

Tools for Learning

SUMMER EXPERIENCES

FRANK M. RICH

For this last issue of EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP before the summer vacation, we call your attention to summer experiences as "tools" for learning. Youngsters do not stop learning because the doors are closed on academic schooling. Education, for better or for worse, continues regardless of the clock or the calendar. Educators are becoming increasingly aware of their responsibilities to boys and girls during the "vacation" months.¹

In this article, Frank M. Rich, retired principal, School No. 2, Paterson, N. J., discusses two of the many types of activities which may contribute to the growth of children during the summer months—day camps and vocational experience.

THE IDEAL PLACE for city children during the summer months, when schools are closed and there are long hours a day for mis-employment, is the suburban day camp, or picnic grove, where the right sort of leaders can provide a happy combination of physical betterment, social outlet, and useful development by day, while the parents furnish the normal family life nights and early mornings.

Fortunately, the day camp regimen is not a matter of location but objective and technique. Using the local facilities of schools, playgrounds, parks, libraries, and museums, the program includes a happy balance of sports, campcraft, handicrafts, assemblies, lunches, excursions and various recreational activities.

When transportation is needed, school buses can be used; or, in most cases the regular bus and tram lines are feasible without serious burden on rush traffic since the camp groups move in the opposite direction from the commuters.

The shortage of experienced camp directors calls for recruiting and instructing new tal-

ent under the direction of experienced persons. Work in camps is an excellent training school even for the very young assistant, and may prove a useful try-out experience for future teachers.

A committee of the school board, or a special advisory board of interested citizens, with a competent administrative official should be commissioned to take over and get action.

For older boys and girls the summer months offer an opportunity for vocational experience under guidance of schools. By a system of reports, guidance, transfer, and adjustment among the employers, valuable experiences may be offered to young people while exploitation and the old tragic weariness of early vocational failure is avoided. Active participation in the world's work is a privilege that most adolescents long for with a passionate desire. This opportunity can be provided through the schools with educational benefit and personal satisfaction to young people and their communities. The merest nod from school authorities can initiate such a program. There is nothing new or hypothetical in it. It has been used many places with complete success and with full cooperation from agriculture, business, and industry. In this war emergency, when every helping hand is needed for service and when every young person should be out of mischief, schools should see the need and make use of the opportunity.

¹Ragsdale, C. E., "9 to 3 for Nine Months," *EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP*, Vol. 1, No. 7, April 1944, 409-412.

Toward a New Curriculum, 1944 Yearbook, Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development, NEA, Chapter 6, "Extending the School Day and Year," Margaret Hampel; Chapter 7, "Schools and Camping," William Van Til.

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