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A Century of Invitational Education

Chris Shute

'Invitational' is a word that our present schooling system fails to recognise. Young people have teaching and testing imposed from the earliest age. Chris takes a look at the Scouting movement and its long, proud history. PEN feels there is good reason that schooling ought to sit up and take note of the possibilities and potential of invitational thinking.

A century ago, on a little island in the south of England a slim man with a military bearing blew a blast on a kudu horn. A score of adolescent boys, some working class, some recruited from public schools, formed up in front of him and, without realising it, started the largest and most popular movement of invitational education the world has ever seen.

The military man was Colonel Baden-Powell, renowned for his canny and ingenious defence of Mafeking during the Boer War. He had seen young boys serve as runners during the siege and he had come to the conclusion that the bush-craft and survival skills which he had learned in South Africa, allied to the natural quick-wittedness of youth and the serviceable uniform of khaki shorts, shirt, scarf and bush-hat might provide the basis for a movement designed to bring out the best qualities in a generation of boys who appeared to the Government to be largely made up of dull-eyed wasters and unhealthy corner-boys.

He wrote a book which was to become the fourth most widely bought and read since books began. It was called *Scouting for Boys*, and it presented to its young readers a vision of life which had little to do with the grey streets and smoky factories of urban England. It was all about tracking, following trails, observing animals and other people, making shelters, cooking food in the open and keeping body and soul together when there is no-one to rely on but oneself.

It was heady stuff, and boys took to it quicker than boiled asparagus. They began to form troops and dress up like the scouts at Mafeking. They could be seen at weekends marching in groups of six, called 'patrols', and named after various birds and animals. They clubbed together and bought handcarts, tents, billy-cans and other stuff with which to live in the open air. Soon they

became a national movement, and other countries began to imitate them, following the same general lines as Baden-Powell

had set out in *Scouting for Boys*. The pattern created by scouting was even taken up by baleful politicians like Hitler and Stalin as the basis of their youth movements. Indeed, it was hard to see the difference between scouts and members of the Hitler Youth, until one saw what they were doing during their meetings.

There had of course, been youth movements for boys before Scouting. The Boys' Brigade had been formed in the late nineteenth century, and attracted a lot of lads with its imitation military uniform, its army-style ranks and formations, and its emphasis on marching and saluting. Even earlier the military metaphor had given rise to the Salvation Army, which had a junior wing, known as Young Soldiers. These movements had their virtues, and were popular with adults because they presented life to young people as a war against evil and sin. Scouting derived some of its ethos from broadly the same source – in early troops the assistants to Patrol Leaders were known as 'Corporals' – but Scouting quickly repudiated the idea of an army, and of its members as 'soldiers'.
[CONTINUES OVERLEAF]

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It aimed instead at creating a Brotherhood which would cross national boundaries, linking in amity young people whose adult governments might be at enmity with each other, and even at war among themselves. Scouts came to understand that the modest amount of marching and saluting which occurred during various activities – usually carried out with frankly unmilitary imprecision – were more about demonstrating the necessary minimum of cohesion in the group than with convincing the youngsters that they were some sort of underage cannon-fodder. I well remember the strange, gratifying feeling which came over me when I spent a day at an International Jamboree sometime in the fifties. Wandering round the various national gatherings I met scouts from Russia, with whose country we were at the time waging a Cold War. They were just like me, wearing the same sort of shirts, trousers and hat, and responding to the same salute. I realised later on that they were émigrés, and quite possibly had never seen their nominal homeland, but it didn't seem to matter. There were scouts from everywhere, each living by their own culture, but all linked together by the ideas of that military man with the kudu horn.

Unlike the earlier Boys' Brigade, Scouting did not emphasise overmuch the formal aspects of religion. You cannot be a member of the Boys' Brigade without being ready to listen to a fair amount of Christian teaching and persuasion to join the ranks of the saved, but you can be a Scout whatever your religion happens to be. Baden-Powell seems to have understood that the average adolescent is essentially a heathen and needs to have whatever religion it is proposed to apply to him laid on with a broad brush. So beyond requiring the Scout to promise to 'do my duty to God and the Queen' – which might mean anything and nothing – he relied on the more simplistic, and essentially practical undertaking to 'do a good turn to somebody every day' for the moral uplift which he hoped to procure. Boys will usually accept a moral compass as long as it has plenty of room for oscillation and influence of passing sources of magnetism. Like all children they want to know how life is lived, and their experience soon teaches them that hypocrisy and compromise are not confined to the young. The Scouts soon came to appreciate the generalised goodness which the movement promoted since it did not interfere much with their normal discovery of the intricacies of adolescence.

Learning to live out of doors was an ideal context for education. It did not require the obsessive neatness and millimetre-perfect accuracy which schools so often prize. The important thing about a campfire was that it should burn. If you could accomplish that you were a good firelighter. It wasn't ridiculously easy, but the art of fire lighting could be learned, and what was more, learned from another boy. In camp there were a number of tasks which could be done by youngsters and which they took pride in learning. The reward for their learning was not a diploma, but rather the far more immediate satisfaction of being able to do something worthwhile which contributed to their own comfort and sense of being in harmony with Nature.

Scouting offered a wide range of learning experiences. A Scout could become proficient not only at living in the open, but also at all sorts of skills which had to do with art, craft, general living, getting on with others and being a good citizen. Each skill was advertised by means of a badge which Scouts had sewn onto the sleeves of their shirts. This gave every boy a natural incentive to explore new areas of knowledge, because it was inevitable that the 'best' Scouts in the troop were reckoned, by the boys

themselves, to be those who could show the greatest number of badges on their arms.

It was, of course, all invitational. Some at least of the skills which Scouts were offered the chance to learn were the same as they were being made to learn at school. The difference was, of course, that Scouting was *theirs*. They had chosen it because it was about them, and it listened to what they wanted to do. Each Scout was a member of a 'patrol' and if the patrol had a good leader it would decide much of its own activity. It might go camping during a summer weekend, or hike into the nearest open country, and cook a meal over a fire at the end of it. Democracy among adolescent boys is inevitably an imperfect thing, but at the very least Scouts saw different ways of making decisions and evaluated them.

It might be suggested that this is all well and good, but education is a serious business, with little or nothing in common with a leisure-time activity for boys. You can't organise a school, it might be suggested, on the same lines as a Scout troop or camp. Yet no-one has to force boys to become Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, nor girls to be Brownies and Guides. There is no corps of wag men to drag them in. Many Scout and Guide groups have waiting lists of eager would-be members. Clearly they have found something which draws and keeps youngsters, and gets them to learn all manner of things, without tension or oppressive discipline.

We may laugh at the imperialism, the moral uplift, the antediluvian thinking about sex, and the entirely questionable attitude to other races adumbrated in the early editions of 'Scouting for Boys,' but we would do well to remember that the movement it gave rise to is still there, and loved by countless thousands of young people.

Christopher Shute is Copy Editor of the journal and trustee of PEN. After 25 years secondary teaching Chris has researched and written widely on education. He was a regular contributor to *Education Now News and Review* and is author of *Compulsory Schooling Disease*, in addition to books on Alice Miller, Edmond Holmes and Bertrand Russell. His latest work is about Joy Baker: trailblazer for home-based education and personalised Learning (see Educational Heretics Press for details of all these titles <http://edheretics.gn.apc.org/>).

Ed Lines

Each time a man stands up for an idea, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope and crossing each other from a million different centres of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

Robert Kennedy

Dispatches from our Grandfather Correspondent

Michael Foot

Michael reflects on his grandchildren's learning experiences as they have now moved on to home-based education.

For the past couple of months our grandchildren, James who is now nearly 7 years-old and Gemma just over 5, have been enjoying the experience of home-based education.

I guess that the reasons why increasing numbers of parents are choosing home-based education for their children will be many and varied - and so it is in this case. But, for James and Gemma, as significant a reason as any was the relative sterility of their school experience.

What can reasonably be summarised as 'education by a thousand worksheets' is a grossly inadequate substitute for the finding out about and making sense of the world which all pre-school learners delight in doing - and do successfully - before ever being introduced to the formality of school. Life for pre-school children is most often wonderful - is full of wonder - but this is too often ignored for too much of the time in too many of our schools. In school, the unrelenting pursuit of skills and knowledge is too often divorced from life's rich realities and possibilities.

And so, after much thought, the decision was made. James and Gemma would be educated at home rather than in school - or, more correctly, their education would be home-based.

It is clearly too early to make other than tentative judgements about its success or otherwise. But there are some encouraging early signs, the most encouraging of which are provided by our occasional telephone contacts with the children to be told about what they have been doing and what they have planned for the immediate future.

Via one such conversation we were informed that their past few days had included a visit to Hampton Court Palace (which provoked a postcard to us from James in the guise of Henry VIII), a day at an 'electricity workshop' (following which Gemma told us that their discoveries about conduction were 'extraordinary'), the local public library, an afternoon building birds nests, and a day at a living rainforest near Newbury. All of which, and much more, is likely to have been a sight more stimulating and fulfilling and fun than what school would have offered.

Happily, however, there are occasional indications that some schools are themselves becoming increasingly dissatisfied with what they have been persuaded to offer their children by a succession of flawed national policy initiatives. Last autumn, there appeared a most surprising and most welcome example of just this in our local free weekly newspaper, the *Fenland Citizen*.

Apart from this one occasion, our *Fenland Citizen* is an unexceptional example of its ubiquitous type. But on this one occasion there was included among the public notices, the planning applications and permissions, and the job vacancies the following notice which I will copy in its near entirety.

The Governors of Elm School would like your views

The governors of Elm School are in the process of reviewing and reorganizing their School Development

Plan and would welcome any ideas you might have that would be helpful to the school and the wider community.

You don't have to be a parent or a pupil to take part - everyone's ideas will be welcome.

The School Development Plan is a core document in the school and sets out how the Governors intend to move the school forward to build on its successes and strengthen any weaknesses. The plan is not just intended to cover academic things like the curriculum, or other internal matters such as staffing, it should also include other strategies such as how to integrate the school into the wider community, Adult Education etc.

You may have other ideas - we'd like to know what they are. Just mail, fax or email them to "The Governors" at the address below by Friday 5th October. Alternatively, if you're passing the school, please feel free to drop them into the office.

We hope you can help. Kind regards
The Governors of Elm School.

There then followed details of the school's postal address, telephone and fax number, and email address.

...would welcome any ideas...everyone's ideas will be welcome...The plan is not just intended to cover academic things...You may have other ideas - we'd like to hear what they are...We hope you can help...

How could such an invitation be resisted?

So I wrote to the head teacher wishing him and his governors well in their enterprise and enclosing for him and them a copy of the book *Let Our Children Learn* (Education Now Books, 2001) which I had co-authored with Tony Brown and Peter Holt. It describes our passionately held beliefs about education and some of the implications of those beliefs for practice in our schools. And it explores some of the features of current practice in schools which, often prompted by government initiatives, militate against the best interests of our children.

A few weeks later I received a letter from the head teacher. It followed a meeting that he had attended, 'a large part (of which) was taken up with a discussion of the contents of the book you kindly sent us. To sum up the feelings of the meeting, it was felt that our school should be incorporating some of the ideas and more importantly the ethos you describe so well.'

In a *cri de coeur* he lamented the fact that 'real education has been lost under the welter of initiatives, frameworks and strategies' and that 'the true purpose of education seems to have been lost in a forest of statistics, test results, targets and reports.' It is his hope, he wrote, to 'once again begin to concentrate on educating our children for a world that we cannot yet understand but that they will inhabit. This will require them to think for themselves,

solve problems, take increasing responsibility and develop autonomy in all areas of life.' He ended his letter with the wish that before too long their school will be 'reflecting more closely the philosophy behind true and valid education.'

And so it is that at a time when, 150 miles away, James and Gemma have embarked upon the fun and wonder and stimulation of home-based education, there is at least one close-to-home school which has implicitly acknowledged why it is that increasing numbers of parents are seeking fun and wonder and stimulation for their children beyond the confines of school.

Michael Foot is a retired Primary Head teacher and was a long time member of Education Now and regular contributor to *News and Review*. He has co-authored *Let Our Children Learn*, Educational Heretics Press, ISBN 1-871526-49-3, and contributed a chapter to *Damage Limitation: trying to reduce the harm schools do to children*, Roland Meighan, Educational Heretics Press, ISBN 1-900219-27-1. (see Educational Heretics Press for details of all these titles <http://edheretics.gn.apc.org/>). Michael was up until recently a school governor.

Educational Heretics Press and Education Now Books

Roland Meighan

The supply of material leading the way to a Personalised Educational Landscape continues to flow with the latest publication available now:

Personalised Learning: Taking Choice Seriously edited by Mark Webster

What happens if you start to take choice in education seriously? This was the theme of a challenging one-day conference at Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent. This book is the outcome of that gathering.

Personalised learning is an idea which puts the learner in the driving seat. It challenges the shallow version of learning with learners as mere receivers as promoted within the present education system, and proposes a different approach where learners themselves make informed choices about their learning. *Taking choice seriously* addresses issues of key importance to all learners and educators: from schools to home-based settings, from community and adult learning through to youth work

Contributors include:

Leslie Safran from 'The Otherwise Club, a home-based education invitational learning community';
Professor Ian Cunningham from the Centre for Self-Managed Learning;
Peter Humphreys from the Centre for Personalised Education Trust;
Tony Jeffs of Durham University;
Dr Roland Meighan, former Special Professor of Education at Nottingham University, a specialist on learning systems;
Dr Tim Rudd from Futurelab;
Mark Webster, from Staffordshire University's Creative Communities Unit;
Alan Wilkins, consultant on Co-operative Learning;
Jackie Rose of the Bridge International Youth Project.

ISBN 978-1-900219-36-5 Price £12-50

Educational Beachcomber

Flotsam and Jetsam

Pupils turned to stone?

Harry Potter returns to Hogwarts to discover that a number of pupils are turned to stone in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Some think the Second National Curriculum was designed to do that to the minds of all pupils. As a civil servant responsible for its design observed, its purpose is to get people to know their place once more.

'For many years, Britain has been governed by damaged people.'

So writes George Monbiot in *The Guardian* 22/1/08, though what he thinks can be gained by stating this truth, is not clear. He was a victim of private school education himself, he confesses, and has spent the rest of his life fighting its effects. 'British private schools create a class culture of a kind unknown in the rest of Europe ... Its most abject victims become its fiercest defenders. How many times have I heard emotionally stunted people proclaim "it never did me any harm" ... A ruling class in a persistent state of repression is a very dangerous thing.' No gongs for Mr Monbiot, then?

Test Fixation Disease?

'Our insistence, unique in Europe, on having frequent high stakes tests and on ranking school publicly by the results has driven the majority of educators into giving children only what they need to know for exam results and nothing more. The bleak narrowness of such an approach has damaged both learning and pupils' motivation' (Jenni Russell, *The Guardian* 7/2/08).

Ofsted Disease?

Jed Holmes, a primary school headteacher killed himself on the eve of an Ofsted inspection. 'It was that impending inspection that triggered off the action he decided to take,' said coroner Gordon Ryall.

Compulsory Toy Guns for Boys?

A Department for Children, Schools and Families (... and Stray Dogs and Wounded Hedgehogs?) report suggests better academic results can be achieved if nursery staff curb their 'instincts' to stop boys from playing with toy guns (reported in *The Guardian* 29/12/07).

You can still be forgiven for thinking that Monty Python is in charge of Education. Did he come from private school education perhaps?

Still going backwards?

The *Great Leap Backwards* in education was the 1988 Education Act when the first national curriculum of the early 1900s along with its aggressive inspections, and Standards (recycled as Key Stages) was reinstated as the second National Curriculum. It was described by the Chief Inspector of Schools of the day, Edmond Holmes, as 'The Tragedy of Education' and he declared that he was ashamed to have been associated with it all. There was one omission – **drill**. However, *The Observer* of 6th April 2008 reports that a government commissioned review recommends military drill and weapons training be adopted for secondary schools ...

Deschooling Cyberspace

Dougald Hine

Dougald travelled to the Ivan Illich colloquium in Mexico during December 2007. This is the first of three pieces he is writing. The focus is on the influence of 'Deschooling' on the personalisation of computing and the internet; the other two parts will explore more fully the reasons behind Illich's later concerns about the internet, and then the practical directions for personalised learning suggested by his later work - and that of his collaborators, especially Gustavo Esteva and John McKnight

Deschooling Cyberspace Part 1: Ivan Illich and the Personalisation of Computing

(i)

Carl Mitcham laughed when I told him I was working on an internet startup inspired by *Deschooling Society*. Now in his mid-sixties, Mitcham is a philosopher of technology, a professor at the Colorado School of Mines and former director of the Science-Technology-Society Programme at Penn State. He was also, from the late 1980s, a member of Illich's circle of friends and collaborators, the travelling circus which surrounded him from the closure of the Centre for Intercultural Documentation at Cuernavaca in 1976, until his death in 2002.

What made Mitcham laugh was his recollection of Illich telling him, in exasperation, 'People are saying I invented this internet!' The thought of it was enough to make him throw up his hands in horror.

The story of Illich's influence on the internet and the reasons for his mistrust of it both deserve attention. Together, they present something like a paradox: how did a thinker whose vision of 'learning webs', 'educational networks' and 'convivial tools' inspired key figures in the development of personal computing come, by the late 1990s, to believe in 'the necessity of defending... our senses... against the insistent encroachments of multimedia from cyberspace'?(1)

The quick way out of this, favoured by those who hail the Illich of *Deschooling* as a prophet of the networked age, is to represent his later attitude as a retreat from the implications of his own work: a descent into pessimism, or simply an old man's failure to get to grips with the newfangled. Some of this is implied by the management thinker Charles Leadbeater, who has argued for the contemporary relevance of Illich's earlier work in a series of articles and most recently his book, *We-Think*. According to Leadbeater, Illich had a 'golden period' in the mid-1970s, when he produced 'highly suggestive ideas' for the future of society; whereas, 'towards the end of his life his writing became more apocalyptic, at times melancholy and pessimistic'.(2)

The trouble with this line is that, by overstating the discontinuity between Illich's earlier and later writings, it avoids attending seriously to his warnings about the technologies which now dominate our lives. Those warnings were made in the name of the same basic concern that underwrote the earlier books, spelt out in the Introduction to *Tools for Conviviality*: a concern for 'friendship or joyfulness' which calls for the exclusion of whichever 'enjoyments... are distracting from or destructive of personal relatedness'.(3) Those who see in the internet the realisation of Illich's 'learning webs' can reasonably be asked to engage with his suggestion that it constitutes just such a distraction or destruction.(4)

Five years after his death, when British government ministers propose compelling parents to provide broadband access for their

school-age children, Illich's warnings only sound more urgent.(5) However, at the bottom of the Pandora's box which he opens, there remains always a stubborn sense of hope.

(ii)

The evidence for Illich's influence over the internet relates to the series of short books he wrote in the first half of the 1970s: in particular, *Deschooling Society* (1971) and *Tools for Conviviality* (1973).

The key text is the sixth chapter of *Deschooling*, in which an alternative to the school system is sketched out, based on a series of 'learning webs'. In his first example, of a network of tape recorders and a library of pre-recorded and blank tapes, Illich makes a distinction echoed since by a chorus of internet evangelists.

This network... would be radically different from the present network of TV. It would provide opportunity for free expression: literate and illiterate alike could record, preserve, disseminate, and repeat their opinions. The present investment in TV, instead, provides bureaucrats... with the power to sprinkle the continent with institutionally produced programs...(6)

If this vision of bottom-up, participative media anticipates what is today marketed as Web 2.0, Illich moreover recognised the power of computing to realise such a vision. His proposal for a 'peer-matching network' for learners is essentially a blueprint for the service we are developing at School of Everything:

The user would identify himself by name and address and describe the activity for which he sought a peer. A computer would send him back the names and addresses of all those who had inserted the same description.(7)

As Leadbeater says, 'In 1971, all that must have sounded mad. In the era of eBay and MySpace it sounds like self-evident wisdom.'(8)

Not only did *Deschooling* anticipate the uses of the web, it may even have influenced the developments in computing which would make the web possible. The computers of the 1960s were machines the size of a room, developed to meet the needs of the military or large corporations, associated with number-crunching and top-down bureaucracy. By the end of the 1970s, a new vision had emerged of personal computing, with machines as tools for individual empowerment. This reflected not just the physical fact that it was now possible to cram more processing power into smaller boxes, but a shift at the level of the imagination. Its epicentre was the San Francisco Bay area, where high-tech research labs sat in or close by campuses which shook with student protest. Straddling this fault line, a now-legendary community of programmers merged earlier cybernetic ideas with the ideals of the counterculture – and began dreaming of the

computer as a communally-developed, consciousness-expanding tool that could revolutionise the world.(9)

Illich was a long way removed from the Californian counterculture. For one thing, he wrote from Mexico, a country labelled ‘under-developed’. For another, he was a Catholic priest, a calling he did not consider himself to have given up when he withdrew from active ministry in 1969.(10) His thinking was grounded in a fidelity to place and tradition, and he could be impatient with rootless radicalism, however good its intentions, as some who journeyed to CIDOC would discover. None of this, however, prevented the adoption of his books as countercultural texts, and they were certainly being read in the circles where the personalisation of computing was under way.

At the heart of the journey from counterculture to cyberculture lies the Homebrew Computer Club, which met for the first time in a garage in Palo Alto in March 1975. From its ranks would come the founders of 23 high-tech companies, including Apple.(11) The club’s co-founder and chair, Lee Felsenstein, seems to have been familiar with both *Deschooling* and *Tools for Conviviality*.(12) He was struck by Illich’s contrast between older radios – which could be taken apart, learned from and mended – and the newer transistor models which broke easily if messed with and had to be replaced:

The possible set of interactions, between the person who was trying to discover the secrets of the technology and the technology itself, was quite different from the standard industrial interactive model, which could be summed up as ‘If you do the wrong thing, this will break, and God help you.’ So radio could and did, in effect, survive [in remote areas] because it ‘grew up’ a cohort of people around it who knew how to maintain and sustain it.(13)

Felsenstein was convinced that a computer intended to work in a public access environment, without relying on constant attention from experts, should be built on the same lines. ‘My proposition, following Illich, was that a computer could only survive if it grew a computer club around itself.’ Of the first Homebrew meeting, he says, ‘That may have been the moment at which the personal computer became a convivial technology.’(14)

A third, more indirect connection between Illich and the origins of the internet is worth touching on. In his last published book, *In the Vineyard of the Text*, Illich argues that new textual conventions developed in the early 12th century represented a more profound break in the experience of reading than the invention of the printing press. The invention of the alphabetic index, the introduction of punctuation, the spacing of words, and a dozen other innovations within one generation made possible a new practice of silent reading, closer to the experience of the modern scholar than to the monastic mumbling which preceded it. While dwelling for the most part on the distant past, a few passages spell out the contemporary relevance of his argument:

Quite recently reading-as-a-metaphor has been broken again. The picture and its caption, the comic book, the table, box and graph, photographs, outlines, and integration with other media demand from the user textbook habits which are contrary to those cultivated in scholastic readerships... The book has now ceased to be the root metaphor of the age; the screen has taken its place.(15)

Just as Illich saw the 12th century leap in the technology of the text as preceding (and making possible) the invention of the printing press, so he recognised the new visual conventions of the web as having been anticipated (and made possible) by developments earlier in the 20th century.

The most striking example of this is surely *The Whole Earth Catalog*, the bestselling compendium of countercultural DIY, which ran from 1968-72 and sporadically thereafter. As Fred Turner says, its pages presented readers (users?) with:

...a system of connections. In the Catalog, no text stood apart from every other; each was part of an informational or social system, and each offered a doorway through which the reader could enter one of those systems.(16)

The *Catalog*’s editor Stewart Brand has been both a key player in and narrator of the story of the counterculture and the internet. He went on to co-found The WELL (Whole Earth ‘Lectronic Link), one of the first major online communities and the Long Now Foundation, as well as *Wired* magazine.

The *Catalog*’s subtitle was *Access to Tools*, and it was Brand as much as Illich who popularised the idea that anything from a map to a computer to a government programme could be seen as a ‘tool’. From the *Catalog* spun off *CoEvolution Quarterly* (later *Whole Earth Review*) which, in its various guises, published articles by Illich and his friends over the next three decades.

It would be interesting to know what direct contact took place between these two prophetic figures, but the main reason for considering them together is that they represent two historically entwined yet ultimately irreconcilable attitudes to technology and the human situation. ‘We are as gods,’ proclaimed Brand in the first *Catalog*, ‘and might as well get good at it.’ His vision, which would be hugely influential over the development of both the internet and the environmental movement, is essentially Promethean. Illich, by contrast, concludes *Deschooling* with a chapter entitled ‘Rebirth of Epimethean Man’. Epimetheus, whose name means ‘hindsight’, was the brother of Prometheus and became the husband of Pandora, which brings us back to hope:

Hope centres desire on a person from whom we await a gift. Expectation looks forward to satisfaction from a predictable process which will produce what we have the right to claim. The Promethean ethos has now eclipsed hope. Survival of the human race depends on its rediscovery as a social force.(17)

For Illich, ‘deschooling’ ultimately means resisting the impersonalisation that goes with ‘expectations’. It is this criterion, he suggests, by which a technology should be judged – and by which he would later judge the internet.

1. Illich, *The Scopic Past and the Ethics of the Gaze* - <http://tinyurl.com/67t9mv>
2. Leadbeater, ‘Production by the Masses’ in *Production Values*, ed. John Craig (Demos, 2006)
3. Illich, *Tools for Conviviality* (London, 1973) p.xiii
4. For an example of a failure to engage with this, see Dave Whittington & Alan McLean, *De-schooling vocational learning through online pedagogies* (Glasgow, 2004) - <http://tinyurl.com/4g8eaa>
5. See my article, *‘Nonline Community: freedom, education, the net’*, openDemocracy Feb 2008 - <http://tinyurl.com/5h55qe>
6. Illich, *Deschooling Society* (London, 1971) p.77
7. *ibid*, p.93
8. Leadbeater, *We-Think* (London, 2008) p.44
9. John Markoff, *What the Dormouse Said* (New York, 2005); Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture* (Chicago, 2006); Leadbeater, *op.cit.* pp.38-48

10. David Cayley, *The Rivers North of the Future* (Toronto, 2005) p.11.
11. Leadbeater, op.cit. p.42
12. Kip Crosby, 'Convivial Cybernetic Devices' in *The ANALYTICAL ENGINE* Vol.3 No.1 November 1995
13. ibid; although Felsenstein refers to Illich writing about different types of radio in *Tools for Conviviality*, he is in fact conflating two passages from Chapter 6 of *Deschooling*.
14. ibid
15. Illich, *In the Vineyard of the Text* (London, 1993) pp.2-3
16. Turner, op.cit. p.110
17. Illich, *Deschooling* p.105

Dougald Hine is co-founder of the School of Everything <http://www.schoolofeverything.com> Before this he had worked as a busker, a door-to-door salesman and a BBC journalist. He also got mixed up in all sorts of community activism and grassroots education projects. That was how he discovered the ideas of Ivan Illich, one of the inspirations for School of Everything. He divides his time between Sheffield and London, buys more books than he has time to read, and writes a blog called Changing the World (and other excuses for not getting a proper job) <http://otherexcuses.blogspot.com/>

PEN Blog and E-briefing Ezine

Peter Humphreys

The PEN blog and E-briefing Ezine were launched during March and April providing a new more responsive and effective canvas for PEN.

If you haven't already done so get clicking to the PEN blog at <http://blog.personalisededucationnow.org.uk/> and sign up to the regular E-briefing ezine which will get blog posts regularly to your inbox.

If you're a member of CPE-PEN and have given us your email address you should already be receiving the ezine as you did the previous e-briefing attachment format. If you're not getting it then either you've changed your email address and not informed us or we have an error on the address itself. Either way go to the blog above and enter your subscription details.

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Overheard in High Places *Christopher Shute*

- George Parr, you are a spokesman for the Dept of Education.
 - TADPOLE
 - I beg your pardon!
 - TADPOLE. *Truancy And Dissident Pupil Obstruction Limitation Executive*
 - What does your work involve?
 - Well, basically we make sure that children go to school and stay there long enough to get an education.
 - What happens if a child doesn't want to go to school and nips off into town instead?
 - In that case we fine the parents.
 - How much?
 - Oh up to a thousand pounds.
 - Can all parents afford that?
 - Probably not. If they are unemployed and on benefits, certainly not. But it's all for the benefit of the children.
 - So what happens to the parents who can't pay the fine?
 - Oh, in that case we lock 'em up!
 - For the benefit of the children?
 - Well, we probably take the children into care. At least then they get made to go to school.
 - But they are also significantly more likely to end up in crime or destitution.
 - That's because they are criminals. You can't let criminals get away with it can you?
 - (Gulp) But sometimes the pupils who go to school are so unhappy there that they make nuisances of themselves, and their schools throw them out.
 - Yes
 - So they can't go to school even if their parents want them to?
 - Obviously.
 - So what does, er, TADPOLE do about them?
 - Oh we tell parents to keep them at home.
 - And if the children drive the parents crazy with being confined to their homes with nothing to do, what do those parents do?
 - Oh, they send them out to wander the streets.
 - Doesn't that cause more crime?
 - 'Course it does. So we bring out another part of TADPOLES's strategy.
 - Which is?
 - We fine the parents.
 - How much?
 - Anything up to a thousand pounds.
 - What if they can't pay...wait a minute, haven't we been here before?
 - Very likely. We always hold interviews in this room.
 - No, I mean about fining the parents and banging them up if they can't or won't pay, with all the consequential bad effects on their children?
 - Well, it's for their own good, and the Government consider that most voters want the undeserving poor leant on and their children put through the same process as everyone else, so we are on a winner either way. I didn't say that of course.
 - Of course. You have given us a very clear apercu...
 - What?
 - Er, insight into the Government's thinking about education.
 - You're very welcome.
 - George Parr, thank you very much.
- (With apologies to Bremner, Bird and Fortune)

Christopher Shute is Copy Editor of the journal and trustee of PEN. After 25 years secondary teaching Chris has researched and written widely on education. He was a regular contributor to *Education Now News and Review* and is author of *Compulsory Schooling Disease*, in addition to books on Alice Miller, Edmond Holmes and Bertrand Russell. His latest work is about Joy Baker: trailblazer for home-based education and personalised Learning (see Educational Heretics Press for details of all these titles <http://edheretics.gn.apc.org/>).

Escape from Pop Pap Education (extract)

Paul Henderson

This is an extract from Paul's latest article which we will serialise in full on the PEN blog. Paul looks at the 'perfect school' and the way forward for personalised learning environments.

The Perfect School

Schools are judged on and are chosen by parents for their reputation for high academic attainment and good behaviour. These are the general indicators of a good school but of course not every school is perfect. Bad behaviour and poor academic attainment are merely smoke screens that obscure the full scope, range and potential of schooling, therefore we need to clear this smoke screen to realise this true and full potential. Most traditional educationalists would agree that only two variables would have to be changed in the schooling equation to make it perfect; teaching efficiency and pupil behaviour. Let's consider a hypothetical world in which teaching was 100% efficient (i.e. 100% of what was taught was deeply learned, thoroughly understood, securely retained and easily accessed) and the incidence of bad pupil behaviour was reduced to zero. The first consequence of this would be that there would be no need for assessment since every pupil would get 100% in every test. At the end of 13 years of full time education every student would be 100% educated and equally able to function in any role in the workforce. This is a bit like how an ant colony operates with each worker ant equally able to perform any task for the colony to survive. Each worker ant is assigned their task as they leave the colony from information retrieved by the ones coming back. For a population of equally able 100% educated humans this might translate to a workforce in which each individual would be assigned his or her job to perform as the state or multinational business requires. The list of work, life and social implications goes on and on but I think most people would agree that this is rapidly becoming a nightmare vision. Schooling, even in its most perfect form, will never serve any true educational purpose because it does not take into account that which makes us human.

Worker ants evolved to have identical abilities through natural selection, which is fine for ants; humans evolved to have individual and unique creative abilities, which is why our species has not only survived but come to prominence. If schooling as it stands today was made 100% effective over a period of a million years then it would have evolutionary implications in that our minds would become more insect like and our societies and cultures would become more like that of an ant colony. This would surely be a backward evolutionary step. The only reason humans are a prominent species on earth is because they have evolved to have individually unique personalities. Every significant event in the advancement of human activity can be traced to an individual. The wheel did not invent itself. Every manmade object you see around about you can be traced back to the creative input of an individually unique mind. For the last 4 million years human learning has been learner centric, except for the very recent and relatively short 150-year blip and even in that period the greatest human achievements have been made thanks to the intrinsically motivated and brilliantly creative minds of individuals, the overwhelming majority of whom had a disdainful attitude to their formal schooling, regarding their successes as being achieved despite their schooling not because of it. It is not difficult to

imagine why the thought of herding a thousand uniquely and differently gifted minds into an institution that tries to mould them into a committee-formulated, state-regulated homogenising template, may well be seen by some as a crime against humanity. For some, schools are seen as gas chambers for the individual creative spirit. It was Adolf Hitler that introduced laws to ban home-based education. He wanted as much state control over young minds as possible. These laws are still in place in modern Germany, as the recent news reports of home-educating families having to flee there because of the very real threat of their children being taken into state care illustrate. It was also Adolf Hitler that said, 'What good fortune for those in power that people do not think.' Winston Churchill, Hitler's arch rival and one in a staggeringly long list of truly great or historically significant fully or partially home educated people (which includes Roosevelt, Hitler's other big rival), had this to say on schooling: 'Schools have not necessarily much to do with education...they are mainly institutions of control where certain basic habits must be instilled in the young. Education is quite different and has little place in school.' Hitler may have failed in his bid for world domination in everything except his adopted educational philosophy. Almost every state education system throughout the world is still based on the same Prussian educational ideology that spawned the Third Reich. In light of this and of recent reports of teachers in countries with repressive governments being brutally murdered in front of their pupils by the state for deviating from teaching the party line, perhaps it is time for people to think.

The so-called 'good' schools are the ones in which young minds are most efficiently assimilated. It is possible for parents, who feel they have to send their kids to school, to limit the damage done and advice on how to do this is given in Roland Meighan's book, *Damage Limitation*, which should be read by all concerned parents.

Instructing, training, tutoring and coaching learning environments are experienced equally by home and community based learners and by school based learners and have therefore been omitted from this table.

All educational initiatives, subject conditions and arrangement documents, curriculum-prescribed learning outcomes and their resultant lesson plans are abstractions, whereas what actually goes on in school classrooms day to day, hour by hour, minute by minute is concrete and forms the basis of learners' actual learning (or 'real learning' as John Holt put it). It has been said that actual learning is indicated by purposive interaction therefore it may be helpful to observe and define the true concrete common purpose of classroom teachers and pupils as opposed to the state imposed philosophical or ideological abstractions. This formed a large part of what John Holt spent years doing and writing about in great detail in his many ground-breaking books. These books really need to be read in order to build up a complete picture. John Taylor Gatto also offers his own insightful perceptions based on his school experiences when he was New York Teacher of The Year in his book *Dumbing Us Down*. The common purpose in teacher-pupil interactions may have been put most succinctly by the then Special Professor of Education, Roland Meighan, in his book, *John Holt: Personalised Education and the Reconstruction of Schooling*, as:

The point is to survive each day with as much dignity intact as possible. (p.5)

This is the true common purpose that unites both teachers and pupils when faced with having to spend most of their waking hours in a dehumanising institution, and is the key driving force behind their interactions and resultant behaviour. It is this purposive interaction that determines what is actually learned in school classrooms.

Possible ways forward

Research over the last 30 years has consistently and repeatedly shown that a more personalised learning environment significantly improves academic, social, emotional and psychological development, yet this will never be accepted until social and cultural attitudes to education change. Current literature on personalised learning and home-based education is too esoteric for the general public and generally preaches to the converted. Negative campaigning was effective in changing attitudes to drink driving and smoking where the negative effects are clearly demonstrable; however the damaging effects of schooling are of a more insidious nature. Shock tactic negative campaigning could do more harm than good unless it was very carefully handled. The ideas behind personalised learning need to permeate popular culture via popular mainstream media. Something similar to this was done highly successfully when the ‘dry as dust’ ideas behind Grail lore sparked the public’s imagination in Dan Brown’s book *The Da Vinci Code* and perhaps it would be possible to write a similar work of fiction which draws upon and reveals the ideas behind personalised learning. Al Gore made a big contribution to changing cultural attitudes towards global warming with his recent documentary film and John Taylor Gatto is currently raising funds for something similar regarding schooling.

How did our education system get into this mess? The accurate history of schooling, along with many insightful educational perceptions, is rigorously chronicled by John Taylor Gatto in his books, website and numerous YouTube clips (with only the occasional dubious interpretation). John Holt also describes the subtle nuances of preschool and classroom learning in his many acutely observed books.

How do we get our education system out of this mess? In the short term, damage limitation, home-based education or flexi-schooling are about the only practical options for concerned parents; however Roland Meighan offers constructive solutions for the future in his many books including *Comparing Learning Systems* and *The Next Learning System* which describe how personalised learning techniques may be implemented on a national scale with classroom teachers reaching their full potential as educators by being retrained as personalised learning agents and how schools could truly enhance their learners’ proclivities and full natural potential by being transformed into community learning centres. There is also the prospect that when technology, such as an iPhone styled device with all the functionality of a phone, internet interface, media player, camera, games console, and PC loaded with high quality encyclopaedias and educational software, etc., finally becomes ubiquitous, personalised learning will be in the hands of every child, effectively taking education out of institutional control in the same way that music distribution has been in recent years. These prospects offer great hope for our future education and ring sympathetically with the visionary Personalised Education Now organisation with which Meighan is associated. Perhaps one day, thanks to the ideas of the above mentioned and other original-thinking visionaries, the human race may finally, after taking a seriously wrong turning, be able to head back in the right direction not only in our education but perhaps even in our evolution.

Paul Henderson is a CPE- PEN network member and contributor. His provocation *The Propagation of Learning* was serialised in our e-briefings.

Book Reviews: *John Holt* by Roland Meighan

The work of John Holt influenced a generation and continues to echo around educational thought. Roland Meighan’s contribution to Holt’s work is incalculable. Peter Holt and Michael Foot review Meighan’s latest effort which is sure to extend that influence. A must for everyone concerned with education. Recommended to every beginning teacher.

I first came across John Holt’s books when I taught in a large grammar school for boys. What he had to say didn’t just speak to me it shouted at me. It is fair to say that I was never the same again! There are ten books in all, but if you want to know what John Holt believed and what he advocated, yet feel you lack the time to read all of them, don’t despair; read this one instead.

It is a superb account of the educational writings of John Holt; a ‘wonderful exposition’ of his work, to quote from Patrick Farenga’s Foreword. It is comprehensive and thorough, without ‘penguinizing’ (see page 130!). and it is as lucid, accessible and compelling as Holt’s work itself.

The heart of this book by Roland Meighan are the ten chapters which deal with each one of Holt’s books in turn, beginning with *How Children Fail* (1964) and moving through to *Learning All The Time* (1989). In doing this Roland Meighan has put so much of his subject into this one volume that the reader finds himself engaging with Holt’s ideas again and again as the pages turn, wanting to shout out applause, wanting to engage in debate, as traditional views and practices in the name of education are ruthlessly taken apart.

A few examples of the Holt credo which Roland Meighan presents to us must suffice: true education requires faith and courage; schooling is a serious infringement of civil liberties; schools give wrong messages to children; maths is entertainment; true leaders do not make other people into followers but others into leaders; and Holt’s own summation, in seven words, of what he eventually learned as a teacher – learning is not the product of teaching.

In the chapter which deals with *Instead of Education* (Holt’s seventh book, 1976) Roland Meighan brings us face to face with the most serious dimension of all to Holt’s criticism of traditional schooling – the moral dimension. This concern is as much an insight into the man as it is a flaying of the system. Here is a man who saw action in the Second World War, who worked tirelessly in the peace movement after the war, who came to believe passionately in the freedom and glory of the individual, from whom he believed, it was nobody’s business – no school’s business – to steal that freedom and that glorious individuality.

Roland Meighan’s book, his contribution to the Continuum Library of Educational Thought, goes beyond an account of the ten books of John Holt. It gives the reader an intellectual biography of the man. It devotes a chapter to an overview of his life and work, and it devotes a chapter to *Growing Without Schooling*, the magazine published by Holt Associates. In its final two chapters which consider the relevance of John Holt’s work today, it benefits from Roland Meighan’s own considerable knowledge and experience of home-based education. The final chapter, particularly, points up the continuous significance of John Holt’s work. That work has not, to use Roland Meighan’s words, ‘been seen off by the regressive forces in society’. It lives on, and in the chapter he weaves Holt’s

beliefs and thinking into the current interest in, and practice of, personalised learning.

This is a powerful book, beautifully written, and we owe Roland Meighan a debt of gratitude for delivering John Holt to us in little more than 150 pages.

Peter Holt

I qualified as a primary school teacher in swinging 1966. A year later the Plowden Report on primary schools was published. I remember that our local education authority organised meetings for teachers at which this brave new world of primary education was explained to us and indeed celebrated. But I also remember that, not just in our corner of Gloucestershire, little seemed to change - despite lurid tabloid tales which subsequently formed into a mythology of progressive education. In fact, a decade and more later a colleague at a neighbouring school assured me with unfettered pride that ‘there is nothing progressive about our school.’

But by then John Holt had entered my professional life. *How Children Fail*, his first book, had a most profound and lasting effect upon me - greater than any other book on education before or since. It and Holt’s books that followed have provoked and stimulated and reassured me through my years as a teacher and a head teacher, and they continue to do so in retirement as a school governor and a generally interested party. They remain fixed references of good sense and sanity in an educational world of often bewildering and ill-considered and eccentric change, they remain timeless criteria against which to judge the latest excesses emanating from policymakers.

It was only in retirement that I heard about and then met Roland Meighan. His is a less well-known name than that of John Holt. But his relative obscurity masks a lifetime of advocating the very essence of Holt’s message, the absolute threat to children’s well-being that too much educational policy and practice represent.

Meighan, like Holt, roots his thinking in how people learn. Both of them marvel at how successful young children are at learning before they even begin formal education. They both wonder why the reasons for this successful pre-school learning are so often disregarded once children are at school.

Now Meighan has done us the great service - though it will have been a labour of love - of distilling the contents of all of Holt’s ten books into this most readable volume of his own.

And he has done so by means of the easiest, the most lucid, the most transparent, of prose. As with Holt himself, there is no attempt here to come between reader and understanding. This is no academic treatise that requires re-reading before it gives up its meanings. Here are Holt’s - and Meighan’s - meanings spelled out with great transparency so that their continued relevance for today become as startlingly clear as they ought to be. How about this, for example, written by Holt in 1971, long before we could ever have imagined that league tables of schools would be introduced with all of their malign effect?

It is only in theory, today, that educational institutions serve the student; in fact, the real job of a student at any ambitious institution is, by his performance, to enhance the reputation of that institution.

Now, in 2008, reading *John Holt* by Roland Meighan has coaxed me back to my own copies of Holt’s books, my inspiration over all these years. But I find that one of them is missing. *How Children Fail*, that first most influential and persuasive and liberating of texts, is not to be found. It must be that the last of the many people to whom I have loaned it over the years has not returned it. Of course, I wish that they had - but I don’t begrudge them the pleasure of having it on their bookshelf, not mine.

I can replace it. And when I do, it can stand alongside Roland Meighan’s eloquent tribute to its author which, in turn, ought to be essential reading for everyone who has the welfare of our children at heart.

Michael W. Foot

Ed Lines

It is among the commonplaces of education that we often first cut off the living root and then try to replace its natural functions by artificial means. Thus we suppress the child’s curiosity and then when he lacks a natural interest in learning he is offered special coaching for his scholastic difficulties.

Alice Duer Miller

Educational Beachcomber

Flotsam and Jetsam

Compulsion! Compulsion! Compulsion!

‘I do feel for headteachers – with so many initiatives being thrust at them ...’ writes Zoe Williams (*Guardian* 23/1/08). ‘Jacqui Smith wants them to introduce metal detectors (or “security arches”), Ed Balls wants compulsory cooking lessons... It may become compulsory for parents to “provide their children with high-speed internet access”, writes Michael Sterne (*Guardian* 29/1/08). Five hours of compulsory sport was proposed before that – will the housing estates need to be bulldozed to reclaim the sold-off sports fields? Five hours of ‘high culture’ was also proposed recently, as well as the compulsory closure of small village schools.

‘*You will do it Our Way*’ is well and truly alive, if only we could make up our minds as to what exactly *Our Way* is, apart from more compulsion in general!

PERSONALISED EDUCATION NOW STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The vision of Personalised Education Now is grounded upon a legitimated and funded Personalised Educational Landscape that includes:

- a focus on the uniqueness of individuals, of their learning experiences and of their many and varied learning styles
- support of education in human scale settings, including home-based education, learning centres, small schools, mini-schools, and schools-within-schools, flexischooling and flexi-colleges
- recognition that learners themselves have the ability to make both rational and intuitive choices about their education
- the re-integration of learning, life and community
- advocacy of co-operative and democratic organisation of places of learning
- belief in the need to share national resources fairly, so that everyone has a real choice in education
- acceptance of Einstein's view that *imagination is more important than knowledge* in our modern and constantly changing world
- a belief in subsidiarity: learning, acting and taking responsibility to the level of which you are capable
- adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in general and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in particular - recognising current limitations on educational choice.

PERSONALISED EDUCATION NOW

Maintains that people learn best:

- when they are self-motivated and are equipped with learning-to-learn tools
- when they take responsibility for their own lives and learning
- when they feel comfortable in their surroundings, free from coercion and fear
- when educators and learners value, trust, respect and listen to each other
- when education is seen as an active life-long process.

What is meant by 'Personalised Education'?

Personalised education as promoted by Personalised Education Now is derived from the philosophy of **autonomous education**. This centres on learner-managed learning, invitational learning institutions, the catalogue/natural versions of curriculum, invited rather than uninvited teaching, and assessment at the learner's request. Its slogan is, '**I did it my way – though often in co-operation with others**' and operates within a general democratically based learning landscape that has the slogan, '**alternatives for everybody, all the time**'.

We already have institutions that work to the autonomous philosophy within a democratic value system. A prime example is the public library. Others are nursery centres, some schools and colleges, museums, community-arts projects, and home-based education networks. They work to the principle of, '**anybody, any age; any time, any place; any pathway, any pace**'.

Such institutions are learner-friendly, non-ageist, convivial not coercive, and capable of operating as community learning centres which can provide courses, classes, workshops and experiences as requested by local learners.

These are part of a long, rich and successful but undervalued personalised learning heritage, from which we draw strength and which we celebrate. Our urgent task now is to share the benefits of personalised learning and to envision a **Personalised Educational Landscape** that really attends to the needs of all learners and to the greater good of society at large.

Personalised Education Now seeks to maintain '**Edversity**' and the full range of learning contexts and methodologies compatible with Personalised Education, our latest **understanding about the brain**, and how we **develop as learners and human beings** throughout our lives.

Personalised Education operates within a **framework of principles and values** resulting in learners whose outcomes are expressed in their character, their personality, in the quality of life they lead, in the development and sustainability of our communities and planet and in peaceful coexistence and conflict resolution. Performance indicators are measured as much in their physical and mental health, in peaceful existence, freedom from crime, the usefulness of their contributions and work, their levels of active citizenship etc as they are in the existing limitations of the assessment scores and paper accreditations.

Personalised Education Now seeks to develop a rich, diverse, funded **Personalised Educational Landscape** to meet the learning needs, lifestyles and life choices made by individuals, families and communities. It promotes education based on learner-managed learning, using a flexible catalogue curriculum, located in a variety of settings, and operating within a framework of democratic values and practices. The role of educators moves from being, predominately, 'the sage on the stage', to, mostly, 'the guide on the side'.



The Centre for Personalised Education Trust (CPE)

Personalised Education Now (PEN) is the trading name for The Centre for Personalised Education Trust (CPE), a charitable company, limited by guarantee (Charity number: 1057442). It emerged from Education Now in 1996 as The Centre for Personalised Education Trust (CPE). In 2004, after 17 years' pioneering work, Education Now transferred its resources and membership to PEN.

What can you do?

Don't let the *Journal* and enclosures end with you or just share with the converted - distribute them widely. This is a message for everyone. Enter a dialogue with as many people as you can. Engage them in the issues and encourage others to join PEN. We find kindred spirits in all sorts of surprising places and those who just need a little more convincing. Often people partly understand but cannot conceptualise solutions. This is not an issue of blame. We need to engage the present system, not alienate it. Some have never thought at all and need deep engagement. One of our roles is to explain and show how it is and could be different. Within a developing personalised educational landscape solutions will evolve according to localised possibilities, including ways of learning that we have not yet imagined. It's all too easy to take the moral high ground and believe we have all the answers because patently the enterprise is challenging and far from easy. But even now we can share the rich history and current practice of learning in all sorts of institutions and home based situations and we can assist in the 'Futures' thinking that can envision and give rise to its evolution. Together, the debate can be aired throughout grass roots and the current learning system, with the general public, media, and politicians and decision makers. The one certainty is that although the road is not easy it is more solidly founded than the one we have at present. Publicise and forward our web and blog links, circulate our PEN leaflet (from the general office). Bring the strength of PEN to succour those currently engaged in personalised education, and provide vision to those who are not.

To find out more, visit our website: <http://www.personalisededucationnow.org.uk> and our linked blog <http://blog.personalisededucationnow.org.uk/>
Read Educational Heretics Press Publications: <http://edheretics.gn.apc.org/>

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Newsletter:

Contributions for the Newsletter are also welcomed. Contact Janet Meighan.

Membership of Personalised Education Now

Personalised Education Now welcomes members, both individuals and groups, who support and promote its vision. Its membership includes educators in learning centres, home educating settings, schools, colleges and universities. Members include interested individuals and families, teachers, head teachers, advisers, inspectors and academics. PEN has extensive national and international links. Above all the issues of personalised education and learning are issues with relevance to every man, woman and child because they lie at the heart of what kind of society we wish to live in.

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- Monthly

Sign up at <http://blog.personalisededucationnow.org.uk/>

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July / August 2008
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Journals

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Learning Exchanges

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