Genius is as common as dirt

These notes were originally part of research compiled for the lecture '[Genius is as common as dirt](#)', delivered at Ignite in the Electric Picnic, 2011.

John Holt '**How Children Fail**' - Schooling reduces kids capacity to learn.

Childhood not a blessed state of bliss
- but one of powerlessness
- kids eager to escape & quick to forget

Classrooms repress speech & speech development

60's revolution didn't greatly improve schooling
- added brief fictive Q&A sessions etc
- still a top down, dominance / authority, lecturing model

Children learn well from other kids
- Lev Vygotsky's scaffolding of learning via - Zone of Proximal Development

Reading - best facilitated by allowing kids to become familiar with shapes of letter & words in own time
- increases self checking & self correcting skills

Timetables for learning
- Don't acquiesce to individual development
- Kids learn in spurts
- Force kids into frightening situations again and again

Dave Hawkins - Science Learning Research
- unstructured play before directed work begins increases understanding & retention

Analytical / deductive reasoning less useful in education than exploration
- explanation of models is extremely ineffective with kids
- not symbolic reasoners

Following Piaget and Vygotsky - children construct reality through experiential learning - not passive absorption from lectures / books

Holt - Opposes coercion - whether persuasion (progressive) or punishment (conservative)
- coercion generates fear & inculcates obedience

[Gels with later development of 'Self Determination Theory' and 'External Control Psychology']

Holt - taught in private schools in US in 50's & 60's
- problem wasn't 'bad' schools / schooling
- but schools considered elite / successful

Children develop strategies to tackle classroom demands

- test performance does not equate with real learning
- actual school learning - fragmented, distorted and short lived
- 'right answer' culture

Kid's Classroom Strategies:
a) Avoid involvement
b) Locate answer through trickery
- success reinforces 'lazy' ineffective heuristics
- failure teaches disappointment / defeat
c) wave hand without knowing answer
d) mumbling / guess and look - start answer and observe teachers response
e) Thinkers - alternative correct or logical but wrong - treated as simply incorrect by teachers

[Newer teaching methodologies avoid - e.g.: Jump Math]

Strategies
- defensive, neurotic and fear laden
- self-limiting and self-defeating

Mistakes - could offer relief
- since they reduced the pressure of expectations

Classroom environment
- low tolerance of uncertainty
- pressure to teacher please

Kids Goals
- to get through tasks enforced with least effort and unpleasantness
- doesn't develop self efficacy
- school became feared and disliked [work follows!]
Tests
- create demands on teachers => from parents, dept of education, school board
for 'good' results
- result - teachers 'teach the test', pre-announce tests, outline contents in advance
- success - is shaky, temporary and ultimately meaningless

Kids Fail
- because they're afraid, bored and confused
=> by contradictory, fragmented, unexplained subjects

Holt's followup book '**How Children Learn**' - how to fix things!

Pre-school learning - children's natural learning styles
- Play - pleasurable & vivid - easy to remember
- unforced / unstressed
- self motivated
- kids are 'naive scientists' learning through uninhibited experimentation

Education is the game of finding out how the world works

Learning - by trial & error, little fear of mistakes, comfortable with uncertainty

- as an end in itself
- data comes before theory
=> kids don't impose a pattern too early, actually better at some cognitive tasks as a result (especially tasks requiring generation of novel ideas)

Language acquired by persistent experiment
- kids correct mistakes without being explicitly corrected!
- imagine a 'talking curriculum' designed by committee
=> would include speech skills, words, syllables, sounds, tests, reviews, competition
=> [research shows correcting mispronunciation - can interrupt proceduralization and worsen speech impediments]
=> kids would grow to dislike talking

An effective school is possible - Providing help & guidance on request
- independent learning pace
- learning out of interest
- self directed learning - choose time & subject
=> Teach learning - not adherence to already outmoded body of acquired cultural baggage

Kids want
- to understand world
- to develop / gain confidence in skills
- to 'find their own work' - way to apply their talents to serve the world

Schools want
- to increase their prestige
- to attract pupils

Teachers
- often come from non / anti-intellectual backgrounds
- see teaching as solid, secure job
- dull, authoritarian, uninspiring

Society wants
- to pass on cultural values / traditions
- … basic general knowledge
- …. employment skills
=> All these functions of education used to be socially performed
=> School is a poor substitute

Education becomes competitive zero sum game
- grade curves
- points systems
=> creates sheep rather than citizens
=> Kids haven't worked so hard since industrial revolution!

Holt - How to Fix School

1) Abandon compulsory attendance
=> while preventing child exploitation
2) experiment with 'schools without walls'

3) Involve non-teachers - 'those who can do'
4) encourage students to teach each other
5) Let kids evaluate own work
6) Abolish fixed, required curriculum

Schools make kids dislike reading
- dictionaries rather than context
- reading aloud is humiliation potential
- demand 'comprehension' rather than understanding

Holt - in his classroom - used
- reading for pleasure days
- composition derby - creative writing periods where spellings were not checked
=> teacher wrote any words students wanted to know how to write on board

The Suzuki Method

Japanese Violinist - Shinichi Suzuki - mid 20th century
- modelled teaching music based on language acquisition
- parental involvement / modelling, repetition, loving encouragement

Early beginning - bootstraps music on 'critical period of language acquisition'
- listening begins at birth
- formal teaching - age 3 - 4

Listen to pieces every day - especially repertoire
=> immerse in local musical community, gigs etc

Repetition - don't move on from pieces once learned
- incorporate & develop repertoire

Positive feedback - encouragement, unconditional positive regard

Learning together with other kids - modelling, scaffolding

Learning through increasingly sophisticated repertoire - not exercises
- Don't teach sight-reading music till later

No auditions - no 'aptitude' testing

Small bite sized learning steps
- NB - limitations of working memory, necessity of practise - myth of aptitude

Finland's Education System

Abandoned Testing -> Improved teaching

1970's
- under-performing education system
- poor agrarian economy (based on lumber!)
- needed to become 'knowledge economy'
- changed preparation & selection of teachers

Finish teachers today
- educated to masters level (in a subject, not 'education studies etc')
- taught how to teach
- only 10% of applicants make it into teaching!
- teaching moderately paid, but strongly unionised / respected profession

Little testing before high school matriculation (aged 16)
- no streaming

OECD Programme for international student assessment (PISA)
- rate Finland as top Western nation

Less than 4% difference between highest & lowest performing schools
- despite spending less per-student than US system

Results - Finland
- ranked amongst highest in the world for innovation, entrepreneurship, & creativity
- despite - not teaching to produce 'skill sets' for industry
- teaching for citizenship / lifelong learning

Teachers are scientists - classroom is laboratory
- half school day for curriculum / lesson development
- teachers work together to improve
- have own offices & resources

Curriculum - integrated & multidisciplinary - not just 3R's

John Taylor Gatto - Against School

30 year veteran of Manhattan public school system
- NY City teacher of the year 1989, 1990, 1991
- NY State teacher of the year 1991

Like John Holt - observed kids & teachers bored & unmotivated

Is school necessary?
- Edison, Rockefeller, Margaret Mead, Mark Twain, Joesph Conrad, Herman Melville, George Washington etc - not products of a school system

Mass schooling in USA - 1905 - 1915
- ostensible goals -
1) good people
2) good citizens
3) fulfill potential

HL Menkin (1924)
- Aim of school is to 'reduce as many individuals as possible to the same safe level, to breed &
train a standardised citizenry, to put down dissent & originality'

US Education System - Developed from Prussian model of early 19th C.

Cardinal Principles of Education - 1918
- conclusions of National Education Association's Commission on the Reorganization of
Secondary Education
- to break the back of underclass / organised labour
- produce works / consumers
- exchange liberal education for lifeskills training

Functions of education (According to Galt)

1) Adjustive - to create fixed habits of reaction to authority
2) Integrating - make children conform
3) Diagnostic / Directive - select social role (i.e.: testing, records)
4) Differentiating - sorting and training - streaming, vocational
5) Selective - Socially diminish the unfit
6) Propaedeutic - push forward select few for leadership via higher ed

Woodrow Wilson (as president of Princeton)
- addressing NY teachers association in 1909
- 'We want one class of persons to have a liberal education, and we want another class of
persons, a very much larger class, of necessity, in every society to forgo the privelleges of
liberal education & fit themselves to perform specific difficult manual tasks'

Gatto
'Genius is as common as dirt. We suppress our genius only because we haven't yet figured out
how to manage a population of educated men and women.'

School
1) Makes Kids Confused - incoherent ensemble of rote info
=> fills free time like television
2) Teaches them to accept their class designation
3) Makes Kids Bored / Indifferent
4) .. emotionally dependent on teacher approval (e.g.: right answer culture)
5) Provides provisional self esteem
6) Teaches constant awareness of supervision - panopticon

Increasingly - medicalisation
- ritalin, modafinil, anti-psychotics!

History of Education

Ideals of universal education were honorable

Comenius - 17th Century Czech scientist, writer & educator
- 'Nothing should be taught to the young', he wrote, 'unless it is not only permitted, but actually demanded by their age and mental strength'

- Children should be taught... ''without any tediousnesse to reade and write, as it were in a continuall course of play and pastime"

- Comenius's plans put into action in Cromwell's England
=> effort made to reform the grammar school system (focused on classics)
=> restoration put a stop to 'interventionist role of the state in education provision'

* 'Nonconformist / Dissenter' Vocational academies emerged to fit the gap
[sound familiar?]
- included modern languages, natural sciences, mathematics

* Charity Schools - designed to save the poor

Mid 18th - 19th C
- Industrial revolution!
- UK population doubles
- Factory act required employers to provide 4 years of basic literacy education
- Electoral Enfranchisement of poor

Teaching Process became industrialised
- through rote learning
- at 'monitorial schools' for poor - 3R's and vocational skills

Strong opposition to mass education for poor
- fear of expense, of social disruption and 'insubordination'
- higher education explicitly excluded the working class

Elementary Education is invented - but not implimented
- David Stow - 1836
- grade system: < 6 elementary, < 14 junior and senior primary
Training System of Education for the Moral and Intellectual Elevation of Youth, especially in large Towns and Manufacturing Villages.

Parliament - began purchasing land for construction of public schools
- majority of children began attending schools - but only for 1 or 2 years
- grants given to religious groups to build parish schools

* Most elementary education still classical - cheaper

Vocational education - provided by private 'Mechanics Institutes'
1860 - state examinations for teachers & students

Separate system for wealthy
- prep schools -> public schools -> university
- 1860s - public school special status and subjects solidified by Royal Commission
-> control of curriculum and books responsibility of headmaster

Series of government reports & acts - began to reform and nationalise education

1870s / 80s - series of acts
- compulsory primary education act for working class kids - to 14
- free only in cases of poverty
- 2.5k schools created
- monitorial rote system

1891 - primary education offered free

Bryce commission of secondary education 1894
- recorded only about 5 per 1000 elementary students made it into existing grammar schools
- recommended 10 out of every 1000 should be secondary educated
- 'It is obvious', the Commission commented, 'that these distinctions correspond roughly, but by no means exactly, to the gradations of society'
- moved control to local authorities
=> scarified plurality of methodology for equality of opportunity

Girls -> only wealthy educated through private schools
- although by the 1890's they could attend the new universities

Second Level Schooling
- on the prussian model

Early 20th C acts
- established scholarships for secondary schools

Unskooling

Practises centred on kids learning through life experiences
- games, household responsibilities, work experience, social interaction
- based on writings of John Holt

Proponents believe
- Self directed natural world learning makes independent, motivated individuals

Children are natural learners
- Carl Rogers - 'A person cannot teach another person directly: A person can only facilitate another's learning.'

Distinct learning styles and development schedules
- Kids learn at own rate and in own way

Learning how to learn more important than any specific body of knowledge

Parents' role -> to help kids navigate & make sense of the world
-> share interesting books, articles
-> introduce kids to knowledgeable people

Home = the open classroom

Conventional Schooling
=> Age segregation, few adults, alienation from community
=> Kids can't choose peers or meet interesting people

Recent development
- Not back to school - unskool summer camp
- founded by Grace Llwellen - author - The Teenage Liberation Handbook

Isaac Azimov

Author of 500 science and SF books
- passionate autodidact
- evangelist for computer learning

'Nowadays what people call learning is forced on you, and everyone is forced to learn the same thing on the same day at the same speed in class, and everyone is different.'

E-books don't change this!
- flat e-books, non-interactive & DRM device locked
=> now being used in Irish schools as a cost saving measure
- i.e.: St Colman's college in Claremorris, iPad scheme
- € 657 for iPad, € 200 for Junior Cert Books

Azimov - interest directs learning
- had no interest in art, economics, or psychology

'Any one of us at any time can be educated in any subject that *strikes our fancy*'
- antithesis of our education system
- everything is rote, everything compulsory

'If from the start children are educated into appreciate their own creativity, then probably almost all of us can be creative'

Computers - should be the end of mass education
- the number of teachers is far greater than the number of good teachers
- computers enable one to one relationships with knowledge for the many

Children look forward to
- no longer learning
- escaping school & compulsory education
- 'most people don't enjoy learning because of the circumstances'

Science = a system for testing your knowledge against the universe to see if they match

Waldorf Education

Austrian Philosopher - Rudolf Steiner, 1919
- founded school for children of Waldorf Astoria factory workers
- Almost 1k around the world

Interdisciplinary learning
- practical, artistic, conceptual
=> emphasises role of imagination
- goal: free, morally responsible, integrated individuals

Strong curriculum - based on academic, emotional & physical development
- emphasising collaborative learning
- 1 teacher loops with class through elementary years

Stages of child development approach

Early childhood

Learning

- experimental, imitative, sensory based
=> learning through practise
- free play, productive work in homelike environment

Teaching

- outdoor play, experience of nature
- oral development through songs, poems & movement games
- simple toys encourage imagination
- TV & recorded media discouraged

7 - 14

Learning

- artistic & imaginative
- learning types develop - kids become more individuated in the modality they best absorb
=> and the pace at which they learn
=> similar to Gardeners ideas of multiple intelligences

Teaching

- multidisciplinary arts based curriculum
- 2 foreign languages
- few textbooks - instruction integrated with art & movement
- kids create illustrate summaries of coursework
- academics are based around monthly themes

Adolescence

- abstract though & conceptual judgement
[? is 'giftedness' just precocious fixation / development of abstract thought]

Stronger focus on academics - though still through art, music & crafts

Organisation

Schools don't have a principle
- directed by consensus group of teachers [i.e.: Quaker model]

Teachers have a high degree of autonomy

Outcomes

Emphasis on tolerance & social responsibility
- research has found students more engaged, positive & prosocial

Have led the way towards integrated communities in divided culture
- South Africa under apartheid
- Israel - bi-lingual Arab-Jewish school

In UK - achieve superior academic results to state schools

Sweden - more tolerant students, more in depth academic style

Australia - outperform state students in humanities and sciences at University

Kids - learn to read later
- often not till 9 or 10
- but by that point have a love of language & strong linguistic skills
- eventually surpass early readers

Loony side

Anthroposophy
=> theosophy derived quasi-religious belief system
- includes reincarnation, karma

Expressed through Eurthymy
- dance method created by Rudolf Steiner

Anarchistic Free Schools

Voluntaryist - all age learning networks

Grew out of Eschela Moderna

Catalonian - pre-Spanish civil war (1901 - 1906)
- school to educate the working class in a rational (i.e.: secular), non-coersive setting

Decentralised anarchist free schools
- Non-hierarchical
- collectivist, self reliance
- non-authoritarian

Democratic Education

John Dewey - published between 1897 - 1938
Philosopher (Functionalist), president of American Psychological Association

Contrasted *Traditional* with *Progressive* Education

Traditional

Top down didactic transmission of tradition
- docile students, passive indoctrination
- books hold knowledge
=> teachers conduits of knowledge & enforcers of discipline

Progressive
- defined by opposition to traditional
- expression, individuality
- free activity
- experiential learning
- learning for dynamic future

Learning is a social process
- school is a social institution & place of social reform
- education for life, develop individual potential & skills, social consciousness

Learning is experiential
- but **not all experience is educative**
=> can be disconnected & damage ability to control future experiences
- a better quality of experience is the point of democratic education

Progressive education **requires a philosophy of education**
- to substitute for custom & routine
- practical methodologies need working out
Influenced - Project Based Learning (PBL)

Teacher = facilitator, partner in learning

Opposed

Curriculum based learning

- student is inactive recipient
- doesn't relate to experience
=> learning should be experiential, hands on

In Democratic Education
- Teachers & Students share decision making

Tolstoy established perhaps first democratic school for peasant children

Summerhill School

1921 - Oldest democratic school still in existence

- staff & pupils have equal vote in school meetings
- students free to choose which (if any) lessons they attend
- freedom not licence - students free, so long as they do not disrupt

1999 - David Blunkett attempted to close
- School won case in Royal Court of Justice

Disputes resolved by ombudsmen
- elected committee of older members of the community

Students placed according to ability - not age
- may take GCSE v.young

Art room & workshop are drop in & open all day

Boarding
- 4 - 5 to a room
- divided into 'houses' based on maturity
- bed times based on age
- single sex rooms for older kids

Sudbury Valley School

Democratic school, Massachusetts 1968
- now 30 around the world

Based on self determination theory
- psychological theory which differentiates between intrinsic & extrinsic motivation

SDT

Rewards undermine intrinsic motivations
- self motivation switches to external rewards

- undermines **autonomy**
e.g. deadlines decrease motivation
e.g: creative problem solving worsened by financial motivation

Conversely - providing autonomy increases motivation

Competence (self efficacy) - positive feedback increases motivation
Need for **relatedness** also supports motivation
=> we behave in ways which solicit social approval from peers / dominant individuals & groups

Innate human drive towards growth
- learning - natural byproduct of human activity
- self initiated, self motivated

Hence @ Sudbury Valley Schools
- No curriculum or required courses
- No classrooms - just rooms where students congregate
- Students decide what they want to study
=> forces students to make active decisions
=> explicit recognition that didactic learning inculcates obedience

School weekly meetings are democratic
- rules decided compiled into law book
- 'Code of Law'

Students mentor one another
- across ages
- two way learning

Perpetual play
- students have responsibility for own education

Kids can arrive at any time during day
- but need to stay in school for 5 horus

School is a gymnasium for learning
- librarys, music rooms, computer rooms, even video games rooms!

Judicial committee of students - adjudicate disputes

Kids learn at own pace - often advanced level subjects
- form ad hoc subject groups

On graduation students must defend a thesis
- they must write a defence of their adulthood and present it to their peers

Graduates

82% finish higher education / vocational
- involved in variety of diciplines
- from education to psychotherapist to military

- almost none in unskilled jobs

Ivan Illich
(writing in 1970s)

School
- custodial care
- indoctrination
- selection of social roles
=> should be disestablished

Special treatment of 'disadvantaged'
- merely add cost & new methods of discrimination
- part of the 'modernization of poverty'
=> creating institutional answers to needs
- translates basic needs into demands for commodities

School monopolizes the education process
- into location, age bracket, and socio-economic circumstances

Childhood - a constructed product of modernity
-> enforcement of the role of the child & compulsory pupil

Social decision to allocate resources of education
- after the 4 years of 'critical period of language aquisition'
- before self-motivated learning of late adolescence & adulthood

Teacher
- becomes custodian, moralist, therapist
=> in loco parentis

School is an assembly oligarch
- undermines right to free assembly

Illich - Positive Solutions

Educational web in unschooled society

Approaches for lifelong learning
- requiring legal & technical establishment

1) Reference services to educational objects
- store elements of real world training
- aspects of real institutions with apprenticeships

2) Skill Exchanges
- offering models for skill learning & learning resources
- How to incentivize
=> credits, social honour, gifts, reputation economy, intrinsic altruism

3) Peer matching - communications network to link learners
- i.e.: The Web! and more specifically Moodle & similar learning tools

4) Reference services to educators at large
=> directory of professionals

Illich - Dreamt of an open educational world
- objects constructed so as to be hackable
e.g.: disassemble-able & modifiable by their users

Dispersed - publicly accessible
- tool shops
- libraries
- laboratories
- gaming rooms

Museums that lent out works of art

Replaced with librarians, custodians, guides

Government investment in business energy etc
- tied to opening up of institution for education

Independent Professional educators
- guide parents & individual learners
- run educational networks

Loony side

Illich favours devastating - health education & welfare budgets

[? - Danger of Unschooling serving a neoliberal / libertarian agenda of de-financing education & welfare
=> cultural revolution & killing fields are 2 examples of deschooling
- protective / cohesive role of school
=> defense from family, labour, religion, exploitation, child soldiers etc]

My Experience / Educational History

Both my parents are teachers - educated to masters level
- strong family promotion of education
- loved talking, reading & writing
- hated school & rote learning

School => boring, frustrating battleground
- classes constantly evaluated & streamed
- 3 hours of stultifying homework per night
- emphasised '3 R's' over everything
- bullying not just endemic but institutional

Positive experiences

SRA Reading Laboratory programme in primary school
=> learn at your own pace, self directed kit
- Personal Project based learning experiences with friends
- individual teachers who promoted creative writing

CTYI

Summer programmes based around active engagement with interesting subjects
- meeting other kids interested in ideas etc

Institute of Education

Excuse to drop out - learned nothing academic
- BUT - social / affective bootcamp
=> providing social learning that had been completely absent / repressed in school
Did predictably badly in leaving cert!

NCI

At 22, did 'mature student' FETAC back to college course
- Social studies elective (no longer available)
- Math, economics, psychology, sociology
- Alive discursive learning environment
- Students of wildly different ages / backgrounds
- math taught through 'micro-steps'

TCD
Single Honours Psychology
- Finally college - and guess what - it's not that hard!
- learned as much through societies - i.e.: Trinity FM as class
- produced numerous radio shows, and Ireland's first vidcast

<u>Post College</u>

Co-written 2 novels, 2 radio series, a TV series etc
Wrote for 2 magazines
Began performing comedy / spoken word
Helped organise Exchange Dublin
Started Creative Writing / Performance programme - Exchange Words
Organised own comedy gigs
Delivered lectures etc

<u>Conclusions</u>

Very little learned in school ended up mattering
- school was compulsive, rote learning at time that agency / autonomy & experiential learning was most important
- on the other hand
=> extracurricular activities
- reading, psychology, radio, comedy, science
- ended up mattering a lot!
- provided outlets for growth & skill acquisition
- because they were *self directed* (just like college learning!)

Everyone wants & needs to learn
- most of us are afraid of 'education'

MIT Open Courseware

2k courses online free
- video & podcast audio
- assignments / solutions, slides, lecture notes

Launched in 2001
- over 70 million users
- including 93% of MIT undergrads
- 82% of students
- 50% of alumni

Provides resources to teachers in developing world, homeschoolers, unskoolers

Harvard - going even further!
- scholarly articles published by faculty must be free online
- part of open science movement

Stanford - Now actually grading open coursework!
- over 25k students taking graded open courses

Conclusions

Agency is the enabler for learning
- continually expanding the range of domain specific self efficacy

Self direction (autonomy) builds agency
- coercion, testing, streaming & criticism diminish
=> results of our education system
=> common assumption of inability - e.g.: I hate math, I'm bad at Irish

Conventional educational institutions
- Emphasises competition
- Isolate learning / shut down communication
- Focus on static, disconnected curriculum
- Teach fear & anxiety through testing
- Teach how to pass exams - not understanding
- Teach conformity through top down organisation
- Teach diminished expectations through streaming
- Model disengagement via under-qualified, underpaid, stressed out, teachers

Education in Ireland

Entirely extrinsic motivation - Points race!

Media & Govt
- collude to create educational purpose as - serving the needs of business, entrepreneurship & modern research based 'knowledge economy'
- one doesn't need to disagree with the aims to see that they are not necessarily congruent with the developmental needs of learners

Reality
- Contemporary economy - sector variety hides job uniformity
=> small number of digital entrepreneurs / researchers
=> larger number of professionals / primarily financial services
=> much larger number of menial service industry roles
=> equally large number of unemployed / unemployable traditional manufacturing cleavage & underclass

Main educational debates in Ireland
- extent & degree of fees (now widely accepted as 'necessary')
- worry over points race / praise for attainment
- how well are courses meeting needs of industry (e.g.: springboard scheme)
General (misplaced) pride in 'world class' secondary & third level education
- some slight worry about church role in primary education

Trendy notion of 'digital natives'
- obscures massive economic & outcome inequalities

- ignore essentially fictive nature of 'multitasking' and cognitive effects of divided attention

Unpaid Internships
- debate again is about - effectiveness / abuse
- not the exploitative - real job removing nature of their very existence

Certification & Points Race
- damages / erases intrinsic motivation

Webs of Education

Ivan Illich's vision of a learning society is compelling & arguably attainable today

Free resources online
- MIT Open Courseware, Kahn Accademy
- Open Learning Initiative
- Harvard & Stanford Equivalents of Open Courseware

Hackspaces / Biolabs

Open Lectures - Knowledge Exchange

Low cost educational institutions
- Saoir Ollscoil Na Heirin
- FAS etc

Libraries

BUT

Right now - the free services are online - and the physical services are not free

Resources are useless without a culture of use
- e.g.: Large inner city libraries lying empty

Open autonomous collective institutions like Exchange Dublin & Seomra
- demonstrate the need for free social spaces not centred around alcohol etc
- & their success in building autonomy and collective action
=> Potentially could be applied to education

Danger of - substituting schooling with technology (ipad) or free service (kahn academy) to off lay costs & responsibilities of teaching

Lack of - physical spaces where adults can non-commercially interact / socialise / learn / create

Lack of - learning environments that cater to alternative learning modalities / learning styles / individuated learning pace
- visual, kinesthetic, tactile etc

LETS

Create a new institution in Dublin
- That's a free, open, educational playground for adults
- With instruments, tools, art supplies, a library of accademic books
- access to online journals
- places to read and discuss your learning

Learning Facilitation - rather than teaching
- not expert teachers - but 'teach what you know'

'Meatspace' skill shares & workshops
- with greymatter infodumps of networks of learning in the city
- i.e: folk who know where and who to look for when learning

Free seminars & lectures - by space users & visiting experts / talented amateurs
e.g.: mechanics, writers, artists, geneticists

Lets make them play-spaces that are fun to be in!
Run by the folks that use them!
Modifiable to suit the needs & creativity of their users!

Distinct from libraries / adult education institutions
- anyone can attend, participate
- learning as a lifelong activity, not only towards certification
- demand & availability driven courses
- up to date vocational & academic library
- no division between 'practical' / 'academic', art / science
- high level learning & talks - ala Knowledge Exchange
- no certification or degree conferring status
- non-competitive, non commercial

Would promote
- social engagement
- personal development
- entrepreneurship
- communities of interest & activism
- creative collaboration
- peer teaching & empowerment

Would connect with
- existing art, education and hack groups
- e.g.: Electronic Rock Ireland Collective (ERIC)
- to facilitate workshops, skill share, equipment share

William Glasser - Quality Schools

'Schooling' teaches valueless material
- teaches material not-relevant to students

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