

University of Michigan Teach-In
Memorandum by University of Michigan Students

At the University of Michigan, the idea of the Environmental Teach-In has now developed into a planned program with the enthusiastic and widespread support of hundreds of students, and also, of faculty, the University administration, and community and national groups. The Michigan Teach-In event next spring has been organized to include much of the following:

University-wide Seminars and Workshops

Focusing on the topic, "Man and the Environment," the Teach-In will be a forum for students, faculty and other speakers and lecturers from all disciplines and walks of life concerned with ecosystem. Planned are informal discussion groups, technical seminars, films, exhibits, mass meetings with a major speaker, and conferences on local environmental problems.

Beyond the University

Speakers and informational services will be provided for local school systems and for concerned citizens groups holding teach-ins on the same day. Coordination with nearby educational institutions and with the community is planned.

Environmental Inventories

Presentation to public authorities and industry of an environmental inventory along with a call for action will be made.

Participatory Actions

A specific action, such as cleaning up a badly littered recreation area may be directed on the teach-in day.



WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Follow Up

In order to direct the momentum and concern inspired by the teach-in day to a lasting and identifiable result, Michigan is considering the drafting of specific legislation for state enactment (such as billboard control), and possible litigation brought by an involved law school to enjoin notorious environmental abuse.

How was all this planned? The students at Michigan can share their experience:

Thinking about a teach-in on the environment began at Michigan in early September among a few students in the School of Natural Resources. It was soon clear that broader, mass involvement was essential to develop the teach-in into a campus and community-wide event. Intensive discussions led to tentative goal-setting and program proposals, fundamentally, to reach beyond the immediate campus to increase all interested individuals' knowledge, concern, and commitment to action. Contacts were made with University officials and others, gaining additional supporters. Then, as soon as preliminary ideas had developed, broadbased involvement was sought. At the University of Michigan, the standard way to accomplish this is to call a mass meeting. Publicity went out--stories in campus papers and local papers, large banners and posters on campus, and dittoed flyers on bulletin boards. More than 350 people showed up for the meeting invited by: "Students, Faculty, and Friends: Our Sick Environment Needs you. Teach-In on the Environment, 1970. MASS MEETING." At the meeting two items were distributed: "Survival U," from HARPER'S, a good article on environmental survival and the role of the universities, and a list of the planners.

The mass meeting combined general information on the environmental crisis, done with slides and a brief talk by an environmental professor; a summary of the national teach-ins planned for next spring, Wednesday April 22; and a review of Michigan's own plans, with emphasis on the need for more ideas and more involvement.



WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Then questions and answers took over--with a tape recorder running. Many valuable ideas were picked up in this way. Articles appeared in both the campus newspaper and the Ann Arbor paper with the National Teach-In as an additional news peg. Prompt followup committee meetings kept up the interest of those who had been first attracted to the teach-in at the mass meeting. Subsequent contact with the university officials has been facilitated incidentally by demonstrating with the mass meeting the status of the environmental teach-in as a major campus interest. Attendance by high school student leaders and community group leaders, and coverage by the local paper's preview article, has ensured coordination with these sectors to make the teach-in truly community-wide.

The Michigan planners are continuing to build momentum and to develop plans. Speakers and workshops will be held between now and the teach-in date at the university, in the community, and in the local schools, to generate wide interest and visibility. This will be done with a speakers' bureau, the usual means of publicity through newspapers and further meetings, and special campus-wide events with major speakers on controversial topics. Further, an information file to monitor journals for environmental information and articles and to index this material for reference by any interested group, and a newsletter with capsule summaries of environmental news and the latest teach-in plans are also being developed. Some special events and participatory actions might be held during this time also.



The environmental inventory will serve as an activity to maintain interest and recruit new people to the teach-in effort. For this, students and local citizens will examine their area-- including the campus, the community, and possibly even the region-- to catalogue and perhaps record on film specific environmental problems. In addition to being a major learning experience, the inventory will build into the teach-in day itself an opportunity for student dialogue with public and industrial officials and scientific experts about solutions and the consequences of further delay. If it is well assembled and presented, the inventory will assure development of specific student and community programs for action.

The Teach-In programs could vary from university to university, according to available time, resources, and particular environmental problems and interests. However, we believe there are many basic elements of the University of Michigan plan which could serve very well in developing Teach-Ins for April 22 on other campuses.

Teach-In on the Environment
Dave Allan
Douglas Scott
Co-Chairmen

Natural Resources Building
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
a.c.313 764-4410



WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY