Paths of Learning:
An Introduction to Educational Alternatives

by Robin Ann Martin
November 2000

<table>
<tr><td>Paths Of Learning
Resource Center</td><td>**Contents:**

Opening Comments
Terminology Confusion
Qualities for Distinguishing Alternatives
Types of Schools
Types of Education
School Choice
Concluding Remarks
For More Information
Notes</td></tr>
</table>

Can teachers and parents develop approaches for interacting with children that are more developmentally sensitive to the unique needs of each child? Can schools provide students with the tools and resources for living more integrated lives with the community and with the planet? According to a growing array of progressive and humanistic alternatives, the answer to both questions is a solid, "Yes!"

This paper offers a heartfelt exploration into educational alternatives that exist today between the cracks of mainstream education and culture which are learner-centered, progressive, and holistic. It is not a conclusive writing on any one type of alternative; rather, it is intended to provide an initial window for seeing the similarities and differences among alternatives while pointing teachers and parents toward other resources for further exploration, making it possible to find (or create) educational alternatives in your own communities that best match your evolving beliefs and core values.

About the Author
Robin coordinates the Paths Of Learning Resource Center, serves as a board member for the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools, and is a graduate student at Iowa State University. She is pursuing a Ph.D. in education with her upcoming research focused on the EnCompass Teacher Development Program.

Words, Words, Words!
Touching on the Terminology Confusion in Education

Confusions in communication and terminology are perhaps the most difficult hurdles for discussing educational alternatives. All too frequently, we use the same words to describe different things, or different words to describe the same thing. For example, a concept as deceivingly straight-forward as "freedom" refers to quite different (and often contradictory) concepts depending on the ideology, or mode of thought, from which one is speaking.[1]

Teachers in alternative education use the same words as other teachers but often mean completely different things. Sometimes they even mean completely different things from each other. When more conventional educators stick to subject matter such as language arts or math as their primary concerns, the ambiguity of words such as freedom, learning, and power can be side-stepped. Indeed, the categories and classifications in traditional performance-based education are much more defined in contrast to the fuzzy categories for learning, subject matter, and teaching methods used within educational alternatives.[2]

Even the term "alternative" is ambiguous; for some people (especially in many U.S. states), it implies schools for "at risk" youth only, rather than being for the education of all children and often for adults as well. So sometimes it is useful to distinguish "philosophical alternatives" from the "at-risk alternatives." These alternatives include educational options for the developmental needs and learning styles of all children. However, "philosophical alternatives" is a mouthful, so I often use "alternatives" for short.

Other words used in place of "alternative" by different authors include non-traditional, non-conventional, or non-standardized. Unfortunately, these words sometimes have negative connotations as well as multiple meanings. Also some alternatives may look traditional, conventional, or even standardized to the untrained eye, until you see inside more closely. Within the field of alternatives, words such as authentic, holistic, and progressive are frequently used as well; however, these words each have different meanings which are more specific or more ambiguous than simply "alternative." Therefore, I'm sticking with "alternatives" for simplicity's sake.

The term "school" may also be misnomer. Many educational alternatives do not call themselves "schools," feeling that this implies a traditional square building with classrooms where students sit in rows of desks and are led by a teacher. However, when I use the word "school" throughout this paper, it implies those *places where people gather intentionally to learn* (with no implications of what, why, or how). Of course, many schools are no longer solitary "places" (like school buildings) but include multiple sites for meeting within the community as well as within nature. The advent of "virtual schools" and "virtual communities" further complicates matters because some schools are now gatherings of minds and hearts without a physical location for bodies to meet.

Thus, the only real thing that most schools still have in common are people and the intentionality for learning. Aside from referring to schools, the word "educational alternatives" in this paper also includes community learning centers, homeschooling

communities, cooperative life-long learning centers, and an assortment of other *learning communities*.[3]

Qualities for Distinguishing Educational Alternatives

> Choosing a school for a child is one of the most important decisions parents make. The school -- its teachers, curriculum, educational philosophy, and values both explicit and implicit -- will affect the child's day-to-day life. It will help shape the child's personality, view of life, behavior, and destiny as an adult. And it will also deeply affect the lives of the parents and the life of the family as a whole.
>
> --Ronald Koetzsch[4]

In 1994, MacMillan Publishing released the *Almanac Of Educaton Choices*, which at that time listed over 6,000 progressive and holistic schools and homeschooling resource centers. (A new version of the Almanac is being published soon by the Alternative Education Resource Organization, www.edrev.org .) Even if parents have only a few alternatives in their local community, in addition to visiting those schools, understanding the underlying differences between alternatives can inform their selection. The schools and learning communities described in this paper feature both commonalities as well as differences.

In terms of commonalities, these alternatives are not hardened institutions with hardened rules or procedures. Avoiding many levels of school bureaucracies, these alternatives are flexible and warm learning communities where people come before procedures, rules, or technology.

Philosophical alternatives are not *ideal* learning communities -- they are as susceptible to conflict, as any other organization. Students disagree with teachers; teachers disagree with parents (and often with each other); parents disagree with school principals. Alternatives are unique, however, in the way in which conflict is approached and resolved, along with the value that is found (and sometimes embraced) within each conflict.

Philosophical alternatives are rooted in philosophies about life and learning that are fundamentally different from mainstream schooling. While these philosophies differ in many specifics, what they have in common is that they tend to **not** be rooted in an overly objective and rational way of knowing that causes conventional schooling to divide learning into isolated components.

Many alternative educators argue instead that who the learners are, what they know, how they know it, and how they act in the world are not separate elements, but reflect the interdependencies between our world and our selves. As author Parker Palmer explains, "The images of self and world that are found at the heart of our knowledge will also be found in the values by which we live our lives." [5] Taking this a step further, Palmer describes the teacher as the mediator between the knower and the known, the "living link in the epistemology chain," teaching a way of being in the world, a mode of relationship.[6] Human development, then, is part and parcel with education, and includes the emotional, ecological, spiritual, physical and intellectual aspects of living.

A second quality that distinguishes these alternatives from traditional schools is their long and unique history within well-rooted philosophical foundations. As educational historian Ron Miller explains:

> Throughout the 200-year history of public schooling, a widely scattered group of critics have pointed out that the education of young human beings should involve much more than simply molding them into future workers or citizens. The Swiss humanitarian Johann Pestalozzi, the American Transcendentalists: Thoreau, Emerson and Alcott, the founders of "progressive" education -- Francis Parker and John Dewey -- and pioneers such as Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner, among others, all insisted that education should be understood as the art of cultivating the moral, emotional, physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions of the developing child.[7]

More recently and in a somewhat different vain, social critics such as John Holt, Paul Goodman, Ivan Illich, and Paulo Freire have examined education from anarchist-leaning perspectives, that is, critiques of the ways that conventional schooling subverts democracy by molding young people's understandings.[8]

A third quality that distinguishes alternatives from traditional education is their diversity. Unlike traditional private and public schools which are remarkably similar across time and space, most alternative schools do not subscribe to the "one model fits all communities" mentality. Each alternative creates and maintains its own methods and approaches to learning and teaching. This is a critical point that is often missed by newcomers (including myself). When initially learning about Montessori, Waldorf, or democratic schools, the overwhelming attitude is: "Oh, yes! Finally, education that pays attention to the unique needs of each child!" Once this excitement wears off, however, you may realize that there are many ways of conceiving and understanding the needs of the whole child in balance with the needs of the community and society at large.

Thus, each alternative approach is founded upon slightly, and sometimes drastically, different beliefs about what it means to live, learn, love, and grow in today's society. (For some examples of philosophically diverse schools, visit the member web sites of schools and organizations in the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools, http://www.ncacs.org/links.htm.)

Unfortunately, by uncritically hailing John Taylor Gatto, A.S. Neill, Rudolf Steiner, Daniel Greenberg, or Maria Montessori, parents as well as educators may create other systems that are as dogmatic and rigid as the system they were leaving. A particular alternative education system may appear on the surface to be "the answer," but at another level, it is still just a system. To create alternatives that are truly nurturing for children and integrated with communities, we must be conscious of the values, philosophies, and beliefs behind the systems and within ourselves. Then, rather than defending one alternative as "the answer," we can open to the idea that there is no "one best system"[9] -- just a diversity of systems that match, or do not match, with the diversity of people in the world. Further, such awareness can also enable us to change our educational systems in more conscious ways that are aligned with how we ourselves are changing. This in turn helps keep us from getting stuck in a stagnated perception of what education "should" look like.

When looking for qualities that distinguish educational alternatives from each other, one could certainly identify the curricula taught within schools. Across educational alternatives, we find that traditional subjects such as reading, writing, and math are not always taught separately but integrated into students' overall learning. [10] Other subjects like environmental education, ecology, or spirituality, not often found in more traditional school curricula, often emerge from the interests of learners and teachers in a more open-ended learning community.[11] Yet, for the most part, subject matters are only indirectly related to the core philosophies and educational approaches used in alternative schools. In the end, what is studied matters far less than how it is learned and how it becomes relevant in students' lives.[12]

The size of most alternative schools varies mostly in the range of 10 to 400 students. This matches with considerable research on small schools (see http://www.ael.org/eric/small.htm) that indicates many advantages of maintaining small schools, regardless of philosophy. In addition, many of these schools maintain a staff:student ratio that is far better than average.

Types of Schools (and *homeschooling* too)

Increasingly, people hear about Waldorf schools and Montessori preschools in the United States, and many people have known for years about Quaker schools as well. Often, though, folks who might find several educational approaches attractive have only learned about a single type of school, remaining unaware of the diversity of choices available.

The descriptions below illustrate eight types of educational alternatives, along with resources and links for more information. The summary for each type of school does not necessarily reflect any one school within that category. With some exceptions (such as Waldorf, Montessori, and Sudbury-model schools), most philosophical alternatives tend toward less rigidity in how each school creates itself from the dynamics of the local community and the values, beliefs, and experiences of current members.

- Democratic and Free Schools
- Folk Education
- Friends (Quaker) Schools
- Homeschooling, unschooling, and deschooling
- Krishnamurti Schools
- Montessori Schools
- Open Schools (and Classrooms)
- Waldorf Schools (or *Steiner Schools* as they are called in Europe)

Democratic and Free Schools

Many educators have heard of Summerhill, the radical "free school" in England, founded by A.S. Neill in 1921.[13] Fewer people know about the many other schools that have developed similar approaches on their own, or modified Neill's premises to fit their own needs and community. From Play Mountain Place in Los Angeles to the Albany Free School to the Children's Village School in Thailand, *free schools* have not withered away but continue to flourish with records of their long-term successes.[14] Their primary purpose is to create a safe environment where children can learn *freely*, that is without the use of force or coercion, drawing on children's curiosity to lead their own learning.

Many *free schools* are structured in ways that often lead them to be *democratic schools* as well, where staff as well as students get an equal vote. Some schools allow votes on all matters, including financial, conflict resolution, staffing, and minor administrative decisions. Other schools divide into committees, or sometimes the director maintains powers to make some administrative decisions. Voting in democratic schools is usually done in weekly all-school meetings. At the Albany Free School, whenever a child or adult feels their rights have been infringed upon by another, they may call an all-school meeting at any time to resolve the conflict immediately. The leader of an all-school meeting is generally elected at each meeting and is usually a student rather than an adult. Rules and procedures agreed upon by the whole community via a democratic vote have a tendency to be honored by community members young and old, with everyone understanding the procedures necessary for overturning a decision.

The role of the children is to learn, with the expectation that they will follow their own interests. In addition, students are expected to serve as responsible community members, following the rules of the community or facing the consequences. The role of teachers and parents varies from school to school. In some schools, teachers offer classes for students who wish to take them; in other schools, teachers are cautious even about teaching until the students request a lesson.

Like Summerhill, the Sudbury Valley School (SVS) believes that parents tend toward the unnecessary use of authority and external compulsion to educate children which Sudbury tries to avoid.[15] Thus the SVS school community is primarily the students and staff; however, other schools modeling themselves after SVS are so small that parents often serve as staff to get the schools started. In contrast, at Play Mountain Place (PMP), the role of the parents has been significant from the get-go in the 1950s because the PMP philosophy considers everyone to be a teacher and so they strive to involve parents in the daily activities of the school. For more information about PMP and other free schools, visit the *Paths of Learning* archives at:
http://www.PathsOfLearning.net/archives/freeschools2000.htm.

Folk Education

Folk education is "learning that happens when individuals and communities come together to celebrate culture and life in order to critically analyze challenging and especially oppressive situations, to build a knowledge base [and] to apply that knowledge to create alternative possibilities for the institutions in which we live and work" (as quoted from the Folk and People's Education Association of America web site at http://www.peopleseducation.org/).

Folk education is a grassroots movement whose history began in Scandinavia in the 1800s. Unlike other alternatives described in this paper, which are mostly for youth and K-12 education, folk education is more concerned with the political empowerment of adults. As we move into the new millennium adults might be more familiar with folk education through experiences with voluntary simplicity, eco-teams, or other informal grassroots movements.

Within academia, this type of learning is sometimes called "*radical adult education*" as it aims to get at the roots of education for social change. In its profile of the original folk high schools, the Informal Education Homepage states:

> Danish Folk High Schools first opened in 1844 (the year the YMCA was founded). The key figure was N.F.S. Grundtvig who planned a network of self-governing residential institutions that . . . would provide a place 'where the peasant and the citizen can obtain knowledge and guidance for use and pleasure not so much in regard to his livelihood but in regard to his situation as . . . a citizen' (quoted in Moller and Watson 1944: 27).[17]

In 1925, over 300,000 young Danes attended folk schools, which were free of government control, a place having nothing to do with grades, tests, or even diplomas, but having everything to do with emotionally-charged issues directly relevant to the lives of the participants. The American social activist Myles Horton, who visited these Danish folk schools in 1931, found that the most successful folk schools dealt as much with feelings and will as with memory and logic.[18]

Also called *people's education*, this movement aims to provide education that is of, for, and by the people. Its power is such that governments or companies in political power tend not to like it, as it stirs people to think and act in ways that disturb the status quo. Educational activist Paulo Freire was exiled from Brazil from 1964 to 1979 for teaching his fellow citizens to read in ways that also made them more aware of their own disenfranchisement.[19]

Today the movement of folk education in the United States is facilitated by the Folk and People's Education Association of America (http://www.peopleseducation.org/). Through its newsletter and quarterly journal as well as its annual conference, the FPEAA supports radical adult education in many forms from simplicity circles to participatory action research to other grassroots groups in cultural work, environmental work, economic work, and community leadership.[20]

It is my hope that adults experiencing various forms of folk education can begin to see the meaningful connections between being and action, learning and doing, and other

less traditional ways of thinking about education. As people understand these connections through their own experiences, the ground is laid for philosophical shifts within education across all ages.

Friends (Quaker) Schools

Quakers (members of the Religious Society of Friends) have contributed to social and educational reform in American culture since the seventeenth century. Friends schools are distinct from many other religious alternatives in the extent of their person-centered practices. Known for their academic rigor, Friends schools also pride themselves on the development of a caring community within and beyond the walls of the school.

Examining the missions of schools in the Friends Council on Education (http://mathforum.com/fce/), several themes stand out. The goals tend not to distinguish the end of education from the process of learning. Both the purpose and process of education involves treating each person with dignity and respect, and understanding that different people learn in different ways. They sometimes describe the goal of self-direction as helping students to "uncover their own leadings." Personal and individual responsibility within the community are essential for success. In addition, life-long learning, social justice, and challenging human oppression are often supplementary goals of the Friends schools. At the global level, Quakers like to think of it as "creating the world that ought to be." Many Friends schools emphasize "simplicity, honesty, the peaceful resolution of conflict, the dignity of physical labor, mutual trust and respect, and care for each other and the earth" (from The Meeting School web site, http://www.mv.com/ipusers/tms/).

Quaker schools tend to be organized in somewhat traditional ways, within classrooms where teachers tend to use traditional methods to facilitate discussions around common academic subjects. They often use grades and grade levels for student advancement as well. Their use of meetings, silence, queries, and conflict resolution techniques are the primary approaches by which they enliven their educational goals and philosophies. These processes give a more heartfelt flavor to decision-making within the schools. For conflict resolution, they engage in "clearness committees." Author Parker Palmer describes these committees as "a communal approach to discernment" that is designed to protect "individual identity and integrity while drawing on the wisdom of other people".[16] In addition, you can find a useful listing of Peace and Conflict Resolution Education Bibliography for different age groups posted in the FCE web site.

The student's role in Quaker schools is to serve as responsible learner and community member. Among other characteristics, the teacher's role is "To make daily space for the inward journey of every student." For a brief list of 16 characteristics of teachers identified by the FCE, visit FCE web site, and click on "Best Practices." Parents are not mentioned much in the Quakers' online educational literature and a number of Quaker schools in the U.S. are residential which limits the involvement of parents in many ways. Nonetheless, Amy Cooke, director of John Woolman School, describes parents as "partners and allies" with the h chool.

Homeschooling, unschooling, and deschooling

As perhaps the largest alternative school movement in the 1990s, from 1994 to 1996, the numbers of homeschoolers may have grown from an estimated 0.8 to 1.4% of the K-12 student population in the United States. While these figures are estimates, it is quite certain that between 345,000 to 636,000 children ages 6 to 17 participated in home education during those years.[21]

The goals of homeschooling vary as widely as the goals and purposes of schools around the world. Like other educational alternatives, homeschooling expands well beyond traditional modes of teaching and learning as well. Of particular interest for parents thinking outside the mainstream approaches are the movements of "unschooling" and "de-schooling" within home education. (It should also be noted that homeschooling approaches also exist in affiliation with Montessori, Waldorf, and many other educational philosophies.)

Unschooling is a form of homeschooling that was popularized by educator and author John Holt in the 1970s. Today, the unschooling philosophy is perhaps best expressed in popular books by Grace Llewellyn and Linda Dobson. [22] In 1997, Llewellyn's *Teenage Liberation Handbook: How to Quit School & Get a Real Life and Education* was published as a practical guide for teenagers (and parents) who were fed up with traditional learning where students remained hidden inside classrooms and text books. Her purpose was to illustrate the means and resources for learning through the community and personal experiences (apprenticeships, etc.). She showed how homeschooling could be a fulfilling use of time while also providing the necessary social interactions far and beyond what is available in most traditional schools.

A complementary trend in homeschooling, called *deschooling*, began with the publication of Ivan Illich's famous book, *Deschooling Society* (1970). A recent book on the topic edited by Matt Hern entitled *Deschooling Our Lives* (1997) provides practical examples "about people, individuals, families, and communities taking control of the direction and shape of their lives . . . and homelearning as a fundamentally cooperative social project". [23] In the book's foreword, Ivan Illich writes:

> If people are seriously to think about deschooling lives, and not just escape from the corrosive effects of compulsory schooling, they could do no better than to develop the habit of setting a mental question mark beside all discourse on young people's "educational needs" or "learning needs," or about their need for a "preparation for life." I would like them to reflect on the historicity of these very ideas. Such reflection would take the new crop of deschoolers a step further from where the younger and somewhat naïve Ivan was situated, back when talk of "deschooling" was born.[24]

Often when liberal or progressive-thinking parents hear about such homeschooling trends the gut reaction is that it's a good idea -- in theory. Yet, the fears of "what if?" often lead parents to use less learner-centered methods of educating their own children. For more evidence and "fear-relieving" facts and stories about how unschooling really works, Growing Without Schooling: Q & A is a good place to start, along with other works by John Holt. To locate national and local networks of unschoolers, you can also

try www.unschooling.org (The Family Unschoolers Network), as well as www.unschooling.com (sponsored by Home Education Magazine). In addition, Karl Bunday's School is Dead; Learn in Freedom web site provides evidence on how students can and do learn on their own with great success and with greater freedoms than ever. Bunday also shows that despite this nontraditional approach, homeschoolers are admitted into many highly selective colleges.

Krishnamurti Schools

How do we move beyond our own conditioning? How do we create schools for the young that do not instill in them our own fears and prejudices? According to Jiddu Krishnamurti, we must create an education that is not a "system" but is built around the attitudes and qualities of the teacher and child and how they relate to one another.

What exactly constitutes a Krishnamurti School? What are the intentions and aims of these schools? These questions, along with important implications about the roles of teachers, were addressed by Krishnamurti in 1984 in a statement made at a school in Ojai, California, based on his teachings:

> It is becoming more and more important in a world that is destructive and degenerating that there should be a place, an oasis, where one can learn a way of living that is whole, sane and intelligent. Education in the modern world has been concerned with the cultivation not of intelligence, but of intellect, of memory and its skills. In this process little occurs beyond passing information from the teacher to the taught, the leader to the follower, bringing about a superficial and mechanical way of life. In this there is little human relationship.
>
> Surely a school is a place where one learns about the totality, the wholeness of life. Academic excellence is absolutely necessary, but a school includes much more than that. It is a place where both the teacher and the taught explore not only the outer world, the world of knowledge, but also their own thinking, their own behaviour. From this they begin to discover their own conditioning and how it distorts their thinking. This conditioning is the self to which such tremendous and cruel importance is given. Freedom from conditioning and its misery begins with this awareness. It is only in such freedom that true learning can take place. In this school it is the responsibility of the teacher to sustain with the student a careful exploration into the implications of conditioning and thus end it.
>
> A school is a place where one learns the importance of knowledge and its limitations. It is a place where one learns to observe the world not from any particular point of view or conclusion. One learns to look at the whole of man's endeavour, his search for beauty, his search for truth and for a way of living without conflict. Conflict is the very essence of violence. So far education has not been concerned with this, but in this school our intent is to understand actuality and its action without any preconceived ideals, theories ot beliefs which bring about a contradictory attitude toward existence.[25]

Structurally each Krishnamurti school is each quite unique as each endeavors to evolve from a "methodless" or "pathless" approach.[26] Some have evolved with an academic focus, others with a spiritual emphasis, and others with a more psychological foundation for student development. More information about specific schools, foundations, or educational centers inspired by Krishnamurti can be found on the Krishnamurti Information Network's Community web pages:
http://www.kinfonet.org/Community/.

Montessori Schools

These schools are in principle based on methodologies developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, the first woman to become a medical doctor in Italy and one of the most respected pioneers in education as well. As Ron Miller explains, "Montessori's central concern was the natural development of the child, the healthy formation of the physical, mental, and spiritual qualities that are latent in the human being and which unfold, she believed, according to a purposeful, even divine, life force (for which she used the word *horme*) . . . Given the proper nurturing environment, *horme* impels the child to unfold his or her potential personality, to expand his powers, assert his independence, and create an adult identity."[27]

Montessori's own work focused around research through direct observations of young children. Thus, the strength of the Montessori method is working with the developmental needs of young children. As of 1997, there were over 3,000 Montessori schools in the United States. These are primarily private schools, but some are public; as school choice expands, more and more Montessori charter schools will likely appear as well.

The American Montessori Society states that "The aim of Montessori education is to foster competent, responsible, adaptive citizens who are lifelong learners and problem solvers".[28]

The student's role in a Montessori school is to engage in experiences and activities designed to foster physical, intellectual, creative and social independence. The teacher's role is to develop curricula and learning environments that are age-appropriate and aligned with the Montessori philosophy and methodology. Families are consider partners with the schools, an integral part of each child's total development.

For more details on the philosophies and structures of Montessori schools, consult any of these large and growing organizations:

- International Montessori Society, http://www.wdn.com/trust/ims/
- American Montessori Society, http://www.amshq.org/
- North American Montessori Teachers' Association, http://www.montessori-namta.org/

Open Schools (and Classrooms)

The Open Classroom: A Practical Guide to a New Way of Teaching by author and New York City teacher Herb Kohl defined a radical alternative that came to be used even in public schools in the 1970s. This book was a direct response to working in an authoritative school environment that was more about controlling students than teaching them. Kohl describes the struggles, problems, failures, and successes of teachers trying to create non-authoritarian classrooms amidst the "battles with self and system" that teachers encounter in public schools.[29]

In theory, the open classrooms were designed based on student participation rather than compulsion; they were intended to validate and honor students' sincere desires to learn. In practice, the patience needed to make such a school or classroom work effectively often exceeded what most school districts were willing to endure. Many teachers now look back on open classrooms as merely another fad of the seventies. However, today many of the over 1,000 members of Coalition of Essential Schools continue to focus on such progressive ideals and the use of non-authoritarian practices originally exemplified by open classrooms. Essential School principles emphasize the "values of unanxious expectation (''I won't threaten you but I expect much of you''), of trust (until abused) and of decency (the values of fairness, generosity and tolerance)" (from http://www.essentialschools.org/aboutus/phil/10cps.html).

Several *open schools* now have long and well-documented track records, including the Mankato Wilson Campus School, Mountain Open School (now the Jefferson County Open School), and St. Paul Open School. [30] In describing the early days of one school, educational researcher Robert Skenes writes:

> The St. Paul Open School pioneered student-centered, community-based learning in the public school arena. With no bells, no grade levels, no course grades or credits, the Open School demonstrated that students could successfully learn through making choices and pursuing their interests with the help of supportive, facilitative adults both within the community of the school and in the broader community beyond the school's walls. At the time of this "snapshot," there were over 1,000 students on the waiting list to get into the school".[31]

One of the best resources documenting the successful practices of open classrooms, open schools, and related humanistic endeavors in public education is Dorothy Fadiman's video "Why Do These Kids Love School?" (1990).[32]

Waldorf Schools (or *Steiner Schools* as they are called in Europe).

Finally, we come to the growing phenomenon of the spiritually-based Waldorf education. Waldorf schools are based on the " anthroposophical " (human wisdom) teachings of Rudolf Steiner in the early 20th century. This approach aims to educate children to "become free, responsible, and active human beings, able to create a just and peaceful society". [33] Waldorf educators consider themselves to be "child-centered" because one of their hallmarks is focusing on the needs of the whole child. Paradoxically, however, in an important sense they are teacher-centered as they are clearly led by teachers. Waldorf teachers aim to help children in learning the life rhythms for creating an inner balance which helps prepare them for creating lives of outward balance.

Structurally, Waldorf schools are similar in some ways to Montessori schools. Both tend to be private schools, with some trials as public charters as well. Both are mostly small schools for younger students, with a focus on the developmental needs of students. However, the core philosophies are quite different. Maria Montessori did significant research into natural learning and the unfolding needs of the whole child. In

contrast, although Rudolf Steiner founded the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1919, overall he was more involved with the development of his own spiritual philosophy of human wisdom than with researching education or children. Nonetheless, his approach has a number of holistic elements that appeal to many parents as well as teachers. Steiner schools focus on integrating the inner rhythms of nature and child through music, art, and dance.

Also, it is worth noting that both Montessori and Waldorf schools have their own special teacher credentialling programs. Further, both types of education have rarely been studied by outside educators or researchers who are not already committed to the school philosophies and structures.[34]

For a more complete summary and discussion of these and other types of alternatives, I recommend Ronald Koetzsch's book, *The Parents' Guide to Alternatives in Education* (1997, Shambhala Press). In addition, the Informal Education Homepage (www.infed.org/) is an excellent source for historic descriptions of core educational philosophers and activists who are associated with these alternatives, including Paulo Freire, Carl Rogers, Maria Montessori, John Dewey, and many others.

Types of Education:
A Map for Understanding the Territories of Alternatives

As many schools and learning communities are not classifiable as "Waldorf" or "open" schools, understanding the core philosophical differences amongst these alternatives can be helpful. There are many ways to categorize and contemplate these alternatives: holistic education, humanistic education, libertarian education, emancipatory or popular education, constructivist education, and the list goes on. Recently, I have reviewed a number of frameworks that attempt to classify then many alternatives into a single framework. Below is one of several underlying frameworks that I find most useful for thinking about education that goes beyond (and yet includes) the traditional academic and achievement-focused schools.

Examining education from a perspective of wholes within wholes,[35] one type of education does not have to foreclose another. Building on the work of John P. Miller,[36] educational historian Ron Miller identifies four distinct orientations of education that have emerged in the past century: transmission, transaction, transformation, and self-direction.[37]

The "**transmission**" orientation asserts that the world is made of individual pieces, and thus curriculum can be divided into separate units. Education is the process of teachers transmitting knowledge, beliefs, values that are accepted by society. Students are the recipients of information, and learning is the process of memorizing information or acquiring skills. This orientation is especially associated with the "back to basics" movement as well as with E.D. Hirsch's popular books on cultural literacy. Ron Miller explains the benefits and dangers of this orientation of education:

"Families or communities with strongly held religious or cultural beliefs who want to ensure that their children adopt these beliefs also tend to favor transmission approaches. Indeed, any educator or parent may find certain situations in which the transmission of specific knowledge is an appropriate strategy, and some children do appear to learn better from direct, carefully planned instruction. But most schooling in the modern age is heavily influenced by this understanding of education, to the point where it has become authoritarian and rigid. Today, government officials, along with leaders of corporations, foundations, universities, and other institutions, determine what all students "need" to know, and this becomes educational policy, expressed in standards, state-mandated textbooks, high stakes testing, and relentless control over teaching and learning."[38]

The "**transaction**" orientation asserts that the world is made of ever-changing pieces, "an ongoing stream where everything is in a state of flux" [39]. Education is the process of experimental problem solving, in which teachers help students learn the scientific method through application. Whereas the teachers were seen as the authority in the transmission approach, in this approach they are guides who encourage students in dialoguing, questioning, and engaging in thoughtful reflection. Students are viewed as inquisitive critical thinkers and problem-solvers. This pragmatic orientation is especially associated with John Dewey and the progressive education movement. Many philosophical alternatives fall within this orientation. This orientation also encompasses some of the progressive reforms and school change movements in mainstream education as well.

The "**transformation**" orientation asserts that the world is not made of pieces at all, but of interactive and interdependent wholes within wholes. It further asserts that we are all evolving and that there is a cosmic source to our existence (which David Bohm calls the *implicate order*; others call it God or the Tao). Both John Miller and Ron Miller describe this orientation as supporting "holistic education." As Ron Miller writes in his most recent book, *Caring for New Life: Essays on Holistic Education*:

"Holism cannot be pinned down precisely, because by its very nature it embraces paradox, mystery, and outright contradiction. . . . Meaning emerges in context, in experience; holistic education is therefore essentially a responsiveness to the wholeness of experience as we live it in particular times and places".[40]

Scott Forbes has completed a detailed analysis of the sociological and philosophical precedents of holistic education (Oxford University, 1999) [41]. Forbes analyzed six primary authors whose writings form the underlying principles that have inspired most holistic schools and approaches to teaching: Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Jung, Maslow, and Rogers. These authors all indicated that students can learn but they are not taught per se. Instead, a teacher facilitates the needed learning by providing students with opportunities for developing wisdom and "real knowledge." Students themselves have the agency and inherent motivation for learning. In addition to the authors named above, others whom both Millers identify within this orientation include Krishnamurti, Maria Montessori, Rudolf Steiner, and Joseph Chilton Pearce, as well as philosophers such as Emerson and Whitehead.

A fourth orientation identified by Ron Miller is that of **self-direction**. This orientation assumes a basic trust in human nature and a world view that is perhaps most like the transactional orientation. (John Miller includes such approaches within the transaction orientation.) Ron Miller qualitatively differentiates self-direction from the transactional perspective because unlike the others, it is concerned with learning as such, and often repudiates education as a distinct profession. In fact, advocates of self-direction are noted for

doing away with most structures of schooling such as grades, lesson plans, age groupings, and teaching strategies. Teachers serve as neither guides nor facilitators (unless requested by youth); teachers are primarily resource persons. Students are responsible for both initiating and for directing their own education. Unlike the holistic or transformative orientation there is no emphasis on the spiritual development of the child or teacher. Authors and educators most associated with self-direction are John Holt and A.S. Neill. The alternatives most associated with this orientation include free schools as well as unschooling.

Within each of these orientations, there exists various domains or topics of focus such as ecology, social justice, academic learning, spiritual development, and so on. While these topics exist within each orientation, they are often given greater or lesser focus by the orientation, or are approached in different ways. Any type of alternative school, such as those listed above, may use one or more curricular foci. The transaction (or progressive) oriented schools are most likely to focus on content as an integral and significant part of how the school is structured. In contrast, the transformation (or holistic) schools may well have rigorous academics within the school, but the academics are not necessarily the core of how the school day or school year are structured. For self-direction, whether or not academics are studied depends on the self-assessed needs of the learner. Of course, no clear boundaries exist between these orientations; many schools as well as families are in the process of deciding for themselves an orientation that best matches their beliefs about freedom, structure, and learning. Educational orientation is an on-going dialogue that emerges as adults and students observe and reflect on their own experiences.

In addition, there are a number of trends in education-at-large that directly relate to approaches for learning and teaching which are used in both traditional and alternative settings. These trends relate most closely to the transactional and transformational orientations. Some of the core trends are described briefly below with links to related developmental topics from various web sites.

- **Character education** -- attention to qualities of the students' being and acting in society that often focus on more intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects of student development. (Note: many works in this field also fall firmly into the transmission orientation as well, as can bee seen by browsing the books in Character Education Resources.)

- **Cooperative learning** -- working with students in groups so that the students learn more about working together rather than just independently.

- **Developmental education** -- focus on a child's growth across life stages, may include physical, intellectual, psychological, and/or spiritual development.

- **Experiential learning** -- the heart of many alternative philosophies of education, this in its simplest form means merely *learning by doing*. It can be incorporated into any philosophical approach or hodgepodge of educational practices.

- **Learning styles** -- refers to how each student often shows preferences for using various modes of learning such as learning best by reading, by hearing, or by moving their bodies. There are many ways to "cut the pie" for describing different learning styles.

- **Multiple intelligences and emotional intelligence** -- two specific, well-articulated, and often-referenced bodies of educational research that involve the writings of theorists Howard Gardner, Daniel Goleman, and many others who have now begun applied research in these developmental fields.

- **Natural learning rhythms** -- a more holistic approach to developmental education articulated especially well by Maria Montessori and more recently by EnCompass , through a series of programs for parents and educators.

- **Whole language** -- a well-documented approach for helping students learn to read that involves learning in context (like we learn to talk), and not solely through techniques such as phonics, grammar, or written symbols alone.

A Word About School Choice Systems

A majority of the states in the U.S.A. have legislated "charter schools" in the past decade, a system of school choice that ideally will allow more kinds of schools to be created with a less rigid structure of accountability, for encouraging greater school autonomy. [42] In addition, vouchers continue to be a hot topic in political debates on educational reform. As parents exercise their choices within public as well as private settings, they are often confused about what all these choices really represent. People often ask me about charter schools as if they were a type of school. In fact, charter schools represent many types of schools. The charter status of a school relates only to how public education is governed at the macro level of politics, and not how the school approaches education. For example, some charter schools are Waldorf, others are back-to-basics, and many are specialty schools (such as schools focused on foreign languages, arts, or music).

Charter schools and vouchers are two types of "school choice" programs. (See the Center for Education Reform web site, http://www.edreform.com/ , as a primary source promoting both charters as well as vouchers.) While many alternative educators support school choice, there are nonetheless many dangers and pitfalls associated with this reform movement. For starters, "choice" does not necessarily lead to the development of what I would call "real" choice, that is schools which are significantly different in their fundamental philosophies of education.

Like enrolling in private schools, school choice programs often provide a smaller class size and more individualized methods of instruction, which can certainly benefit students. Still, it remains to be seen whether or not the school choice movement will have significant impact on the awareness of families for choosing more philosophically diverse schools.

For parents who take time to compare their choices, the tendency thus far is toward choosing more back-to-basics types of schools or specialty schools, many of which are just as traditional in their approaches to learning as the public schools. After analyzing a 1985 survey of 575 parents with students in 14 magnet schools in a county on the East coast, Jeffrey Henig concluded:

> "While parents are interested in special educational programs, their dominant concern seems to be whether the school does a good job in fulfilling the traditional functions that we associate with education: teaching basic skills and problem-solving in a safe and orderly environment. This desire for a generic kind of "good school," shared for the most part across ethnic groups, challenges those who favor a managed choice approach to integration."[43]

The factors that parents consider in choosing a school depends partly on the type of school choice program and the kinds of parents who are using it. For example, for selecting private schools, parents often look at the other kinds of families attending that school (their social status or religious affiliations). In other studies, it is found that parents consider location as a primary factor of selection. As a contrast, in Milwaukee's early targeted voucher program (targeted to low-income families) parents stated that their choices were based on such matters as educational quality, teaching approach and style, discipline in a choosen school, and atmosphere.[44] However, there is still limited research on the deciding factors in how parents choose schools, or how those selection criteria impact the students' success in schools.

Most "school choice" rhetoric focuses on several unvalidated assumptions about systems for school choice. First, school choice advocates assume that opportunities for choice will mean more options, which has not yet been validated by research. Second, many advocates as well as parents continue to assume that there is "one best system" and that the guiding factor of choice would and should be academic excellence based on test scores and student performance.[45]. Third, choice advocates assume that school choices will level the playing field for disadvantaged students (from lower income families or traditionally disenfranchised populations), when in fact evidence shows that whether this is true depends a great deal on the details of how the choice program is designed and implemented.[46] In reality, many advocates for school choice programs are entrepreneurs and corporate leaders who have something to gain by creating a competitive market system for our schools that has the appearance of being more "democratic."

On the flip side of the coin, a choice system such as the one now in place in Milwaukee can be a great supporter of truly alternative schools. Many philosophical alternatives do not cater to upper-class families and so financially they often struggle to survive. Vouchers as well as charters are two means by which they can more easily serve students from a range of social classes, nationalities, and ethnic backgrounds. For example, in Maine if students live in small towns where there is not public school they are given vouchers to choose whatever private school they wish in their area. When I visited Liberty School in Blue Hill, Maine, I found it thriving with over 100 students, a well-paid staff and well-designed facilities. In

contrast, schools of similar philosophies that I had visited in other states often struggle to attract even a dozen or more students. Plus, they often face the added problem of attracting a majority of students who come to their school only as a last resort (having practically dropped out of other schools) rather than those who would be attracted to the school because of its philosophical beliefs.

When weighing finances with philosophies, if students aren't failing in the traditional schools, most parents believe the public schools are good enough and offer their children socializing experiences that they can't get in schools that are too small. Thus, alternatives find themselves in a bind and are often willing to take the risk of a "few strings attached" in order to get the added financial benefits of public school choice programs.

Concluding Remarks

I began this paper by describing the problems with word usage in educational alternatives and then presented qualities for understanding the differences among and between educational alternatives. Next, I summarized the various types of alternative schools that many people hear about in passing or that they want to learn more about but aren't sure where to begin. From these specific schools I stepped back to show more clearly the philosophical landscape into which such alternatives can be located by describing types of education. Finally, I wrapped up by highlighting some of the more recent political issues involved with school choice which may (or may not) impact the growth of the type of alternatives discussed in his paper.

It is hoped this paper has provided a framework for parents and teachers to better understand approaches to education within your own schools and communities. If such alternatives do not exist where you live then this knowledge can support you in promoting or standing behind school change and school choice efforts as they arise.

Rather than having "mainstream" education which reaches perhaps 80% of the population at arguably shallow levels of knowledge acquisition, I would like see the expansion of "real choices" in education. For this to happen, both parents and teachers must become educated to understand that the purpose and means for educating is integral with what is learned. Rather than marginalizing alternative education, we may instead consider all schools and learning environments to be *educational alternatives*. Then, the schools that you choose for yourselves or for your children can be based on a deeper level of reflection about what you think it means to be human and to live and to grow in a self-sustaining and nurturing community.

For More Information . . .

We invite you to subscribe to *Paths of Learning* magazine (see the information available at: http://www.great-ideas.org/paths.htm). Our magazine offers ongoing insights from educators, students, parents, and others who have been actively involved with educational alternatives for many years, across many diverse backgrounds, and from around the world. You can also request a free sample issue.

We also invite you to wander around the Paths of Learning Resource Center to learn how this free online tool can assist in your educational explorations. You can now search over 500 indexed books, magazines, and journal articles related to topics discussed in this paper as well as other dimensions of educational alternatives.

In addition, below are a few other online articles and summary pages that we have posted in the Paths of Learning Archives that may be of use to you. Good luck in your explorations!

PoL Archives: Feature Articles

- Educational Accountability: What Can We Learn From History? by Robin Martin
- Holistic Education: An Introduction by Ron Miller
- Krishnamurti's Insights Into Education by Scott Forbes
- School Choices: Beyond Only Academic Differences (coming in Dec. 2000)
- Teacher Development and Action Research (coming in June 2001)

PoL Archives: Action Guides and Resource Summaries

- Comparing Schools: Discovering Differences
- Early Childhood Education
- Educational Research
- Free Schools and Humanistic Education
- Homeschooling With Charter Schools
- Krishnamurti Education: Philosophy and Schools
- Standardized Testing and Test Refusing
- Summary Reports Especially for Parents, Teachers, Administrators, and Researchers
- Teaching Tolerance
- Unschooling
- Waldorf Education: Learning Rhythms

NOTES

---

1. Educational philosophy professor David Owen, of Iowa State University, has begun to compile the lectures of Richard McKeon who uses freedom as a primary example in distinguishing four "modes of thought." These modes of thought are roughly parallel to behavioralism, humanistic education, progressive education, and Platonic approaches to education. This framework may be of special use to researchers of educational alternatives.

2. Social psychologist Basil Bernstein distinguishes performance-based pedagogy from competency-based pedagogy, with the latter showing qualities similar to many less formal learning environments as well as educational alternatives. See: Basil Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*. London: Taylor & Francis, 1996.

3. "Learning communities" is a term increasingly used across disciplines in education to reference a number of different trends. When I use it, I am referring especially to "cooperative community life-long learning centers." This phenomenon is described by the Coalition for Self-Learning in its new book, *Creating Learning Communities*, edited by Ron Miller, Foundation for Educational Renewal, 2000. In brief, the term "learning communities" implies a variety of democratic and person-centered approaches to education which are ecological and life-centered rather than driven by economic forces.

4. Ronald Koetzsch, *The Parents Guide to Alternatives in Education*. Boston: Shambhala Press, 1997, page x.

5. Parker Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983, p. 21.

6. *Ibid*, Palmer, p. 29.

7. This quote is from "Introduction to Holistic Education" by Ron Miller, a brief online article at: http://www.PathsOfLearning.net/archives/holistic-educ-intro.htm. For more extensive insights into the history of educational alternatives, and holistic alternatives in particular, see Miller's book, *What Are Schools For? Holistic Education in American Culture*, Third Edition. Brandon, VT: Holistic Education Press, 1997.

8. For a brief summary of the educational contributions of John Holt, Paul Goodman, Ivan Illich, and Paulo Freire, see *"Pioneers in Community-Based Education"*, chapter from *Creating Learning Communities*. Brandon, VT: Foundation for Educational Renewal, 2000, pp. 22-24.

9. Increasingly in educational literature, there is much research around "best practices." This trend sometimes impacts the thinking within educational alternatives as well. When reading or interpreting reports about different or unique approaches to learning, it is important to be cautious about whether the authors are framing it as if this would be most suited for *all* teachers, *all* students, or even all students of a given learning style.

10. Integrated curriculum was popularized as a formal concept in education by John Dewey over a century ago; detailed reference to its successful application in an elementary-age school can be found in Mayhew & Edwards' 1936 book, *The Dewey School: The Laboratory School of the University of Chicago*. More recently, authors and educators in both mainstream and alternative education have written much on this topic. Particularly noteworthy is Edward Clark Jr's *Designing and Implementing an Integrated Curriculum: A Student-Centered Approach*. Brandon, VT: Psychology Press/Holistic Education Press,

1997. For further resources, please select "Integrated Curriculum" from the Learning Options in the Thematic Searches of the Paths of Learning Resource Center.

11. For insightful and scholarly discussions on the integration of egological, spiritual, and social topics in schools and classrooms, read the quarterly journal *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice* (published by Psychology Press/Holistic Education Press, http://www.great-ideas.org/). For examples of panoramic course offerings in a unique Seattle alternative, see: http://www.pscs.org/information/tutorial/offerings.html.

12. The case for relevancy in learning is often a source of discussion in traditional education, and individual teachers who are good at their craft often do quite well in helping students understand the relevancy of academic subjects. However, when examining the actual practices of schools, the structures and politics built into the mainstream system appear to reinforce the standardization of curricula. For more information about trends against standardization, visit: PoL Archives : Standardized Tests and Alternative Forms of Evaluation , http://www.PathsOfLearning.net/archives/test2001.html . Especially noteworthy for compiling concrete research are the works of author and activist Alfie Kohn, www.alfiekohn.org/.

Types of Schools

13. Summerhill became well-known in the 1960s with the popularized publication of *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing* by A.S. Neill (with Foreword by Erich Fromm). The book was edited and updated by David Albert and released again in 1995 as *Summerhill: A New View of Childhood* (St Martin's Press). In addition, a new book authored by Michael Appleton was released in 2000 offering another perspective on the school entitled *A Free Range Childhood: Summerhill and the Principle of Self-Regulation* (Foundation for Educational Renewal).

14. Play Mountain Place was founded by Phyliss Fleishmann in the early 1950s; a full length article by Erika Schickel about the school's history can be found in *Paths of Learning*, Issue #4 (April 2000). The Albany Free School was founded in 1969 by Mary Leue, and articles about it are in *Paths of Learning*, Issue #1; in addition, the current director Chris Mercogliano has written a full length book entitled *Making It Up As We Go ALong: The Story of the Albany Free School* (Heinneman Press, 1997). The Children's Village School in rural Thailand was founded in 1979, by Rajani and Pibhop Dhongchai, and is based on Buddhist principles along side the philosophies of Summerhill; the founders have published a book in English entitled *Real Life at Moo Baan Dek* about the school (Bangkok, Thailand: Foundation for Children, 1997). For formal research documenting the successes of a democratic school across two decades, see *Legacy of Trust* (Sudbury Valley Press, 1992) about students after they left the Sudbury Valley School.

15. Sudbury Valley School was founded in 1968, and currently promotes model-schools around the country by offering "how-to" kits on creating other democratic schools in this style. The Sudbury Valley Press offers numerous books, including *Free at Last* (1987) by founder Daniel Greenberg which provides a portrait of the school.

16. Parker Palmer's article entitled *"The Clearness Committee"* can be found in the "Related Resources" section of the Center for Teacher Formation, http://www.teacherformation.org/html/rr/index.cfm

17. Quoted from "*Folk High Schools: a survey of their development and listing of key texts,*" online article, Informal Education Homepage, http://www.infed.org/schooling/b-folk.htm.

18. Frank Adams, *Unearthing Seeds of Fire*. Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, 1975, pp. 20-21. Myles Horton was perhaps the first well-known American educational radical with his founding of what is now called the Highlander Research and Education Center, www.hrec.org.

19. Paulo Freire, 1921-1997, is an oft quoted author of critical pedagogy, perhaps best know for his publication of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970, 26th printing 1987, Continuum Publishing Corp.). For more references, visit *Infed*'s profile of Freire and his works: www.infed.org/thinkers/et-freir.htm.

20. In addition to the FPEAA web site, other meta-resources for learning about movements connected directly or indirectly with folk education include: The Simple Living Network http://www.simpleliving.net/, *Creating Learning Communities* with its outstanding resource section of links to several types of educational alternatives, including folk education, http://www.creatinglearningcommunities.org/

21. These homeschooling statistics are from a report entitled "Issues Related to Estimating the Home-Schooled Population in the United States with National Household Survey Data" compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics. This 110-page technical report details why homeschooling statistics and trends are difficult to estimate. These statistics reported from 1994 to 1996, which indicated an almost doubling in the number of homeschoolers ages 6 to 17, may contain several misleading sources of data collection errors. This report can be accessed online at: http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2000311

22. For summaries and bibliographic references to books by Grace Llewellyn and Linda Dobson, as well as other unschooling classics and homeschooling references, please click on "unschooling" as the learning options thematic search in the Paths of Learning Resource Center, http://www.PathsOfLearning.net/themes.cfm. In addition, a summary article by Linda Dobson about unschooling, along with an online action guide and an interview with Grace Llewellyn are in Issue #2 of *Paths of Learning* (October 1999).

23. Matt Hern (editor), *Deschooling Our Lives.* Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers, 1996, p. 3.

24. *Ibid*, Hern, pp. ix-x.

25. For the rest of this quotation by Krishnamurti about education and the role of schools, see: http://www.kinfonet.org/Community/schools/about_schools.htm.

26. Author James Peterson described Krishnamurti schools as having a "methodless method" for education in *Paths of Learning*, Issue #5 (July 2000). In a similar vein, within Krishnamurti's own teachings, he often talked about truth as a "pathless land." These extensive teachings were summarized by Krishnamurti in October 1980, a speech which is posted in its entirety at http://www.ratical.org/many_worlds/K/K1.html#coreTeach.

27. Ron Miller, *What Are Schools For? Holistic Education in American Culture* (Third Edition). Brandon, VT: Holistic Education Press, 1997, p. 160.

28. American Montessori Society, *POSITION STATEMENT KEY CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES*, http://www.AmericanMontessoriSociety.org/positions/index.html.

29. Herbert Kohl, *The Open Classroom: A Practical Guide to a New Way of Teaching*. New York: Random House, 1969, p. 15. For a more recent interview with Kohl and summary of his many writings, please refer to *Paths of Learning*, Issue #5 (July 2000).

30. Don Glines, *Creating Educational Futures: Continuous Mankato Wilson Alternatives* describes 69 specific and radical changes for a year-round open school that operated for 10 years in Minnesota (1995, National Association for Year-Round Education, http://www.nayre.org/). The Mountain Open School is described in Tom Gregory's book *Making High School Work: Lessons from the Open School*, New York: Teachers College Press, 1993. The Saint Paul Open School was studied along with nine other free and open schools in a qualitative research study by Robert Skenes entitled *Free Forming: Greater Personal Fulfillment Through Living Democracy*, Colonial Beach, VA: DaySpring, 1978.

31. Robert Skenes *"Experimenting with Futuristic Systems of Learning"* in Creating Learning Communities edited by Ron Miller, Foundation for Educational Renewal, 2000, p. 53.

32. The video "Why Do These Kids Love School?" (1990) is available from Pryamid Film & Video, Box 1048, Santa Monica, CA 90406-1048 USA. The video profiles eight progressive public schools in the United States with high standards that are "met through mutual trust" within each school community.

The three features shared by the profiled schools are: (1) innovative curricula, with teachers free to be creative, (2) non-competitive environments, and (3) shared responsibility for the school amongst all school members -- students, teachers, and administrators.

33. *Ibid*. Koetzsch, *The Parents Guide to Alternatives in Education,* p. 216.

34. One well-documented qualitative study by Mary Henry compares a Waldorf school to a private Catholic school by examining the details of their cultures in terms of myths, curricula, rituals, and relationships. This study is told in *School Cultures: Universes of Meaning in Private Schools*, Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corp, 1993. Another indendent study was conducted by David Marshak that compares the philosophies and daily practices of schools based on the educational principles of Rudolf Steiner, Sri Aurobindo, and Inayat Khan, described in *The Common Vision: Parenting and Educating for Wholeness*, New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1997. Most other detailed descriptions of Waldorf schools come from organizations such as the Association for Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA), http://www.waldorfeducation.org ; Rudolf Steiner Library,web site: http://www.anthroposophy.org/; or Rudolf Steiner Press, http://www.rudolfsteinerpress.com/.

Types of Education

35. A modern philosopher and writer who has contributed much to developing a holistic cosmology is Ken Wilber. Wilber writes especially about wholes within wholes, or "holons" as he calls them. His detailed books on cosmology are often referenced by holistic educators.

36. See John P. Miller, The Holistic Curriculum. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Press, 1996 (revised edition).

37. Ron Miller "*Philosophies of Learning Communities*" in *Creating Learning Communities* edited by Ron Miller. Brandon, VT: Foundation for Educational Renewal, 2000, pp. 201-205.

38. *Ibid*, pp. 202-203.

39. *Ibid*, John Miller, p. 14

40. Ron Miller, *Caring for New Life*, Brandon, VT: Foundation for Educational Renewal, 2000, p. 4.

41. Scott Forbes, *Holistic Education: An Analysis of Its Intellectual Precedents and Nature*. Unpublished dissertation, University of Oxford: Green College, 1999. (Copies of this manuscript available upon request from Encompass, 1-800-200-1107, or http://www.encompass-nlr.org)

School Choice

42. J.E. Chubb and T. M. Moe, *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 1990. This is an often-cited study that uses a database based from a 1980 survey of 60,000 students in 1,000 public and private schools. Chubb and Moe's interpretation of the data highlights a strong relationship between student performance and school autonomy, as well as the importance of schools having clear goals, ambitious academic programs, strong educational leadership, and high levels of teacher professionalism.

43. Jeffrey Henig, "*The Local Dynamics of Choice: Ethnic Preferences and Institutional Responses*," in *Who Chooses? Who Looses? Culture, Institutions, and the Unequal Effects of School Choice*, edited by Bruce Fuller and Richard Elmore. New York: Teachers College Press, 1996, p. 112.

44. John F. Witte, *The Market Approach to Education: An Analysis of America's First Voucher Program*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000, p. 63.

45. From her research of a St. Louis inner city transfer program, Amy Stuart Wells describes how parents

choosing to transfer their children to new schools tend to accept the "achievement ideology" of the schools into which they are transferring. See Chapter 2 in *Who Chooses? Who Loses? Culture, Institutions, and the Unequal Effects of School Choice* edited by Bruce Fuller and Richard Elmore, New York: Teachers College Press, 1996, p. 32. The emphasis on an academic performance model of educaton is further is evidenced by the number of studies (all of them!) that focus almost exclusively on adacemic achievement as the sole factor for comparing the success of students enrolled in school choice programs.

46. Richard Elmore and Bruce Fuller, *"Empirical Research on Educational Choice: What are the Implications for Policy-Makers?"* in *Who Chooses? Who Looses? Culture, Institutions, and the Unequal Effects of School Choice*, edited by Bruce Fuller and Richard Elmore. New York: Teachers College Press, 1996, p. 195-199.

47. Another current source and voice on school choice research is Paul Peterson and B. C. Hassel (Eds), *Learning from School Choice*. Washington, DC, Brookings Institution Press, 1998.

This paper is presented complements of the Paths of Learning Resource Center. *Paths of Learning* aims to inspire parents, educators, and others interested in educational policy and practice to consider diverse ways in which children and adults can gain meaningful, integrated knowledge and develop their own authentic potentials. Sponsored by the Foundation for Educational Renewal, we offer a popular magazine that you can share with friends, a free online resource center to support the growth of educational alternatives, and new books, such as *Caring for New Life: Essays on Holistic Education*, that will invigorate your imagination for what is possible in education and how you can get involved. All of our materials are done in sync with practices and organizations that serve as part of a well-established and growing field known as "holistic education." To subscribe to our magazine or order books, please call **1-800-639-4122**.

Paths of Learning is published and sponsored by:

The Foundation for Educational Renewal
Box 328
Brandon, VT 05733-0328
1-800-639-4122
http://www.great-ideas.org/
paths@great-ideas.org