Dr. Jasvir Kaur

Assistant Professor

G.H.G. Khalsa College of Education

Gurusar Sadhar

Evan Illich

Evan Illich (4 September 1926 – 2 December 2002) was an Austrian philosopher, Roman Catholic priest, and "maverick social critic" of the institutions of contemporary Western culture and their effects on the provenance and practice of education, medicine, work, energy use, transportation, and economic development. Illich was born in Vienna to a Croatian Catholic father, engineer Evan Peter Illich, and a Sephardic Jewish mother, Ellen née Regenstreif-Ortlieb. His maternal grandmother was from Texas. Illich had Italian, Spanish, French, and German as native languages. He later learned Croatian, the language of his grandfathers, then Ancient Greek and Latin, in addition to Spanish, Portuguese, Hindi, English, and other languages. He studied histology and crystallography at the University of Florence (Italy) as well as theology and philosophy at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome (from 1942 to 1946), and medieval history in Salzburg. He wrote a dissertation focusing on the historian Arnold J. Toynbee and would return to that subject in his later years. In 1951, he "signed up to become a parish priest in one of New York's poorest neighborhoods—Washington Heights, on the northern tip of Manhattan, then a barrio of fresh-off-the-airplane Puerto Rican immigrants." In 1956, at the age of 30, he was appointed as the vice rector of the Catholic University of Puerto Rico, "a position he managed to keep for several years before getting thrown out—Illich was just a little too loud in his criticism of the Vatican's pronouncements on birth control and comparatively demure silence about the bomb." It was in Puerto Rico that Illich met Everett Reimer and the two began to analyze their own functions as "educational" leaders. In 1959, he traveled throughout South America on foot and by bus.

In 1961, Illich founded the Centro Intercultural de Documentación (CIDOC, or Intercultural Documentation Center) at Cuernavaca in Mexico, ostensibly a research center offering language courses to missionaries from North America and volunteers of the Alliance for Progress program initiated by John F. Kennedy. His real intent was to document the participation of the Vatican in the "modern development" of the so-called Third World. Illich looked askance at the liberal pity or conservative imperiousness that motivated the rising tide of global industrial development. He viewed such emissaries as a form of industrial hegemony and, as such, an act of "war on subsistence." He sought to teach missionaries dispatched by the Church not to impose their own cultural values and to identify themselves instead as guests of the host country. "Throughout the late '60s and early '70s, CIDOC was part language school and part free university for intellectual hippies from all over the Americas."

In the 1980s and beyond, Illich traveled extensively, mainly splitting his time between the United States, Mexico, and Germany. He held an appointment as a Visiting Professor of Philosophy, Science, Technology and Society at Penn State. He also taught at the University of Bremen and University of Hagen During his last days of his life he admitted that he was greatlyinfluenced by one of the Indian economists and adviser to M.K. Gandhi, J.C. Kumarappa, most notably, his book, Economy of Permanence. During his later 20 years, he suffered from a cancerous growth on his face that, in accordance with his critique of professionalized medicine, was treated with non-traditional methods, such as meditation and yoga. In the last few years, he regularly smoked opium to deal with the pain caused by this tumor. At an early stage, he consulted a doctor—who told him he would live only for 3 months—about having the tumor removed, but was told that there was too great a chance of losing his ability to speak, and so he lived with the tumor as best he could. He called it "my mortality

List of works

- *Celebration of Awareness*. 1971. .*Deschooling Society*. 1971.

- *Tools for Conviviality*. 1973.*Energy and Equity*. 1974.

- *The Right to Useful Unemployment*. 1978. *Toward a History of Needs*. 1978.

- *Shadow Work*. 1981. *Gender*. 1982.

- *ABC: The Alphabetization of the Popular Mind*.1988 1988.

- *In the Mirror of the Past*. 1992.

- *Corruption of Christianity* Disoccupazione creativa (Creative Disoccupation), 1977

Evan Illich's Educational Philosophy

Evan Illich didn't believe that school problems could be solved by increasing funding or setting higher standards. He believed that educational problems originated with government-run schools themselves and were worsened by the way schools made people think about learning. Illich claimed:

- Most learning happens informally.

- Institutionalized schooling hinders true learning.

- The ideal education "system" allows people to choose what they learn and when they learn.

Informal Learning

Illich is quick to point out that people learn more from their day-to-day experiences than they learn from sitting inside a classroom.

"A...major illusion on which the school system rests is that most learning is the result of teaching. Teaching, it is true, may contribute to certain kinds of learning under certain circumstances. But most people acquire most of their knowledge outside school, and in school only insofar as school, in a few rich countries, has become their place of confinement during an increasing part of their lives.

Most learning happens casually, and even most intentional learning is not the result of programmed instruction. Normal children learn their first language casually, although faster if their parents pay attention to them. Most people who learn a second language well do so as a result of odd circumstances and not of sequential teaching. They go to live with their grandparents, they travel, or they fall in love with a foreigner. Fluency in reading is also more often than not a result of such extracurricular activities. Most people who read widely, and with pleasure, merely believe that they learned to do so in school; when challenged, they easily discard this illusion."

Students may learn something from spending eight hours a day inside a classroom. But, how much more could they learn by spending their time reading, having natural discussions, or working towards actual accomplishments?

The Problem with the Institution of Schooling

The problem with schools, according to Illich, is that they force ownership over the very idea of learning. They make people believe that learning is the domain of schools alone. "Don't attempt this at home," they seem to say. "Your learning must be supervised by a credentialed professional."

When schools fail, people see it as a further indication that learning itself is an insurmountable challenge:

"All over the world the school has an anti-educational effect on society: school is recognized as the institution which specializes in education. The failures of school are taken by most people as a proof that education is a very costly, very complex, always arcane, and frequently almost impossible task."

Not only do traditional schools diminish students' ability to learn on their own, they take students away from the situations where learning readily occurs: the workplace, the political arena, the home, and the community.

A Better System Evan Illich envisions a better way to encourage learning. Instead of traditional schooling, he believes that people of all ages should be able to choose what they learn and when they learn it.

Illich proposes that informal education can be supported through four services: libraries that store the materials needed for learning, skills-based exchanges where people can develop specific abilities, peer-matching that allows learners to meet others interested in studying the same subject, and a database of educators available for assistance.

The government could support informal learning by replacing mandatory schooling with options:

"Right now educational credit good at any skill center could be provided in limited amounts for people of all ages, and not just to the poor. I envisage such credit in the form of an educational passport or an "edu-credit card" provided to each citizen at birth…Such credits would permit most people to acquire the skills most in demand, at their convenience, better, faster, cheaper, and with fewer undesirable side effects than in school."

In an impressive bit of foresight, Illich imagined a "learning web" that connected people with the resources they need. Now that we have the internet, this network of resources is more possible than ever.

Theory of Value

What knowledge and skills are worthwhile learning? What are the goals of education?

"It must not start with the question, What should someone learn?' but with the question, 'What kinds of things and people might learners want to be in contact with in order to learn?'"

All knowledge and skills that are of interest to each individual are worthwhile to learn, and the student should choose the method by which he wants to learn them - "the educational path of each student would be his own to follow, and only in retrospect would it take on the features of a recognizable program. The wise student would periodically seek professional advice: assistance to set a new goal, insight into difficulties encountered, choice between possible methods."

The ultimate goal of education is liberation - "To liberate access to things ... To liberate the sharing of skills by guaranteeing freedom to teach or exercise them on request ... To liberate the critical and creative resources of people ... To liberate the individual from the obligation to shape his expectations to the services offered by any established profession."

Education "Should use modern technology to make free speech, free assembly, and a free press truly universal..."

Theory of Knowledge

What is knowledge? How is it different from belief? What is a mistake? What is a lie?

Knowledge is learned and is broken into two categories: skilled knowledge which can be "acquired and improved through drills because skill implies the mastery of definable and predictable behavior" and more "liberal knowledge such as "inventive and creative behavior" and "the ability to argue, to compete, to cooperate, and to understand." Belief is uneducated knowledge. A mistake is caused by lacking enough skill knowledge to perform it correctly. A lie is caused by lacking enough liberal knowledge to tell the truth.

Theory of Human Nature

What is a human being? How does it differ from other species? What are the limits of human potential?

Human beings have evolved from one who once relied on nature to one who seeks to control it - "Primitive man lived in world of hope. He relied on the munificence of nature, on the handouts of gods, and on the instincts of his tribe to enable him to subsist ... The classical Greeks recognized as true men only those citizens who let themselves be fitted by paideia (education) into the institutions their elders had planned... Contemporary man goes further; he attempts to create the world in his image, to build a totally man-made environment."

All other species in the world are engineered or shaped in some way by man - "a child on the streets of New York never touches anything which has not been scientifically developed, engineered, planned, and sold to someone. Even the trees are there because the Parks Department decided to put them there."

Man's potential is limited by the institutions that he has created - "Surrounded by all-powerful tools, man is reduced to a tool of his tools ... Man is trapped in the boxes he makes to contain the ills Pandora allowed to escape."

The limited resources available on Earth also limit man's potential - "The value of institutionalized man depends on his capacity as an incinerator... Man now defines himself as the furnace which burns up the values produced by his tools."

Theory of Learning

What is learning? How are skills/knowledge acquired?

"Learning itself is defined as the consumption of subject matter, which is the result of researched, planned, and promoted programs. Whatever good there is, is the product of some specialized institution. It would be foolish to demand something which some institution cannot produce."

"To learn means to acquire a new skill or insight"

Most skills and knowledge now and should be acquired voluntarily, outside of the schools - "Most learning happens casually, and even most intentional learning is not the result of programmed instruction. Normal children learn their first language casually."

Skills and knowledge should be acquired by everyone through networks of peers and skill models "What are needed are new networks, readily available to the public and designed to spread equal opportunity for learning and teaching".

Theory of Transmission

Who is to teach? By what methods? What will the curriculum be?

Currently, "skill teachers are made scarce by the belief in the value of licenses. Certification constitutes a form of market manipulation and is plausible only to a schooled mind. Most teachers of arts and trades are less skillful, less inventive, and less communicative that the best craftsmen and tradesmen."

However, teachers should be "skill models" merely be skilled at their subject matter and willing to demonstrate it to those interested. There should be no set curriculum. - "Opportunities for skill-learning can be vastly multiplied if we open the 'market.' This depends on matching the right teacher with the right student when he is highly motivated in an intelligent program, without the constraint of curriculum."

"Educational webs" should be the primary methods of instruction - "The child grows up in a world of things, surrounded by people who serve as models for skills and values. He finds peers who challenge him to argue, to compete, to cooperate, and to understand; and if the child is lucky, he is exposed to confrontation of criticism by an experienced elder who really cares."

Four Methods of Learning from which each student should be able to choose freely:

1. Reference Services to Educational Objects - which facilitate access to things or processes used for formal learning. Some of these things can be reserved for this purpose, stored in libraries, rental agencies, laboratories, and showrooms like museums and theaters; others can be in daily use in factories, airports, or on farms, but made available to students as apprentices or on office hours.

2. Skill Exchanges - which permit persons to list their skills, the conditions under which they are willing to serve as models for others who want to learn these skills, and the addresses at which they can be reached.

3. Peer-Matching - a communications network which permits persons to describe the learning activity in which they wish to engage, in the hope of finding a partner for the inquiry.

4.**Reference Services to Educators-at-Large** - who can be listed in a directory giving the addresses and self-descriptions of professionals, paraprofessionals, and freelancers, along with conditions of access to their services. Such educators, as we will see, could he chosen by polling or consulting their former clients."

Currently, "Instruction is the choice of circumstances which facilitate learning. Roles are assigned by setting a curriculum of conditions which the candidate must meet if he is to make the grade."

"Curriculum has always been used to assign social rank ... it could take the form of a ritual, of sequential sacred ordinations, or it could consist of a succession of feats in war or hunting."

However, a curriculum of interest is proposed where all learning is voluntary - "Learners should not be forced to submit to an obligatory curriculum, or to discrimination based on whether they possess a certificate or a diploma."

Reference Services to Educational Objects

Things are basic resources for learning. The quality of the environment and the relationship of a person to it will determine how much he learns incidentally. Formal learning requires special access to ordinary things, on the one hand, or, on the other, easy and dependable access to special things made for educational purposes. An example of the former is the special right to operate or dismantle a machine in a garage. An example of the latter is the general right to use an abacus, a computer, a book, a botanical garden, or a machine withdrawn from production and placed at the full disposal of students.

At present, attention is focused on the disparity between rich and poor children in their access to things and in the manner in which they can learn from them. OEO and other agencies, following this approach, concentrate on equalizing chances, by trying to provide more educational equipment for the poor. A more radical point of departure would be to recognize that in the city rich and poor alike are artificially kept away from most of the things that surround them. Children born into the age of plastics and efficiency experts must penetrate two barriers which obstruct their understanding: one built into things, and the other around institutions. Industrial design creates a world of things that resist insight into their nature, and schools shut the learner out of the world of things in their meaningful setting.

Skill Exchanges

A guitar teacher, unlike a guitar, can be neither classified in a museum nor owned by the public nor rented from an educational warehouse. Teachers of skills belong to a different class of resources from objects needed to learn a skill. This is not to say that they are indispensable in every case. I can not only rent a guitar, but also taped guitar lessons and illustrated chord

charts—and with these things I can teach myself to play the guitar. Indeed, this arrangement might have advantages—if the available tapes are better than the available teachers. Or if the only time I have for learning the guitar is late at night or if the tunes I wish to play are unknown in my country. Or I might be shy and prefer to fumble along in privacy.

Skill teachers must be listed and contacted through a different kind of channel from that of things. A thing is available at the bidding of the user—or could be—whereas a person formally becomes a skill resource only when he consents to do so, and he can also restrict time, place, and method as he chooses.

Skill teachers must also be distinguished from peers, from whom one would learn. Peers who wish to pursue a common inquiry must start from common interests and abilities; they get together to exercise or improve a skill they share: basketball, dancing, constructing a campsite, or discussing the next election. The first transmission of a skill, on the other hand, involves bringing together someone who has the skill and someone who does not have it and wants to acquire it.

The teacher of skills needs some inducement to grant his services to a pupil. There are at least two simple ways to begin to channel public funds to non-certified teachers. One way would be to institutionalize the skill exchange by creating free skill centers open to the public. Such centers could and should be established in industrialized areas, at least for those skills which are fundamental prerequisites for entering certain apprenticeships—such skills as reading, typing, keeping accounts, foreign languages, computer programming and number manipulation, reading special languages such as that of electrical circuits, manipulation of certain machinery, etc. Another approach would be to give certain groups within the population educational currency good for attendance at skill centers where other clients would have to pay commercial rates.

Peer Matching

At their worst, schools gather classmates into the same room and subject them to the same sequence of treatment in math, citizenship, and spelling. At their best, they permit each student to choose one of a limited number of courses. In any case, groups of peers form around the goals of teachers. A desirable educational system would let each person specify the activity for which he seeks a peer.

School does offer children an opportunity to escape their homes and meet new friends. But, at the same time, this process indoctrinates children with the idea that they should select their friends from among those with whom they are put together. Providing the young from their earliest age with invitations to meet, evaluate, and seek out others would prepare them for a lifelong interest in seeking new partners for new endeavors.

A good chess player is always glad to find a close match, and one novice to find another. Clubs serve their purpose. People who want to discuss specific books or articles would probably pay to find discussion partners. People who want to play games, go on excursions, build fish tanks, or motorize bicycles will go to considerable lengths to find peers. The reward for their efforts is finding those peers. Good schools try to bring out the common interests of their students registered in the same program. The inverse of school would be an institution which increases the chances that persons who at a given moment share the same specific interest could meet—no matter what else they have in common.

Skill teaching does not provide equal benefits for both parties, as does the matching of peers. The teacher of skills, as I have pointed out, must usually be offered some incentive beyond the rewards of teaching. Skill teaching is a matter of repeating drills over and is, in fact, all the more dreary for those pupils who need it most. A skill exchange needs currency or credits or other tangible incentives in order to operate, even if the exchange itself were to generate a currency of its own. A peer-matching system requires no such incentives, but only a communications network.

The operation of a peer-matching network would be simple. The user would identify himself by name and address and describe the activity for which he seeks a peer. A computer would send him back the names and addresses of all those who have inserted the same description. It is amazing that such a simple utility has never been used on a broad scale for publicly valued activity.

Professional Educators

As citizens have new choices, new chances for learning, their willingness to seek leadership should increase. We may expect that they will experience more deeply both their own independence and their need for guidance. As they are liberated from manipulation by others, they learn to profit from the discipline others have acquired in a lifetime. De-schooling education should increase—rather than stifle—the search for men with practical wisdom who are willing to sustain the newcomer on his educational adventure. As teachers abandon their claim to be superior informants or skill-models, their claim to superior wisdom will begin to ring true.

With an increasing demand for teachers, their supply should also increase. As the schoolmaster vanishes, the conditions arise which should bring forth the vocation of the independent educator. This may seem almost a contradiction in terms, so thoroughly have schools and teachers become complementary. Yet this is exactly what the development of the first three educational exchanges would tend to produce—and what would be required to permit their full exploitation—for parents and other "natural educators" need guidance, individual learners need assistance, and the networks need people to operate them.

Parents need guidance in guiding their children on the road that leads to responsible educational independence. Learners need experienced leadership when they encounter rough terrain. These two needs are quite distinct: the first is a need for pedagogy, the second for intellectual leadership in all other fields of knowledge. The first calls for knowledge of human learning and of educational resources, the second for wisdom based on experience in any kind of exploration. Both kinds of experience are indispensable for effective educational endeavor. Schools package these functions into one role—and render the independent exercise of any of them if not disreputable at least suspect.

Three types of special educational competence should in fact be distinguished: one to create and operate the kinds of educational exchanges or networks outlined here; another to guide students and parents in the use of these networks; and a third to act as *primus inter pares* in undertaking difficult intellectual exploratory journeys. Only the former two can be conceived of as branches of an independent profession: educational administrators or pedagogical counselors. To design and operate the networks I have been describing would not require many people, but it would require people with the most profound understanding of education and administration, in a perspective quite different from and even opposed to that of schools.

What is Society?

What is Society? What institutions are involved in the educational process?

Society is enveloped, even trapped, inside itself and all of its evils - "Our society resembles the ultimate machine ... a box: you expected to be able to take something out of it; yet all it contained was a mechanism for closing the cover. This contraption is the opposite of Pandora's 'box'"

Currently, the school is the monopolistic institution involved in the educational process - "School teaches us that instruction produces learning. The existence of schools produces the demand for schooling ... In school we are taught that valuable learning is the result of attendance; that the value of learning increases with the amount of input; and finally that this value can be measured and documented by grades and certificates."

However, no institution at all need be involved in the educational process - "Learning is the human activity which least needs manipulation by others. Most learning is not the result of instruction. It is rather the result of unhampered participation in a meaningful setting."

Theory of Opportunity

Who is to be educated? Who is to be schooled?

All should be educated in that which they are interested - "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."

Schooling is a societal evil to be eliminated, ending its monopoly over education - "School appropriates the money, men, and good will available for education and in addition discourages other institutions from assuming educational tasks." "Schooling is obligatory and becomes schooling for schooling's own sake."

"School has become the planned process which tools man for a planned world, the principal tool to trap man in man's trap. It is supposed to shape each man to an adequate level for playing a part in this world game."

"School is the advertising agency which makes you believe that you need the society as it is."

Schooling is an "age-specific, teacher-related process requiring full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum" that makes people dependent rather than independent.

Theory of Consensus

Why do people disagree? How is consensus achieved? Whose opinion takes precedence?

Inequality and inadequacy, especially in schooling, creates disagreement between rich and poor and even between different countries - "Obligatory schooling inevitably polarizes a society; it also grades the nations of the world according to an international caste system. Countries are rated like castes whose educational dignity is determined by the average years of schooling of its citizens ...The escalation of the schools is as destructive as the escalation of weapons but less visibly so."

Equality of schooling is not possible, due to the positional value of it - "Rather than calling equal schooling temporarily unfeasible, we must recognize that it is, in principle, economically absurd, and that to attempt it is intellectually emasculating, socially polarizing, and destructive of the credibility of the political system which promotes it."

Therefore, since it creates disagreement and can't be equalized, it should be eliminated to achieve consensus -"Inevitably the deschooling of society will blur the distinctions between economics, education, and politics on which the stability of the present world order and the stability of nations now rest."

Currently, the opinions of the rich (and thus powerful) take precedence over those of the poor because the rich have more opportunities in life- "poor children lack most of the educational

opportunities which are usually available to the middle-class child ...So the poorer student will generally fall behind so long as he depends on school for advancement or learning ... All this is true in poor nations as well as in rich ones."

General Characteristics of New Formal Educational Institutions

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. Such a system would require the application of constitutional guarantees to education. Learners should not be forced to submit to an obligatory curriculum; or to discrimination based on whether they possess a certificate or a diploma. Nor should the public be forced to support—through a regressive taxation—a huge professional apparatus of educators and buildings which in fact restrict the public's chances for learning to the services the profession is willing to put on the market. It should use modern technology to make free speech, free assembly, and a free press truly universal and, therefore, fully educational.Schools are designed on the assumption that there is a secret to everything in life; that the quality of life depends on knowing that secret; that secrets can be known only in orderly successions; and that only teachers can properly reveal these secrets. An individual with a schooled mind conceives of the world as a pyramid of classified packages accessible only to those who carry the proper tags. New educational institutions would break apart this pyramid. Their purpose must be to facilitate access for the learner: to allow him to look into the windows of the control room or the parliament, if he cannot get in the door. Moreover, such new institutions should be channels to which the learner would have access without credentials or pedigree—public spaces in which peers and elders outside his immediate horizon now become available.**Educational revolution be guided by certain goals.**

1.) To liberate access to things by abolishing the control which persons and institutions now exercise over their educational values.2.) To liberate the sharing of skills by guaranteeing freedom to teach or exercise them on request.3.) To liberate the critical and creative resources of people by returning to individual persons the ability to call and hold meetings: an ability now increasingly monopolized by institutions which claim to speak for the people.

4.) To liberate the individual from the obligation to shape his expectations to the services offered by any established profession—by providing him with the opportunity to draw on the experience of his peers and to entrust himself to the teacher, guide, adviser, or healer of his choice.