

Science, Art Camps Provide Outlet For High School Students in Summer

(Editor's note: What are our children to do with their vacation time? Parents must see to it that they go right on learning, says a distinguished educator—learning things which might not be possible to study during the stiff environment of school. Some ideas on vacation activity for youngsters are examined in the following report by E. Paul Torrance of the University of Minnesota's bureau of educational research.)

By E. PAUL TORRANCE
Written for
United Press International
Most schools in the United States will soon close, or have closed, their doors for the summer, but this does not mean that either teacher or pupils will stop learning and thinking.

The 1961-62 school year has perhaps seen the testing of more new ideas in education than any other period in history. Many of the ideas which have been tested have given teachers and pupils both the skills and the driving urge not only to learn more but to do something with what they have learned.

Many children and teachers have perhaps for the first time in their school careers been caught up in the excitement of learning creatively—by questioning, inquiring, experimenting, testing, manipulating and testing. They have also learned by authority—that is, learned what they were told in the way they were instructed.

But the teachers gained a new recognition that many

things can be learned creatively more effectively than they can by authority. They have also recognized that many children learn creatively who seem not to be able to learn by authority.

Many teachers will spend a part of their summer vacations in creating new materials or in trying to increase their skills in identifying and in developing creative talent. Some of them will do this learning on their own.

Others will attend workshops, institutes and summer courses learning how to do a better job of developing their pupils' creative thinking abilities.

They will go to such places as Teachers College of Columbia University, Northwestern University, University of Buffalo, University of Kentucky, San Jose State College, Colorado State College, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, University of Oregon and the University of Utah, just to mention a few such special programs.

Not all children have had teachers who find learning an exciting and important matter and make it that for their pupils. Some have given up and have been counting the days until summer vacation. Some have attended schools where learning is a grim matter. Some have felt that they were in "steel boxes."

One mother of a very creative boy writes:

Seed Always There
"So many doors closed! Where is the spirit of educating and cultivating the child's natural desire to learn—some seed of it is always

there, to one extent or another!

"I feel he is in a steel box—I think he feels he is, too, and thinks the only way to be free is by quitting school."

"How can doors be opened, can you tell me? Can you advise or suggest anything that could help?"

"Please, don't be too busy to care or answer me. I just don't know where else to turn!"

What happens when children feel that they are in steel boxes and that all doors to the expression of their creative needs and abilities are closed? The answer is a tragic one. Of course, such children may sacrifice their creativity, becoming very conforming and outwardly become models of the well-adjusted child—only later to have ulcers or become overwhelmed and break down.

More Tragic Picture
A more tragic picture, however, is presented by the child who refuses to learn, becomes delinquent, feels lost and out of touch with his environment, or experiences a mental breakdown.

This summer, many creative youngsters will find at least temporary release from their "steel boxes" through arts and science camps. Such camps have gotten a start during the past two or three years. Science and Arts Camps, Inc., will sponsor several such camps this summer.

The Minneapolis School of Art will again conduct its science and arts camp on Lake Minnetonka. Here both boys and girls will work with outstanding young scientists and artists in a variety of

fields. They will learn both creatively and by authority. They will think and do with an enthusiasm which will be new to many of them.

Many summer camps established along other lines are beginning to adopt some of the ideas of the science and arts camps. It is such a "natural" for helping some creative children find their way out of their "steel boxes."

Son's Experience
One mother wrote me as follows about her son's experience last summer:

"He is exuberant, bright, loving, and so deep in his thoughts, yet he failed last year. He had an extremely rigid teacher who tried to bend Tom to his will and Tom would not comply. Needless to say, 'the war was on.' After his sad experience last year, we sent him to a creative camp during the summer where he bloomed like a fully kicking up its heels at being free. He did a chalk (painting) and when I first saw it on exhibit at the camp (I didn't know at the time that it was his), I loved it—the colors are exquisite. Imagine how I felt when I found out it was Tom's! I framed it and have it in our living room."

The science and arts camp has many "built-in" features which make it almost ideal for stimulating creative growth. Briefly, here are some of the reasons why.

Frequently in Home
In the school, on the playground and frequently even in the home and the church, children are almost forced by social pressure to blot out

certain areas of awareness. Certain areas of life are off limits for thinking.

Creativity, however, requires an openness or intensified awareness to one's environment. Thus, these taboos areas or experiencing take a heavy toll on creative development. Many forces create these taboos areas but some of the most powerful ones stem from the great emphasis which we place at a very early age upon different expectations for boys and girls.

In our culture, sensitivity or openness to the environmental represents a feminine value. Independence represents a masculine value. Since creativity requires both sensitivity and independence in thinking, highly creative boys are apt to appear more effeminate than their peers and highly creative girls are apt to appear more masculine than theirs.

Even when parents are aware of these facts, they feel uncomfortable when their own boys are open and responsive to the environment or when their girls show independence in thinking or interest in science.

Makes Natural Setting
A camp makes a natural setting in which boys can indulge their appreciation of beauty—full responsiveness to and awareness of their environment. The girl can also be free to indulge her curiosity about the scientific wonders of the environment. In this setting, nothing is thought to be wrong with the boy who shows responsiveness to beauty nor the girl who inquires about science.

Tiny Bolt May Have Caused Jet Crash

Washington—UPI—A tiny bolt worth about five cents and less than an inch long may have caused the crash of an American Airlines jetliner at New York's Idlewild airport last March, the Federal Aviation Agency reported today.

The bolt is located in the mechanism moving the rudder with hydraulic fluid like power steering on a car. The FAA said there was strong evidence that it fell out, literally locking the rudder in a hard left turn.

and arts camp in bringing about creative growth and in helping creative youngsters find their way out of the "steel boxes" which they feel confine them.

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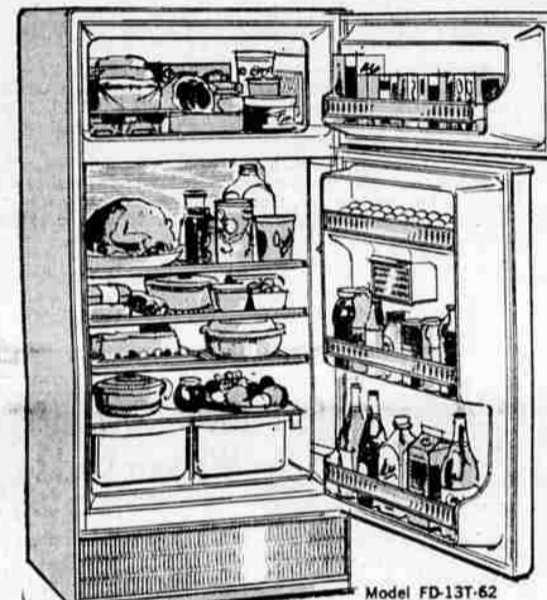
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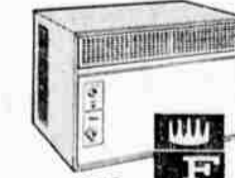
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