAY

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____
4. ____ 5. ____ 6. ____
7. ____ 8. ____ 9. ____

- (26) What form do these meetings generally take?

METFORM

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____

4. ____ 5. ____ 6. ____

7. ____ 8. ____ 9. ____

- (27) How many people are in the group?

NOPEOP

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____ 4. ____ 5. ____ 6. ____

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____

4. ____ 5. ____ 6. ____

7. ____ 8. ____ 9. ____

- (28) Is there a fee involved? (1) Yes (2) No

FEE

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____

4. ____ 5. ____ 6. ____

7. ____ 8. ____ 9. ____

- (29) If yes, how much?

FEEAMT

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____ 4. ____ 5. ____ 6. ____

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____

4. ____ 5. ____ 6. ____

7. ____ 8. ____ 9. ____

- (30) Do you feel that these meetings are (were) successful?
(1) Yes (2) No

SUCCESS

1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____

4. ____ 5. ____ 6. ____

7. ____ 8. ____ 9. ____

LEARNING EXCHANGE: METROPOLITAN CHICAGO STUDY

5

Notes on success of meetings: _____

- (31) If you did not participate in any regular meetings, why not?
(In those cases where an individual participated in first meetings but no subsequent meetings were scheduled)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

YNOMET

1. ___ 2. ___ 3. ___
4. ___ 5. ___ 6. ___
7. ___ 8. ___ 9. ___

- (32) Do you want to remain listed with the Learning Exchange?
(1) Yes (2) No

REMAIN

- (33) If no, why not? _____

NOREMAN

- (34) Have you recommended the services of the Learning Exchange
to any of your friends? (1) Yes (2) No

RECOMEN

- (35) What is your: Age (years) _____
Sex (1) Male (2) Female _____
Race (1) White (2) Black (3) Oriental _____
(4) Spanish surname (5) Other: _____

AGE _____
SEX _____
RACE _____

EDUC _____

Education (years of school)
(12) High School (16) Bachelor's
(18) Master's (21) Ph.D., M.D., L.L.B., etc.

LEARNING EXCHANGE: METROPOLITAN CHICAGO

6

(36) Marital Status: _____ (1) Single (2) Married (3) Widow(er) (4) Separated (5) Divorced (6) Common Law, Living in Sin, etc.	<u>MARITAL</u> _____
(37) Occupation: _____	<u>OCCUPAT</u> 1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____
(38) Income: _____ (approximate family income) (1) Student (2) -5 (3) 5-10 (4) 10-15 (5) 15-20 (6) 20-25 (7) 25up	<u>INCOME</u> _____
(39) Do you own your own home or rent? (1) Own (2) Rent	<u>OWNRENT</u> _____
(40) Generally, how do you describe your political philosophy? (Conservative, Liberal, Radical, etc.) _____	<u>SOCPOL</u> _____
(41) Do you have any complaints about the service you have received from the Learning Exchange? (1) Yes (2) No	<u>COMPLAN</u> _____
(42) If yes, please elaborate: _____ _____ _____ _____	
(43) How might the Learning Exchange be improved? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	<u>SUGGEST</u> 1. ____ 2. ____ 3. ____

APPENDIX B

SAMPLES OF ARTICLES ON THE LEARNING EXCHANGE

Chicago Tribune, Sunday, July 11, 1971

Learning Exchange Acts as Educational Catalyst

BY KATHLEEN DALY

If you want to learn or teach a special subject, without spending a lot or getting a degree, there's a new educational agency that can help you.

The Evanston Learning Exchange, 828 Davis St., provides these opportunities, but it doesn't have a staff of teachers, classrooms, definite curriculum, grades, tuition, semesters, or even a budget.

What it does have is a staff of 14 "cochairmen" operating out of an office in the Evanston Volunteer Bureau who have compiled a list of 55 subjects for which they have either prospective teachers or prospective students.

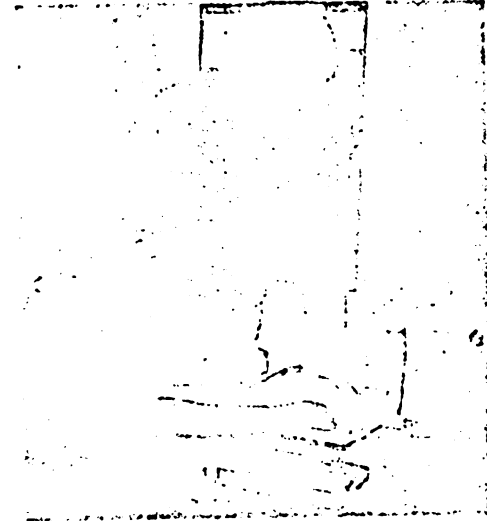
Goal Is Togetherness

"We're interested in deschooling education, or finding alternatives to school," Denis Detzel, founder of the exchange, said. "We want to bring people with similar interests together on a more personal basis."

When someone calls the exchange wanting to teach or learn a subject, his name and some background information are placed on file until a corresponding student or teacher is found, Detzel said.

"So far we've matched about 12 pairs of people," he said. "We even had one 'double match' of a father who wanted his children to learn French while he was interested in teaching Spanish."

Among the various courses person wants to learn something he can use the exchange



Roberta Gutwiler and Denis Detzel, 1045 W. Juneway Terr., get on the phone to match teachers with those who want to learn certain skills.

without volunteering to teach completed elementary school to another subject.

Detzel said that when a now on record at the exchange are Spanish, French, Polish, German, Russian, piano, clarinet, furniture upholstery, carpentry, masonry, skydiving, dance, recent literature, many handicrafts and several types of art.

Ages of the teachers and learners vary from 16 to 75, and educational backgrounds range from some who have not

college graduates. Since the exchange charges no fee for its service, it operates on what Detzel calls a "shoestring budget." The 14 chairmen receive no salary and are employed at other jobs. Detzel, himself, is a Ford Fellow at Northwestern University's Center for Urban Affairs.

"We really don't have much to do after a match is made," he said. "The two people set their own meeting times and places and proceed at their own rate. Eventually we would like to do some followup research to see if any progress has been made."

Several people have called the exchange and seemed somewhat hesitant about signing up, Detzel said. "They don't know what it is, they expect to be charged and some just don't feel they can learn anything outside of a school," he added.

"It's really a simple concept for getting people together. Instead of picking a subject that polarizes them, for example politics, they pick one that joins them together."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

TUESDAY, APRIL 10, 1973

In Chicago, It's Easy to Find Someone To Teach Lion Taming or Anything Else

By TERRY P. BROWN

and Reminiscent of The Wall Street Journal
CHICAGO—Joan Phillips, a college admissions director here, is learning sign language one night a week so she can "talk" to a deaf neighbor. Mrs. Jessie Sobotoff, a housewife, studies Hebrew so she can speak with her grandchildren when she visits them in Israel. Peter Tasso, a 22-year-old university graduate, meets weekly with a dozen other aspiring writers to discuss their works.

They, and thousands of others in this metropolitan area, are participating in an unusual experiment in education called "The Learning Exchange." It isn't a school with classrooms, grades, entrance requirements or certified teachers—and as often as not there's no tuition. It's a simple design to bring together people who want to teach with those who want to learn. For the price of a phone call or postage stamp, many people are getting access to education they wouldn't otherwise get.

The Exchange's rolls have increased to more than 4,000 participants in less than two years. And the number of people using the Exchange could increase to nearly 20,000 by year-end, its co-founders say. This growth has been stimulated primarily by word-of-mouth and public notice advertising by local media.

Getting Rich and Taming Lions

An academic commission on nontraditional study recently reported that many of the nation's adults want a different kind of education and a lot more of it than most colleges and universities provide. Most adults aren't getting what they want, however, primarily because of prohibitive costs and a desire not to go to school full-time. "The Learning Exchange is one attempt to meet the needs of those who aren't being served by existing institutions," says Boston's John Holt, educator and author of several books on the ills of contemporary education. "New ways are being discovered to break the monopoly schools have on learning."

In many cities, night schools and local YMCAs offer inexpensive courses for adults, but the Exchange is far more extensive and far less structured. Its latest quarterly catalog lists more than 800 subjects, ranging from traditional ones such as algebra and history and 23 foreign languages to more colorful ones such as bagpipe playing, lion taming, chimpanzee training and male liberation. On the practical side, there's "How to Get Rich," "Income Tax Preparation" and "Holding a Job," which don't have to be taken in sequence.

The Exchange works like this: When a person calls desiring to learn, he's given the nature and telephone numbers of those who

have registered to teach that subject. The Exchange's operator also tells the caller how the teacher acquired his competence. If a teacher isn't available, the learner is kept on file until one registers. There also are interest group matchings for people who simply want to discuss a subject with others. That's it, as far as the Exchange's involvement is concerned.

Some Teachers Charge Fee

It's up to the learner to call the teacher and set up "class" arrangements. About 1,000 groups are meeting in homes, libraries, restaurants or wherever they choose. Most "classes" are small with one or two learners, but interest groups can range up to 15 or more people. If learners get bored or don't like their teacher, they can quit or try to find a more stimulating pedagogue.

Qualifications of teachers vary widely and, although most participants are adults, all ages are using the Exchange. A teen-aged north suburban girl gives flute lessons to students twice her age. A high-school teacher gives German lessons to a chemical engineer and Russian lessons to two young boys. A retired welder, who converted his garage into a workshop, teaches his trade to several young men. "It's the only place in town where I can learn French free of charge," says one enthusiastic user.

About 40% of the teachers charge some

"Even at that, our budget is nothing compared to schools that serve as many people," says Mr. Lewis. "In fact, we hope to be self-supporting at the end of three years by relying on contributions from our users." Services of the Exchange itself are free. Mr. Lewis, who made a spartan \$7,000 last year while running the Exchange, would like to boost his salary to at least \$11,500 a year.

Power to the People?

In the meantime, both men have tried to interest Chicago companies in supporting the Exchange, a registered nonprofit state corporation. Although there have been no incidents, many ask: How do you screen out phonies and socially dangerous people? "We operate under what some may call a romantic and conservative assumption that people are responsible and can act for themselves," says Mr. Detzel. "We never give out addresses, only telephone numbers, and it's up to the individual to call and to decide if the teacher is competent." He adds: "In two years, we've found that people can be held accountable for their own education."

Mr. Lewis and Mr. Detzel say they've received calls from people in several cities asking them to set up exchanges. "Other exchanges have been tried in more than a dozen cities since this one began," says Mr. Lewis, "but most have had trouble because they try to affiliate with a university or try to perpetuate a 'poor-to-the-people' ideology that turns off many in the community."

"We've been careful not to allow a certain viewpoint to pervade our catalog, and we only exclude a subject if it's illegal," says Mr. Lewis. "We don't want to create barriers to learning, only make it easier." He thinks the next step for the Exchange will be to tie libraries, community groups and corporations into their information network. The Chicago Public Library, one large life-insurance company and the city's Catholic schools have already distributed many catalogs.

fee, but many who charge use a sliding scale based on the learner's ability to pay. When a person calls, the Exchange will tell you whether a teacher charges or not. Fees can range from \$1 a lesson to learn English, for example, to \$10 an hour for piano lessons. Many participants barter one of their own skills or areas of expertise in order to learn another. Mrs. Phillips gives her sign-language teacher guitar lessons, and Mrs. Sotohoff does typing for her Hebrew professor.

A \$25 Grant

The Exchange was started in May 1971 by Denis Detzel, 26, and G. Robert Lewis, 32, former doctoral candidates in education at Northwestern University in suburban Evanston who call themselves "Ph.D. dropouts from the academic assembly line." Mr. Lewis, who runs the Exchange full-time, says: "In any sizable community, there are skillful, knowledgeable people outside of schools and universities who can teach others." He adds: "We provide a simple way to bring these people together with anyone who wants to find tutors, beat boredom, recover old skills or develop new ones."

The simplicity of the Exchange requires little capital outlay. There are thousands of three-by-five file cards, some well-worn wooden filing cabinets, telephones and dedicated office space. When the Exchange moved to new quarters recently, the entire "institution" made the trip in a Volkswagen. An initial \$25 grant from a Northwestern dormitory lasted for the first six months, but success has led to a full-time paid staff of four and a pressing need to lease a computer terminal for the filing system. Grants of \$4,000 each from Quaker Oats Co. and DeWitt Wallace, publisher of Reader's Digest, helped sustain the Exchange in its early going, but Mr. Lewis now projects an annual budget of about \$58,000.

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 1973

An International Daily Newspaper



Tutors on tap

By David Mutch

Evanston, Ill.

Wayne Williams, a young black, came by the Learning Exchange here to find a tailor who could help him turn his sewing talent into a professional skill.

"He came in here dressed fit to kill," recalls Robert Lewis, program director of the Learning Exchange, "and we found out he made his own clothes."

Mr. Lewis says they are looking for the right firm to buttonhole this youngster who wants to learn.

The Learning Exchange itself is a kind of tailor shop, now in its second year of matching a bit of talent here with a desire to learn there. They want to re-outfit everyone that comes along.

Harold Koessner, a welder with 22 years' experience, called the Learning Exchange to meet someone who wanted to do welding-sculpture. When two high-school youngsters responded to his interest, he rented a neighbor's garage and they set to work.

"I started this a year ago," he recalls, "but it had been in my head for some time." He recently took a course from a well-known Chicago sculptor. "Last Christmas I gave some of my pieces as gifts," he said.

Matching process

All you do if you live in the Chicago area is dial 864-4133 and tell a staff member what you can teach, or what you want to learn, or what interest group you want to join, and the matching process begins.

A staff member glances in a card file with 4,000 names and produces the right phone numbers. You say you want to learn Yoruba, exchange rare books, or learn origami? Quickly you are told where you can sew up a deal.

With some 1,300 topic listings, the Learning Exchange aims to suit any fancy. They expect to have 2,500 topics by the end of the year. The office is open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily, and there are about 50 calls a day from people of all ages and all walks of life.

If the Learning Exchange operates on a theory, it is that people must not give up their individuality and responsibility to institutions, which, according to the exchange's founders, categorize, stereotype, and eventually alienate people. They want to see people help each other break out of the molds society tends to put them in. Everyone has something to teach, everyone wants to learn. Is their motto.

An interest in writing

Mrs. G. M. Seaton called the Learning Exchange and offered to teach students French and German if they would come to her. She is confined in a nursing home. As a result of the call she has tutored several students in those languages and in German classics.

Raised in Europe, Mrs. Seaton played the violin for more than 70 years. She has just had a short story, a Gothic tale, published, and wants to start a writing workshop. She hopes to find candidates through the Learning Exchange. She has a lot to share, as do many older people who spend a lot of time on the fringe of life.

Mike La Velle bends hot pipe at an iron factory eight hours a day. He called the Learning Exchange to brush up on his writing and also to meet some students. He wanted them to explain George McGovern. Soon Mike burst upon the Chicago journalism scene — last year — with a piece on why he wasn't convinced by the South Dakota Senator. Now he does a weekly column for the Chicago Tribune.

One PhD called the Learning Exchange to revive an interest in philosophy, dulled by work as an insurance investigator. Another PhD called to learn plumbing. Some callers list a favorite book or author to get a discussion group going.

A college student from Africa met with a group of elementary teachers who taped some of his recordings of original African lullabies and dances and played them for their students. A college student, lost in a psychology course, got 45 minutes of tutoring over the phone on basic theories, which cleared up her whole problem.

Co-founders of the sparky group are Mr. Lewis and Denis H. Detzel, both dropouts of PhD programs in education. They ran the whole operation for the first six months on \$25 and a lot of faith in the idea. They have more money now — a small staff on small pay — and even more faith.

Mr. Detzel says they have had offers — "men with \$5,000 or more in their hand" — from New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Austin, Texas, for us to come and do their thing in those cities.

But they want to get their Evanston operation into a self-sufficient position, first. Although there is no charge for the service, people voluntarily sent in \$500 in contributions in January and February. They need more cash now to consolidate their growth.

When listings grow from the present 4,000 people to 8,000, Mr. Lewis says, they will have to utilize a computer, already used to print the catalog. They anticipate that a staff of five can handle 50,000 members.

The idea came from a course Mr. Detzel took at Cuernavaca, Mexico, with Ivan Illich, known for his criticism of highly structured educational processes. A handful of other educational exchanges have sprung up and faded in the United States. All are related in spirit to the free-school, noninstitutionalized-education idea.

Mr. Lewis credits two factors as contributing most to the success of the Evanston Learning Exchange: "First, we are non-ideological — we are not going the counter-culture route because we believe in a pluralistic society. There are radicals as well as conservatives turned on to this idea. We believe that those who work with their hands want to work with ideas, while many professional people will want to do things with their hands.

"Second, we are not going to associate with a university, which eventually would feel threatened by us."

Their eclectic acceptance of all subjects, except those that would be clearly against the law such as bombmaking, as well as a lack of any monitoring process, would no doubt be controversial in an institutional setting.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLES OF ENDORSEMENTS RECEIVED BY THE LEARNING EXCHANGE



STATE OF ILLINOIS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SPRINGFIELD 62706

DANIEL WALKER
GOVERNOR

April 6, 1973

The Learning Exchange has proven itself to be an exciting alternative to formal classroom education. This unique educational program has given many people an opportunity to learn subjects not usually offered in the curriculum of most schools.

I would like to offer my best wishes to the school, its volunteers and everyone who has helped to make the Learning Exchange a success.

May you continue to broaden the educational opportunities for the people of the Chicago area and the State of Illinois. I wish you continued success.

Sincerely,

Dan Walker

May 11, 1972

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE

LEARNING EXCHANGE

Mr. PERCY. Mr. President, in an era when institutionalized education is receiving criticism for not being responsive enough to the needs and concerns of the individual, many Americans are seeking meaningful and enjoyable alternatives to classroom learning. A group of people in Evanston, Ill., have organized an innovative program called the Learning Exchange. The project requires neither huge sums of money nor large numbers of people. Yet in its year of operation, the Learning Exchange has broadened the educational opportunities of the people of the Evanston area and demonstrated that teaching and learning can also be fun.

I ask unanimous consent that information on the Learning Exchange program be printed in the Record.

There being no objection, the information was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

A COMMUNITY'S EFFORT TO RECYCLE EDUCATION

In May, 1971, a group of graduate and undergraduate students at Northwestern University along with residents of the Evanston community joined together to establish the Learning Exchange. After eleven months of operation this simple educational mechanism has grown to serve the learning needs of almost 1,000 participants and offers a "curriculum" of over 700 topic areas. The total cost of the Learning Exchange program has been under \$200.

The area presently served by the Learning Exchange roughly corresponds to the outer limits of the Chicago metropolitan area. The focal point of the learning community is a small, borrowed office provided by United Community Services of Evanston. The Exchange is two telephones, three boxes of 3x5 file cards, and a group of fifteen volunteers who determine policy and answer the telephones.

Anyone who wants to use the services of the learning community simply writes or telephones the Learning Exchange and indicates his educational needs and interests to the volunteer operator. If the caller wants to learn a skill or body of knowledge, he is given the names and phone numbers of people who know what he wants to learn and are willing to teach him. The learner assumes responsibility for contacting one or more of the teachers provided and attempts to work out a mutually satisfying learning relationship. Decisions regarding meeting time, place, frequency, rate, and fee (if any) is mutually decided by the teachers and learners to suit their needs or convenience.

Teachers who wish to make their services available to other members of the Chicago metropolitan community are invited to register with the Exchange. Some have school credentials and certificates, while others draw on work, leisure, or life experience as the basis for their knowledge. Preliminary research indicates that the Learning Exchange is successfully tapping onto or recycling some of these skills, talents, and knowledge that have not previously been utilized. A quality control mechanism is presently being devised that will enable the recipients of a teachers' service (learners) to recommend or not recommend the teacher to prospective learners.

Another aspect of the Learning Exchange is called the Interest-Match wherein there are no teachers and no learners, just people who are interested in discussing a topic of mutual interest. People in the learning community, for example, are forming groups around book titles, hobbies, foreign languages, etc.

The Learning Exchange services are offered free to the public. There are no access restrictions whatever. It is a highly pluralistic group—7 year olds to senior citizens, grade school drop-outs to Ph.D.'s, and all

social and ethnic groups are represented in this learning community. Aside from being very inexpensive, this new approach to self-improvement and education encourages a sense of community and is even being used by local public, parochial, and free schools to enrich their academic and extra-curricular programs.

[From the Chicago Sun-Times, Nov. 9, 1971]
How "LEARNING EXCHANGE" WORKS—AT \$27 FOR 6 MONTHS

(By Dennis D. Fisher)

The radio ad was catchy:

"Would you swap what you know for what you want to know with someone who knows what you want and wants to know what you know?"

"If so, then call the Learning Exchange weeknights at 475-2402."

A phone call to Robert Lewis, 30, a doctoral candidate in education at Northwestern University and a co-founder of the exchange, netted more specifics on the unusual experiment in learning.

"It is a free educational matching service for anyone with access to a telephone or the 6 cents for a postage stamp," he said. "We don't offer a school. All we offer is a mechanism for getting learners and teachers together."

STARTED IN MAY

The exchange was started in May by Lewis and Denis Detzel, 25, who is a doctoral candidate at NU in sociology of education.

Detzel said the idea for a learning exchange originated from three months of study at the Center for International Documentation run by radical social critic Ivan Illich in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

The institution of education in this country is "a locked system" that destroys motivation and the will to learn, Detzel observed.

"An individual (in school) has no choice over who will teach him, what he wants to learn or when he wants to learn it," Detzel said.

"We wanted to develop a learning structure that anyone could use, rich or poor, regardless of race or skill level," he said. "And we also wanted a structure that was not controlled by the state or any bureaucratic system."

PARTICIPATION VOLUNTARY

The Learning Exchange has about 20 non-paid co-directors and a very loose organizational structure that works on a voluntary basis. The directors meet once a week and discuss issues and problems and volunteer for shifts at manning the phone for the next week.

The exchange is set up in borrowed space in the Volunteer Bureau of Evanston office at 828 Davis. Expenses are minimal because no outgoing calls are placed. The whole budget for six months has been \$27, most of which was used for printing costs.

The co-directors supply callers with the phone numbers of teachers, learners or those with a mutual interest, like a hobby or discussion of a best-selling book.

The Learning Exchange has built up a file of 290 topics, ranging from traditional amateur radio and the stock market to more colorful subjects such as the Baha'i faith, communes, Esperanto, handwriting analysis, psychic investigation and hammock making.

There are potential learners but no available teachers for Aikido, auto mechanics, chinchilla ranching, playing the flute or the Greek, Russian and Yiddish languages.

The interest-match category includes a wide array of themes, including East Asian philosophy, extremist groups, guitar, photography, male liberation, bowling and discussion of books like "The Greening of America" and "Future Shock."

Lewis said the exchange will not list topics that have to do with anything illegal or violent, like bomb making. He said very few of the teachers charge a fee.

The exchange now serves persons from high-school age to senior citizens, with a predominance of persons in their middle 20s and older.

The beautiful thing is that you don't need formal credentials to be a teacher," Lewis said.

One promise of the experiment is that "a vast number of educational resources go to waste in any given community," he said.

The exchange is one way of making use of this untapped talent, he said.

Encs earlier is questioned about possible interests to share and subjects he may be able to teach.

"There is no limit to how large our file can grow," Lewis said.

Information from each caller is placed on a 3-by-5 card and cross-referenced.

CHIEF—BUT REAL

"What we have is a cheap but real and thriving alternative to the education establishment which has been the only game in town until now," Detzel said.

Detzel and Lewis agree that a side benefit is the exchange's catalytic effect on people communicating.

"This is a vehicle for getting people together around what they're interested in and the interest promotes self-learning," Lewis said.

The eventual goal is to turn over the project to the community.

[From Evanston, January 1972]

LEARNING EXCHANGE: SOMETHING FOR ALL

What is your major educational interest? Would you like to learn more about it? If so, The Learning Exchange in Evanston might be able to help. The Exchange matches people in the Chicago metropolitan area who want to teach, learn or share their skills and knowledge.

After six months of operation there are more than 400 topic areas available through the Exchange. The catalogue grows daily as more people hear about and take advantage of the free educational matching service.

Close to 1000 persons are registered—pre-adolescents to senior citizens. No one is excluded. Anyone who has access to a phone and the desire to learn, teach or share an interest area can use the Exchange.

Teachers include Ph.D.'s, M.A.'s, B.A.'s, high school graduates, some adults who never finished high school. The Exchange taps onto a vast storehouse of educational potential by providing a way for people to teach and share their skills and knowledge even if they do not have credentials from a four year teachers college.

About 90 per cent of the teachers provide their services free. The Exchange neither encourages nor discourages teachers from charging a fee. Many are willing to teach for the sheer enjoyment that the experience affords them.

Another important and highly popular service offered is the Interest-Match—no teachers, no learners, just people who want to discuss and share a common interest. People are getting together to discuss books, movies, plays, hobbies, organizations, politics, religious, current events, you name it. If a person wants to discuss a subject but does not feel capable of teaching it, he can list himself in this category.

The Learning Exchange is not a school. It is only an office, two telephones and a small group of volunteer operators. Expenses are very small. The office is provided free by the Evanston Volunteer Bureau. The Bureau uses it during the day and the Exchange uses it in the evening. The telephones are also provided by the Bureau. Since the Exchange has very few outgoing calls, people call in the phone bill is quite small.

The idea of a Learning Exchange originated at CIEOC in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Denis Detzel, a doctoral student with the Center for Urban Affairs at Northwestern University, was part of a group of innovative educators who brainstormed for alternative educational structures. The Exchange was one of several proposed.

For more information about the free educational matching service call 475-2402 any weekday between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. or write to the Learning Exchange, 828 Davis Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201.

APPENDIX D

LOCATIONS OF OTHER LEARNING EXCHANGES

The Learning Exchange

P.O. Box 920

Evanston, Illinois 60204

Franklin County Learning Exchange

Greenfield Public Library

Greenfield, Massachusetts 01301

Ingroup

Public Learning Corporation

18 Brattle Street

Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Campus-Free College

Central Office

466 Commonwealth Avenue

Boston, Massachusetts 02215

Free Learning Exchange

c/o Paul Knatz

305 Riverside Drive, Apt. 7-E

New York, New York 10025

Idea Exchange

Education Association, Inc.

Upward Bound

171 Massachusetts Avenue

Washington, D. C. 20002

Opening Networks

613 Winans Way

Baltimore, Maryland 21229

Free Learning Exchange

c/o Dave Minkler

University of Virginia

Charlottesville, Virginia 22903

Knowledge and Skills Exchange

c/o Action Studies Program

303 Jefferson Building

Iowa City, Iowa 52240

Whole Earth Learning Community

817 E. Johnson Street

Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Education Exploration Center

1304 16th Avenue South

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55407

The Learning Exchange

Guild House

802 Monroe Street

Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

The Learning Exchange

303 Sunset Place, W. Apt. E.

DeKalb, Illinois 60115

Come Together

Box 27

Glenwood, Illinois 60425

Network for Better Education

c/o Ed Wynne

Box 4348

College of Education

University of Illinois

Chicago Circle

Chicago, Illinois 60680

Learning Resource Exchange

4552 McPherson

St. Louis, Missouri 63108

People Resource Directory

University of Man

615 Fairchild Terrace

Manhattan, Kansas 66512

Learning Exchange

Project One

1380 Howard Street

San Francisco, California 94103

Chico Learning Exchange

P.O. Box 3305

Chico, California 95926

The Learning Network

c/o New School Movement

Earth Station 2

402 15th Avenue E.

Seattle, Washington 98105

Student Resource Center

c/o Harold Cochran

Counseling Center

Gonzaga University

Spokane, Washington 99202

Peer Matching-Learning Experience Catalog
6421 Pitt Street
West Vancouver, British Columbia
Canada