



Open Community

Summer Activities

Mercer Free School has a few new activities for this summer. The school was launched in March 2010 to provide the local community in/near Mercer County, NJ a means to share self-motivated learning experience *for free*. As long as no space/safety/regulatory issues are involved, anyone can facilitate activities and anyone can participate in them. For more information, please visit our home page at <http://mfs.insi2.org>

Current Activities

Bike Maintenance

New session TBA (August?)
An overview of bicycle maintenance, encompassing routine maintenance and bike anatomy. Bikes will be on hand for hands-on demonstrations.



Calligraphy for Beginners

August 14 & 21, 9:00-10:30am,
Ewing Branch of MCLS

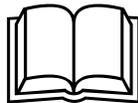


Learn to express themselves in Calligraphic script. Both classes must be attended and there will be homework exercises assigned in between. **Registration required.**

Materials: Registered participants will be provided with the necessary materials.

Haiku

New sessions TBA (August?)
Two-session class in which we will read and enjoy haiku by many authors, ranging from the Japanese Masters to contemporary American poets. We will also try our hand at writing techniques to make use of this wonderful poetic form.



Healthy Kid & Parent Cooking

August 2, 12-1pm, Lawrence
Community Center



Cooking a Healthy Breakfast. This hands-on cooking class will teach children how to prepare delicious, easy, and nutritious foods to start the day off right. **Material cost: \$3/participant who eats. Registration required.**

Meditation Group

August 7, 11am-12pm, Ewing
Branch of MCLS
August 28, 2-3pm, Lawrence
Community Center



Learn and practice meditation through sharing experience with others. We begin with discussion of our motivations and constraints so that we can find out the most appropriate approach for each individual.

Basic Music Reading

August 14, 11:00am-12:30pm, Ewing
Branch/MCLS

Learning note names, basic rhythm, time and key signatures, and hopefully some solfege and sight-singing!



Table Tennis for Fun

August 14, 2-4pm, Lawrence
Community Center

Enjoy playing table tennis and other gym activities.



Disclaimer: Permission to use the community rooms/space does not imply library sponsorship or endorsement of any group or program.

Future Activities

The following activities are upcoming or requested by potential participants:

- **Basics about Chakras**
- **Chinese Language**
- Computers
- **Cooking Club**
- **Dog Training**
- **Food Gardening**
- Homeschooling
- Household Troubleshooting
- Hypermiling
- Mindfulness
- Mushroom Hunting
- **Poetry**
- Self Publishing

Intrinsic Motivation (from our blog)

Whenever we are involved in a learning process, it would be good to think about why we are doing so. In some cases, we do so because it is required (extrinsic motivation) and in some other cases, we do so because we enjoy the process of learning (intrinsic motivation). For example, many students take certain courses simply because they are required or necessary to satisfy some other conditions. Many students are also concerned more about grades, diplomas, and jobs after graduation, and not necessarily the process of taking courses. As long as they get what they want at the end, that may be all right. However, the answer to whether they actually learn something well that way appears to be negative. That is, extrinsic motivation has been shown to undermine the learning process and intrinsic motivation. This point has been prominently argued by Alfie Kohn (link on the blog).

Reflecting this point, learning through intrinsic motivation is one of the three principles at Mercer Free School. So, there will be no extrinsic motivators, including

grades, certification, and financial incentive. Note that we are free from both positive and negative extrinsic motivators (i.e., punishments and penalties). That is, participation is completely voluntary and nobody is forced.

Then, how can we cultivate intrinsic motivation? We don't know the answer. Even the literature does not seem to offer a very good answer. Here at Mercer Free School, unlike most other schools, we try to challenge our well-established habit of relying on extrinsic motivators for learning. [<http://mercerfreeschool.wordpress.com/>]

Help Wanted

You can always help us in the following ways:

- Facilitating an activity
- Subscribing to our email list
- Spreading the word, even by visiting us on Facebook and becoming a fan
- Printing and posting our flyers (esp. outside Ewing)
- Joining us as an organizer



Mercer Free School
Mercer County, NJ

