

Surf *and* Study at the Same Time

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In the good old summertime, it is perfect for catching waves along the Coast, splashing in pools when the temperature rises or feeling the burn from biking across country. What pleasures the outdoor brings!

Summertime is also the ideal time for study.

No, this is *not* an attempt to ruin anyone's summer vacation. You see, almost every activity in life has an educational bent if *you look for it*. Positive experiences broaden our horizons and even improve our reasoning ability.

Think about it. What is learned from hiking in the forest or walking on the beach? Hang gliding, juggling and riding a unicycle all have little built-in physics lessons. And learning to cook over a fire pit involves kitchen chemistry. By staying alert, even a trip to the mall might prove enlightening. Looking for learning opportunities is a game anyone can play!

And when we're back in the classroom, new experiences and physical activities provide a tangible means with which to align our studies. We are so used to getting our information from books and documentaries that we often overlook that this same viewpoint can and should be applied to the great outdoors.

My six-year old granddaughter reminds me how much she learns from the environment every time she visits. She always beelines for the backyard to hunt for lizards, toads or any kind of living creature she can find. My husband and I have come to know the importance of keeping an assortment of containers on hand so she'll have a home for her newfound friends. And she is intensely interested in adding theory to her practical studies. She knows where our animal and insect books are kept and pores over them until she finds a photo that matches her latest discovery. Then she asks us to help her read about it so she will know the animal's specific name, what it eats and how she can help it survive.

Perhaps the ultimate outdoor learning experience *is* caring for plants, animals and our environment. After all it is easy to see how we benefit across the boards when we show love and respect to Mother Earth. She teaches us significant lessons when we care for her creatures or create habitats for them, when we plant the seeds of flowers or vegetables and watch them peek out from under the dirt. Nature gives us the real world in which to compare the words written in our science texts.

So this summer visit new places, enjoy the thrill of outdoor activities and the beauty of the natural environment, but look closely. Hidden in the playground of life are lessons. They are there, just waiting to be learned.

Surf's up!
Sea beckons
I see it
I am my board
My board is me
Running toward it
Like the wind
My heart soars
I catch it
I ride it
Suddenly,
Unexpectedly
I become it
I am the perfect wave!



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