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Building the School Entertainment Day by Day: Cooperating Rather Than Competing in Play

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phonetic principles to unphonetic words, for example, *calling*. The pupil should recognize "ing," but the first part of the word is not phonetic and should be told by the teacher.

11. He should be able to follow simple written directions involving words of known vocabulary.

No one can say how many books each child should read during the first year. This is an individual matter and the number should be limited only by the ability of the child.

In general it is best to provide much easy material rather than a small amount of difficult reading, but the material should be increasing in difficulty. Books used for library reading should be more simple than those for regular class work.

At the close of the second year and the third year we have carried the child still further along in the acquisition of the various habits and skills begun in first grade. The emphasis is similar in kind but is carried into more difficult material at each step. We have fixed still more firmly his appreciation of reading and its opportunity to afford him pleasure and furnish him with interesting information. By the close of the third year mechanical skills should be thoroughly established.

Each of the habits and skills enumerated for grade one should be applied to material of second and third grade, respectively.

Definite study habits, on the level of the grade material, should be initiated, and by the close of the third year pupils should be able:

To follow directions, written or in connection with the reading text.

To select paragraph meaning.

To organize main thoughts of a selection as the result of careful questions which direct the thought.

To know how to study to retain facts read.

To know how to use books: table of contents, glossary, assigned reference material.

The close of the third year makes the end of the third reading period, which includes grades two and three, "The period of rapid growth in fundamental habits, attitudes and skills."

We should send pupils into the fourth period of their reading, "The period of wide reading to extend and enrich experience," in possession of all the skills necessary for this broad reading and a study ability which truly functions.

Building the School Entertainment Day by Day

III. Co-operating Rather Than Competing in Play

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Two types of school entertainments, the special-day program and the exhibit of class work, have been discussed in previous articles. There is a third type which is so popular with children and adults that its possibilities and present limitations merit consideration. This is the field and track meet, an established annual affair in many communities.

To justify any school entertainment as an educational instrument, it must

be rich in the learnings gained by day in the school through careful teacher guidance. How well does the average athletic meet express sound educational practice?

Many of the people who come to see children in athletic contests have never watched them planning, organizing, reading, or writing in a class situation. If they had, they would note that subject-matter assignments provide for activity on the part of each learner.

Tasks are adjusted to individual differences so that each child may be successful and happy because he works on his own level. Everyone is doing something.

In contrast, the activity in the usual field meet has been limited to the few, and those few have won the right to be contestants by their superior skill. Their need for the learnings gained by participation in the various events is less than that of the many who stand on the side lines. The children who watch cannot run as fast or jump as far as those on the track, but they *can* run and jump and need to be *in* the meet instead of being *at* the meet.

Boys and girls living in a happy schoolroom atmosphere have learned to subordinate individual desires to promote the welfare of the group. Co-operation is practiced earnestly and intelligently by children who have been given sufficient freedom to determine social values. To secure the competition that makes for maximum effort, each child is encouraged to improve his own record in spelling or arithmetic or health habits. In too many field meets, the element of competition between groups destroys any spirit of co-operation broad enough to extend beyond one school or one community. In an age when far-seeing leaders plead for co-operation between all races of all nations, dare teachers place children in settings which limit co-operation?

Play indoors or outdoors is dear to the hearts of young and old alike. Its universal appeal makes a school entertainment of play a necessity in every wide-awake community. If that entertainment is whole-hearted participation in games which have been learned during the year, if every child takes part, if one group plays with other groups for the sake of winning games instead of prizes, and if the adults play while the children do, all the attractions of a field meet are retained. The customary athletic contest becomes, however, a rural Play Day rich in learning values for all who take part.

For such a Play Day, one school centrally located serves as the hostess. All schools participating plan the arrangements and the program through representatives. If a tentative program can be outlined in September, it will serve as a basis for constructive play activities during the year. The people in the communities help with preparing the grounds, providing the transportation, furnishing the food, and looking after groups of children.

A suggestive Play Day program follows:

Parade of all children from all schools headed by a school band
Games for children and special games for adults

Lunch

Community singing

Folk dancing

Stunts

Games

Some games that are easily learned and happily played are:

Grades one to three—

Farmer in the Dell
London Bridge
Jack and Rachel
Mulberry Bush
Looby-Loo
Beanbag Toss
Jump the Rope
Call Ball

Grades four to six—

Boys:

Fifty-Yard Dash
Standing Broad Jump
Baseball Throw (Distance)
Skin the Snake Relay

Girls:

Potato Race
Dodge Ball
Human Croquet
Leap Frog Race
Jump Stick Relay

Grades seven and eight—

Boys:

Baseball
Four-Hundred-Forty-Yard Relay

Seventy-Five-Yard Dash
Running High Jump

Girls:

End Ball
Volley Ball
Three Deep
Obstacle Relay

Adults—

Men:

Horseshoes
Naildriving
Baseball

Women:

Deck Tennis
Croquet
Suit-Case Relay
Dumb Bell Push Relay

Folk dances—

Grades one to three:

I See You
Danish Greeting
Shoemaker

Grades four to six:

Highland Fling
Indian
Pop Goes the Weasel

Grades seven and eight:

Dutch
Irish Jig
Oxdansen

All children of the schools co-operating for Play Day are divided into three groups according to their classification. Those in grades one, two, and three form one group. Children of grades four, five, and six form another while boys and girls of grades seven and eight make up a third group.

Each of these major groups is divided into color teams consisting of five to ten children according to the number available. A color team is composed of one or possibly two children from each school. A ribbon of a certain color is distributed equally among the different schools. When a child receives his ribbon badge, he keeps that color throughout the day and plays always with others of his color team. That color team plays in the various events with the color teams formed of children of the same grades.

For instance, the blue color team of intermediate grade boys tries to win the standing broad jump from the orange team consisting of lads of the same major group.

In the group consisting of the first three grades, boys and girls are in the same color team. In the other two groups, boys in one color team play with boys in another color team while girls in one team play with girls in another. By this arrangement each child co-operates with the others in his group to win the games. He plays for play's sake and not for the glory of his particular school or community.

The scores made are kept by judges and the winning team in each group is designated. No prizes are given, and the honors are won by color teams made up of children from a number of schools and from two or three grades. Sportsmanship and friendship, not community bickerings and personal rivalries, are the fruits of such victories.

When children play for fun and not for prizes, the kind of clothing worn is of minor importance. Bloomers and middies are desirable for intermediate and upper grade girls, but the child who cannot secure them must be made welcome by her group. She will be welcomed if teachers suggest rather than demand a certain costume. Boys will be more comfortable in track suits but should be placed under no compulsion to purchase and wear them. The child's activity and enjoyment are the chief objectives.

Any Play Day requires equipment which must be gathered from the various schools. It should be in good condition and plainly marked before being sent to the central school. The children can help in making some of the materials. These items are necessities:

Baseballs, bats, mitts
Dodge balls
Volley balls, net or cord
Relay sticks—one foot long
Jumping pit and standards
Six potatoes (blocks of wood)

Six horseshoes.

Three rope rings—one foot in diameter

Whistle

Tape

Yarn

Boys and girls in the first three grades make a particular appeal to older children as well as to parents and friends. For this reason, some teachers may wish to present valuable units of work that grew out of the pupils' desire to give pleasure to others. This was done in a track and field meet in a county of the state last year. The standards for working out such a unit were:

I. Selection of plan—

1. Suitability to interests of children of this age
2. Suitability to occasion (Play Day)

II. Working out of plan—

1. Evidence of child participation in preparation

2. Evidence of artistic elements—
Color and design

3. Evidence of adaptation of materials

a. Clever use of materials

b. Use of common home materials

c. Simplicity and economy of materials

4. Evidence of unity and balance of project as a whole

III. Presentation of unit—

1. Evidence of child leadership and initiative.

2. Evidence of joy and naturalness in presentation

Every child needs to learn to work intelligently with a group in any worthy undertaking. On that depends much of his present and future happiness. He needs to learn to play freely and efficiently. In that is health and joy. A rural Play Day pays big dividends in these social values which schools must stress if they fulfill their obligation.

Teach Pupils to Study

The usual procedure in most school rooms is to spend too much time in recitation and not enough in study. Since the pupils, especially in rural schools with several grades, spend a great deal more time by themselves in preparation than in recitation, the teachers first responsibility is to *teach the pupils how to study.*

1. A very definite assignment of work well planned.
2. An outline of the essential points to be prepared in a new lesson and not merely in an assignment of pages.
3. A method or device to follow that is simple, clear and direct.
4. A fixed time for drill on essential points.
4. A quick plan for checking every written assignment.
6. Where it is possible, use the last thirty minutes of the day for supervised study.

—King County Course of Study.