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A RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EVOLUTION OF AN OPEN
EDUCATION TEACHER WITH FOCUS ON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL
REWARDS AND DEMANDS OF THE PRACTICE OF OPEN EDUCATION

A Dissertation Presented

By

DORTHEA BUSH HUDELSON

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

September 1979

Education

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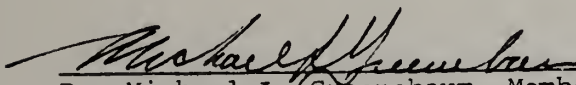
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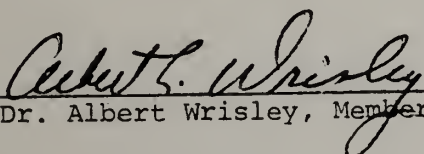
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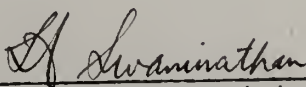
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Mario Fantini, Dean
School of Education

DEDICATION

To my family--

To Wes,

whose rock-bottom support made this possible;

To my children--Julie and Larry, Mary and Travis,

who believed I could do it;

To my grandchildren--Heather and Benjamin,

whose futures make educational inquiry worthwhile;

To my father, David Frazer Bush,

whose memory inspired me to try.

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

To Masha, for exemplifying the role of the open education teacher: challenger, supporter, facilitator, diagnostician, guide and friend;

To Mike, for insisting that this be done, and then providing encouragement and unique and thought-provoking criticism;

To Al, for caring enough to contribute careful, precise questions;

To all the children, over all the years, who have helped me find my way;

To Sue, for getting it all together;

My grateful thanks.

A B S T R A C T

A Retrospective Analysis of the Evolution of an Open
Education Teacher with Focus on Internal and External
Rewards and Demands of the Practice of Open Education
(September 1979)

Dorthea Bush Hudelson, B.A., University of California

M.Ed., University of Massachusetts

Ed.D., University of Massachusetts

Directed by: Dr. Masha K. Rudman

The study examines the effects of the practice of open education on the teacher, the demands made upon teachers committed to the open approach, and the possible personal and professional rewards which may accrue from the practice of openness. The author seeks verification that the practice of open education offers advantages to the teacher which compensate for the demands inherent in the implementation of this approach. The author uses her personal experience as an open education teacher as the basis for the analysis. She was an initiator of an Integrated Day project in the Amherst, Massachusetts, public schools, and she taught in the program for six consecutive years.

Chapter I presents an overview and rationale for the study. The personal investment in the open approach mandates an investigation of the factors affecting the teacher at this particular time because current trends in education will influence the personal and professional life of the teacher.

Chapter II contains a review of the literature relating to the person of the teacher who practices open education. Sources both old and new are explored through a framework of nine items relating to teacher satisfaction. This framework was devised by the author and consists of:

1. Opportunities for personal and professional growth
2. Self concept of the teacher
3. Creativity
4. Attitude toward professional career
5. Interaction and cooperation with colleagues
6. Support within the professional framework
7. Independence and internal locus of control
8. Financial and job security
9. Rest, recreational refreshment of body and spirit

The author notes the paucity of literature applicable to the theme of the study and the declining number of publications relating to open education.

In Chapter III the author chronicles her educational autobiography which spans thirty-seven years, extends to all educational levels, and was experienced in divers locales. The central focus of the autobiography covers the six years of teaching in an open classroom which followed the author's commitment to educational openness motivated by participation in a summer seminar in England. The progress of her version of the Integrated Day program over six years is viewed in retrospect and the teacher scrutinizes her successes and failures in implementing this program.

Chapter IV examines the central problems which arose during the author's teaching experiences in the open classroom and the steps taken to correct those problems. The problems which remained a constraint are analyzed. These constraints fall into two groups: those problems arising out of the time-consuming nature of the practice of open education; and those concerning the pressures and stresses felt by this open education teacher to prove the efficacy of the approach.

The challenge of providing a proper program for five-year-old children within the context of a family-grouped open classroom is explored in this chapter.

The author deplores the confusion resulting from the use of the terms "open education" and "open classroom" to denote both educationally open classrooms and those classrooms functioning in architecturally open situations but not necessarily open educationally.

The author measures her personal educational experiences in her open classroom against the nine items relating to teacher satisfaction explicated in Chapter II.

Chapter IV concludes with a re-affirmation of the strengths of educationally open programs and the affirmation that the rewards gained by the teacher offset the demands of the approach.

Chapter V concludes the investigation of factors affecting the open education teacher with a review of the structure and conclusions of the study. It offers some practical suggestions to help open education teachers experience success both personally and professionally, and suggests implications for further study.

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C H A P T E R I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to describe the evolution of an open education teacher to determine the effects of the practice of open education on the teacher; to investigate the kinds of demands presented by an open classroom, and to judge whether these demands can be offset by the satisfactions gained by the teacher. The study is undertaken by a classroom teacher involved in practicing the principles of open education for fourteen years, seven of which have been spent in multi-age grouped classes. It is the intent of the author to seek patterns inherent in open education teaching as viewed over several years and many classes.

There is need for such a study at this particular time because of the changing views about education by the public and by educators. There is confusion about the meaning and practice of open education and its goals. Teachers currently involved in open education, and those who are contemplating the change to this approach, must also contemplate the uncertainty of its future.

The attitudes toward open education of both educators and citizens will have a direct bearing on the professional and even the personal life of the teacher. If open education is to succeed as an option, practitioners must be convinced of its worth. They must be educationally informed, competent, and strong enough in body and soul to persevere.

Competent teachers of high quality must be found to exemplify the teaching process. If the teacher is poorly suited to the open classroom, the result will be damaging to the entire idea of openness. If the demands are so overwhelming that the well-suited teacher gives up the quest, open education suffers a defeat. In order to recruit teachers of quality with the necessary competence, the rewards of this kind of teaching must be at least equal to the demands. Preferably, the balance should tip the scales in favor of rewards! Leonard Sealey stated in 1977, "The open education movement has reached a particularly sensitive stage of its development in the United States;"¹ this is equally true, if not more so, today. He continued, "Too ready acceptance to sweep aside one educational approach after another before maturity is reached . . . threatens open education."² Sealey found that many people had no opinion of open education whatsoever, or else disapproved of it. He recognized the growing "go back to basics" movement as one which would favor behavioral approaches to the detriment of the open approach.

The author has watched with dismay the misunderstood principles of open education being misapplied in public schools, with disastrous implications for the future of the genuinely open education approach. Proponents of open education are dedicated to a learning environment which aids children to acquire the necessary skills for successful

¹Leonard Sealey, Open Education: A Study of Selected American Elementary Schools (Bethesda, Md.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 151 076, 1977), p. 12.

²Ibid., p. 13.

living. These educators may extend the list of the traditional basic skills to include others they judge necessary, but surely reading, writing, and mathematics are included. Yet, much of the expressed dissatisfaction with open education appears to stem from a belief that open education is the antithesis of basic education. Vincent Rogers, as quoted by T. Darrell Drummond, notes:

At this point the American public seems to see good education as a hard dragging, highly competitive, academic race; and educational innovations fitting that image stand a better chance of acceptance than do other innovations.³

The Christian Science Monitor of January 16, 1978, printed a letter from Joe Eller of Ohlone (a city in the San Francisco peninsula), in which he praised the open education school available to children of his community. He wrote that another school in the district was a very traditional Back-to-Basics institution, and that both schools seemed to be thriving. However, he, as a parent, was grateful for the educationally open opportunity for his children. The principal of the open school attributed the resurgence of the "back-to-basics" approach to the outgrowth of general unhappiness in the way things are going in the United States today. Mr. Eller's letter concluded that probably most children can learn in widely different educational settings.⁴

If educators themselves are unsure about the meaning and appropriate application of open learning, it is not surprising that members

³T. Darrell Drummond, "British Primary--Locus of Leadership," in Current Research and Perspectives in Open Education, eds. D. Dwain Hearn, Joel Burdin, and Lilian Katz (Washington, D. C.: American Assoc. of Elementary-Kingergarten-Nursery Educators, 1973), p. 66.

⁴"Open Education," Christian Science Monitor 16 January 1978, sec. B6, p. 10.

of the citizenry not actively involved with education should be confused. If educators are openly hostile to the approach, for whatever reasons, parents will see it as a threat to their children's wellbeing and future potential. Therefore, an in-depth look at one teacher's long-standing commitment to the principles of open education and that teacher's implementation of the practices of the open way of responding to children's learning needs would appear to be helpful at this point in educational time.

A description of an open education teacher involves several steps: an articulation of the characteristics of open education and also of an open education teacher, as well as a description of a working open classroom.

The actual evolution of one open education teacher is detailed through the educational autobiography of the author. A framework of the items involved in teacher satisfaction has been devised by the author through which to screen a review of the literature concerning the effects of the practice of open education on the teacher.

The kinds of demands posed by open education practice, in particular those problems and challenges encountered by the author and the manner in which these were met and solved or remained unsolved, will be explored in Chapter IV. In conclusion, a balance will be sought between the demands imposed upon the open education teacher and the rewards gained, and the strengths of the approach will be affirmed. Recommendations will be made concerning possible implications for further study and for practitioners in the field.

Characteristics of Open Education

Open education, like any systematic, reasonable educational approach, is based on beliefs about children's learning. It is a unique way of looking at, thinking about, and providing for educational growth. The basis of any degree of open education is humane respect for each individual involved, regardless of age, and trust that children can be active agents in their own learning. Children are seen as beginning decision-makers and are expected to grow in their ability to assume responsibility for their own behavior and to help each other to maintain order and purpose. Space, time, and materials are flexible components of the school program and respond to the educational needs of the group. The changing roles of the teacher include that of the facilitator, provisioner, challenger, supporter, diagnostician and guide. The sources of learning come from the children and teacher collectively, and the curriculum must reflect the organic growth of the particular learning community. There is firm expectation for children's deep involvement in the learning process as well as acceptance of each child at his own particular stage of growth. The classroom structure is the result of the uniqueness of its participants and is based on the integrity of the members of the group. Children are seen as individuals and work often alone or with a small group, but the goal is that of fully functioning individuals drawn together in community--a community to which each has contributing responsibilities and satisfying privileges.

Vincent Rogers and Bud Church discuss open education in terms of children who are deeply involved in the life of the school, who take responsibility for much of their learning, who make intelligent choices

about what and how to learn and how to spend their time, who care about materials, animals and each other; children who create things and ideas of beauty and who care about learning itself.⁵ Robert Anderson describes the practice of open education as "commitment to children, careful planning, hard work for the teacher, and a significantly different support role for the principal."⁶ Beatrice and Ronald Gross choose four operating principles to explain the open approach: "A decentralized classroom with flexible space, children free to explore this room and to choose their own activities, an environment rich in learning resources, and the teacher and aides working with individuals or small groups, seldom presenting material to the class as a whole."⁷

Descriptions of open education vary, and the actual practice of open education will vary with each teacher and group of children functioning together, and will vary also with the same teacher at different times. The terminology employed to name this approach has multiplied so that Open Classroom, Open Education, Informal Education, Responsive Education, Open-hearted Education, Strategic Intervention, the Leicestershire Plan, the Integrated Day, are a few of the terms used to attempt to attach a label to an educational idea, but the core of the philosophy and principles remain the same.

⁵ Vincent Rogers and Bud Church, eds., Open Education: Critique and Assessment, with a Foreword by Delmo Della-Dora (Washington, D. C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1975), p. 1.

⁶ Robert H. Anderson, Opting for Openness (Arlington, Va.: National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1973), p. 6.

⁷ Beatrice and Ronald Gross, "A Little Bit of Chaos," Open Education, A Sourcebook for Parents and Teachers, eds. Ewald B. Nyquist and Gene R. Hawes (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), p. 10.

In this study, the terms "open education" and "open classroom" will be used synonymously, both referring to the open education approach, but not necessarily in relation to physically open plans. The author chooses to use the feminine pronoun to refer to teachers, since she is the teacher described in the autobiographical section, and to use the masculine pronoun when referring to students. This is to avoid confusion on the part of the reader, and not to reflect any bias on the author's part toward sex roles in the teaching profession. It is to be hoped that future classrooms will be staffed as often with men as with women.

Characteristics of an Open Education Teacher

An open education teacher is a caring individual, committed to providing the best possible educational environment for children. This teacher respects each child for his unique humanity and accepts him as he is. She makes clear distinctions between accepting the child and approving his actions. She encourages children to share in decision making and abides by the decisions she has allowed. She cares enough about each child to be truthful in her relationship with him. She believes that children can learn successfully only when they are comfortable, confident and unafraid to venture, so she provides a climate for learning which is warm, encouraging, non-threatening and challenging. She knows that children feel secure within clearly understood boundaries, so she sets limits and allows for much freedom within the safety of these limits.

In the author's view, an open education teacher feels no restriction on the types of responses she makes to the needs of the children

with whom she lives and works. She provides whatever materials, equipment, advice or lack thereof, and degree of structure are appropriate for each child. She is not afraid to try unique approaches, nor is she afraid to risk mistakes, realizing that mistakes are true steps to learning and eventual mastery. She deems it a positive value for children to see that she is human and fallible, for then children will dare to accept their own humanness and be unafraid to try unique solutions to problems perceived.

Molly Brearley states that the role of the teacher is three-fold: "a provider of materials and stimuli and climate; a mediator of experience who looks on all aspects of children's living as a means of learning, and a teacher whose knowledge of skill enables him to teach at the moment of willingness and ability to learn."⁸ The author accepts this contribution to the working definition of an open education teacher.

Description of a Working Classroom Based on
the Principles of Open Education, Focusing
on the Role of the Teacher

A visitor to an open classroom might (perhaps, should!) have difficulty locating the teacher, because teacher visibility is not so important as teacher presence. It is entirely possible that the visitor may not locate the teacher at all; she may be out of the classroom on a legitimate errand, but her absence should produce no visible change or appearance of the classroom. Gardner and Cass state:

⁸ Molly Brearley, The Teaching of Young Children, Some Aspects of Piaget's Learning Theory (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), p. 184.

When visiting classrooms of good teachers one is always struck by their tendency to stand back and let the children's work be seen. The visitor will be told of the ideas suggested by the children, and success achieved by one or another child will be pointed out. Nothing will be said of their own share in bringing about a situation in which the child's own ideas were accepted and used and their achievements encouraged and helped. This tendency, while it is very commendable as evidence of a teacher's unselfish interest in her pupils, sometimes misleads the inexperienced visitor who imagines that mere provision of materials and opportunities for the children have been all that was required. This preoccupation of good teachers with the children rather than themselves may explain why, when asked by research workers what they think their most important function to be, their answers reveal only a small part of what they actually do.⁹

To further complicate the problem of presenting a description of an open classroom is the fact that arrangements, activities, materials, and groupings differ from day to day, for a genuinely open situation changes frequently in response to the interests and needs of its members. For example, in a classroom for young children, on a particular day, the observer might see a room arranged so that there are several areas of special interests: a math center stocked with manipulative materials, both commercially and teacher produced, including homey items like rocks, shells, bottle caps and clothespins; a music corner with a piano and/or autoharp, rhythm instruments, record player and perhaps even a teacher's guitar; an art area provisioned with easel, paints, clay, crayons, papers of several colors and textures; a cooking corner with hot plate, oven or even small stove and necessary cooking utensils, cookbooks available and maybe a recipe printed and displayed; a cozy reading area stocked with books of many kinds and reading levels, comfortable cushions or rocking chairs, or a reading "tent" providing book display space outside, inside

⁹D. E. M. Gardner and J. E. Cass, The Role of the Teacher in the Infant and Nursery School (London: Pergamon Press, 1965), p. 2.

which one or two children can snuggle to look at books; a listening-looking center with earphones, tape or record player, filmstrip projector, possibly a camera; a housekeeping center with small furniture representing the basic kitchen equipment, dolls, doll beds, and dress-up clothes; a small table holding an aquarium, terrarium and some books on plants and fish and a magnifying glass; and a portion of the shelf space in the room devoted to unit blocks for building, near an open area. There are several plants on the window sills, and on one countertop there are two trays containing small clay pots with shoots just coming through the soil. A workbench with tools and a supply of wood stands just outside in the hall area. The wall space in this classroom is covered with specimens of children's work. One area is set apart for paintings, and there are many, representing many levels of skill and talent. Near the math center are examples of math task recordings and simple posters made by the teacher which state accomplishments by children: "John measured the carpet with the trundle wheel. He found it was three meters long and two meters wide;" or "Sarah and Jane made long roads of unifix blocks that reached from the math corner to the piano;" or "Aaron discovered that if he twirled the square shape really fast, it became a circle." There is one spot with a red drape arranged attractively against a screen and on a low table in front are many objects, all some shade of red. A child-made graph attests to the attendance of boys and girls for one week, and near the meeting area around the piano a calendar shows days marked off with weather pictures. From the ceiling several simple mobiles hang to record a particularly well-loved story.

Two boys are constructing a zoo with the blocks, and they look for the teacher because they need a sign for the zoo. Two girls and a boy are counting out knives, forks and spoons in the housekeeping corner to tally against an inventory list in rebus form; four children are in the math area, two of them working out a problem on geo boards, one balancing objects on a scale while the other child records the results. The teacher is playing a Cuisenaire Rod game on the floor with four children. Two girls are painting at the easel; in the reading corner a young child is reading to an older one, whose arm is stretched companionably over the younger one's shoulder. Several children are working at a table, writing or drawing in notebooks. Two children are leaning on the science table discussing which fish had the babies that were discovered earlier in the day.

The teacher interrupts the Cuisenaire Rod game momentarily to write "School Zoo" on a small slip of paper, and the boys proudly tape it to the roof of their building. The children working with geo boards take their boards, replete with colored rubber bands, to show the teacher the task they've completed. The children working with the balance scale put away the objects and scale and start toward the block corner just before the teacher gets up and plays a signal on the piano. All children stop their activities temporarily and look toward the source of the signal. The teacher announces that children should plan to finish their work in about ten minutes, for it will then be time to clean up. There is a buzz of talking as children hurry to complete their tasks or come to a reasonable stopping point. When the teacher nods to a child, who plays the signal notes on the piano once more, all children begin to pick up

materials and put them away. The teacher both helps with the task and encourages others. Within a few minutes the classroom is in order and children and teacher sit down comfortably on the floor for a discussion of the morning work. Some children bring with them items on which they have been working; others merely relate their accomplishments; the two boys who built the zoo explain that since the teacher allowed them to leave it up until the next day, they will conduct a tour to explain their construction at the conclusion of the discussion time.

The roles of this teacher are both obvious and implied as the classroom is observed during the brief morning visit. She has provisioned the environment with materials reflecting the current interests of the group, books are supplied in appropriate places, a spot of color and beauty exists in the red arrangement, children's work is tastefully and generously displayed. Materials needed by the children during their morning work period are at hand. She challenged the children in the Cuisenaire Rod game to extend their concept of relationships a bit further; she facilitated the reading progress of the young child by suggesting help by the older one and kept her senses tuned to the activity; she supported the block builders by allowing them to leave their building up to extend another day; and she guided the children in the transition from one activity to the next through the cleanup and into the discussion group. Often she seems to be listening to several children at once as she attempts to sort out the many requests and statements directed to her. She looks into the eyes of one child as she listens intently, meanwhile putting a hand companionably on the shoulder of another; then she signals to two others that she will hear them in a minute and reaches for a sign

to hold up which states, "Please wait. I'm busy." She may nod to an older child to attend to the request of the two little ones.

Her role as diagnostician occurs all during the day and again after children depart when she carefully looks through notebooks and accumulated work of the day. Her hours after school are as important as the time she actually spends with the children, for then she is planning, preparing, providing, evaluating both herself and the children and deciding on next steps. This teacher feels comfortable working with children in whatever manner seems to be indicated by the needs of the day. Usually she works with children on an individual basis, or in very small groups, but she holds whole-group meetings daily, and has strong convictions that it is even more important to establish a feeling of community in a classroom where children work individually than it is in traditional classrooms where group work is the order of the day much of the time. Each child is given the amount of guidance and help that he seems to require in any particular learning situation, and the teacher varies the degree and kind of structure she designs.

Perhaps the most outstanding quality of this kind of teacher is that she exhibits openness in its most inclusive meaning: she is open to suggestions, to new learnings, to new applications of old theories and untried solutions; is open to those about her, whether young or adult; in a word, she is open-minded and open hearted, embracing all who learn as her fellow travelers.

Before going on to a review of the literature, it is necessary to clarify briefly what open education is *not*, in order to prevent confusion. Open education is not large numbers of children in a large open

space, rotating from one teacher to another on a set time schedule; or all children going through a prescribed sequence of academic activities at their own individual rates; nor is it each child in a school group working in isolation for most of each school day, and it most certainly is not "free school" where children are given freedom, which often turns into license, to use the environment in any way they choose, with little or no direction from a teacher, and in which they may choose to do nothing at all, with no resulting action on the part of the teacher.

Open classrooms are often vertically grouped; children of several ages being in one classroom. Although many open educators favor this family arrangement, it is not a requisite.

Martha Norris gives a working definition of an educationally open classroom that seems particularly apt:

Children learn best in rich and stimulating environments where there are opportunities for self-expression through language, art and music, where attitudes of inquiry are promoted and sustained through appropriate experiences in science and math; where reading is viewed as a source of pleasure and information; where respect for persons is a guiding moral principle and where prime consideration is the value of the uniqueness of the child, his interest, his level of functioning and the contribution he can make as a group member.¹⁰

¹⁰ Martha Norris, The Role of the Advisor in Open Education (Bethesda, Md.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 115 402, 1975), p. 8.

C H A P T E R I I
LITERATURE PERTAINING TO THE TEACHER
PRACTICING OPEN EDUCATION

The author's purpose is to review the literature which deals directly with the influence of the practice of open education on the teacher.

It is frustrating that so many writers say the same things in much the same manner and the process begins to resemble the cracked phonograph record that goes round and round repeating one phrase over and over. But far more frustrating is the fact that with so many thousands of words printed in books, dissertations and articles, so few of them refer to the teacher as a person. The search is revealing in the story told by numbers alone. In one review of the literature on open education, twenty-nine books are listed, twenty-one of them written between 1964 and 1974 and eight books written between 1975 and 1978. In a much more extensive review of open education literature, that compiled by Robert Horwitz,¹ the decline of literature dealing with the open concept becomes startlingly obvious. From 1961 to 1971, Horwitz lists seventy books; between 1972 and 1976 the number is two hundred sixty-seven! In 1977 there are only twelve. The high point of the listing for one year comes in 1975, which produced eighty-two. The ERIC files

¹Robert A. Horwitz, "Psychological Effects of the 'Open Classroom'" (Bethesda, Md.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service ED 156 972, 1978), pp. 30-76.

told much the same story--decreasing interest in open education--and if numbers alone indicate interest, the numbers show that open education is losing ground.

Still another disappointment, although not unexpected to the author, is the application of open education terminology used to describe physically open schools and classrooms with no real relation to educationally open programs. Many research reports, articles and dissertations whose titles appeared to refer to the teacher in open education, described other aspects of the approach, or concerned a different educational system. Since the author's focus is the effect of the practice of open education on the teacher, publications concerning the implications of open education for other aspects of the approach, while interesting and commendable, are not applicable to this study.

Vincent Rogers stressed the need for research into teachers' experience when he stated, "The experience of teachers is probably one of the most neglected reservoirs of help, or verification, if you will, of what works. Yet we tend to look down our noses at this."² This was written in 1973, and one must assume that educators are still "looking down their noses" at this area of possible inquiry, if the literature available in 1979 is a measure. Therefore, much of the reading had to be discarded as having no actual bearing on this study.

The paucity of literature regarding the person of the teacher in the educationally open classroom necessitated the author's returning again

²Vincent Rogers, "Current Research in 'Open' Informal Education," in Current Research and Perspectives in Open Education, p. 24.

and again to those earlier writers who espoused the approach. Another reason for re-examining the writings of these early authors is that (in the author's opinion) what they said was important, and they said it with authority. The author makes no apology for frequent citing of the works of the familiar, but not particularly current, authors such as: Mary Precious and Norman Brown, Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Lillian Weber, Sybil Marshall, Vincent Rogers, Anne and John Bremer, Leonard Sealey, Elwyn Richardson, Roland Barth, and others whose names are synonymous with the term open education.

It was necessary to devise a framework through which to view literature that did relate directly or indirectly to practicing teachers in open classrooms. The author discovered a research report by Robert Horwitz,³ an updated version of his monograph "Psychological Effects of 'Open Classroom' Teaching on Primary School Children" which had been published in 1976. Horwitz chose to summarize the great number of evaluative research studies on open education in box score form, grouping studies together according to outcome variables. The results were interesting in themselves, although not relating directly to teachers of open classrooms but to the students in those classrooms. (Open education children tended to have more differentiated self concepts; they described themselves in less rigid, more subtle and thoughtful ways; they were less future-oriented; they had more open conceptions of social sex roles; there was more group problem solving. They tended to be more cooperative and less competitive. They seemed to possess much more positive attitudes

³Horwitz, "Psychological Effects of the 'Open Classroom,' 1978," p. 8.

toward school. Horwitz pointed out that D. E. M. Gardner's 1966 study showed much the same results.⁴

It was decided to adapt and modify the outcome variables defined by Horwitz and construct a framework for describing possible teacher satisfactions, against which to explore relative literature. Horwitz selected ten items: academic achievement, self-concept, attitude toward school, creativity, curiosity, adjustment and anxiety, independence, locus of control, cooperation and interaction. These have been modified for this report in the following manner:

1. Personal and Academic Growth - Teachers need to continue to search for intellectual stimulation and increase of knowledge, both in areas directly concerned with their professional career and in non-career related fields.

2. Self-concept - As important for teachers as for children is the feeling of self-confidence, competence, readiness to try new ideas, to risk making mistakes because of a sure feeling of self-worth and respect for oneself. An individual should experience a continuum of growth toward this goal throughout his/her entire life.

3. Attitude Toward Professional Career - Teachers, to feel success, need to have positive, enthusiastic attitudes toward teaching, a certain childlike eagerness to "get on with the job."

4. Creativity - Not all teachers wish to be artistically creative, but all should have desires to create order and beauty in some manner. This creativity may occur in the arts (music, drama, writing or art), or in the art of teaching itself, creating new methods as well as approaching problems through new insights.

⁴Ibid.

5. Interaction and Cooperation with Colleagues - It is difficult to teach in isolation; teachers need support and stimulus from others engaged in the same vocation.

6. Administrative Support - A climate of mutual trust between teachers and administrators is necessary to promote confidence and decrease anxiety.

7. Independence and Locus of Control - Teachers need to be independent in order to respond as they think best to each child and situation, and the locus of control must be internal. The feeling of control over one's own destiny promotes healthy functioning.

The following two items were included also:

8. Financial and Job Security - All teachers need the support of knowing that if they work at their profession with earnest endeavor and continue to strive to learn and grow, they will be able to support themselves and continue in their chosen vocation.

9. Rest, and Recreational Refreshment of Body and Spirit - Since the practice of open education makes substantial demands upon teachers, it is essential that they have occasions for renewal.

This particular teacher makes no claim to having compiled a complete list of items necessary for teacher satisfaction, and those listed could be combined in variously different ways. Also, some of the relevant literature has bearing on more than one item in a single reference. However, it seems more important to "get on with the job" than to spend time in endless refining of the list. These nine items were chosen to "read against," and these items will meld one into another unless carefully spread apart to suit the purposes of this study. The natural integration

of learning tends to work its own magic and pulls together ideas and subjects one had thought to separate into categories.

Personal and Professional Growth

Adventure in Creative Education⁵ describes Sybil Marshall's

experiment in teacher education with fifteen teachers and headmasters in England. Long dissatisfied with teacher training as it had existed in England, Mrs. Marshall decided to try a radical approach. She would take fifteen "highly intelligent, experienced-hardened, tough and mature adults" and after their completion of part-time inservice courses over two terms, she would live and work with them for an entire summer term of ten weeks (which stretched to thirteen) not teaching them techniques of classroom managements or cram courses in elementary subjects, but allowing them to use their own minds and hearts and hands to experience learning. Her goal was to release the creative powers of teachers through their tackling individually and together as many forms of creative work as possible.

One of the intentions of this educational experiment was that it should place the teacher once again in the position of the taught. Marshall selected a theme from which to work during their weeks together. This theme was Marvell's poem, "Upon Nun Appleton House." As the theme was explored, she anticipated that the adults would experience the joys and frustrations of all the divergent inquiries, tasks, and creative responses that might grow from this theme. With adults, as with children,

⁵Sybil Marshall, Adventure in Creative Education (Oxford, London: Pergamon Press, 1968), p. 7.

it is not satisfactory nor motivational to tell them facts, solutions and conclusions; these must be worked out, bit by bit, as the learning adventure progresses. So it was with Marshall's "guinea pigs" (her term for these particular students). The book details each step of the adventure as these adults learned to work with clay, poetry, papier mâché, paints, historic digs, authorship, movement and music. The participants grew in power and in self confidence. Their awareness of their environment, history, arts, all areas of learning, expanded.

Mrs. Marshall states, "It is not merely enthusiasm--it is vigour, and curiosity and delight, and wonder, and the ability to see old knowledge anew, as through childlike eyes."⁶ She made sure that "everyone is working right up to the limit of his potential . . . keeping them alive as warm-hearted human beings, giving them a chance now and again to fill themselves up with the culture they ought to be dispensing, and making them full, rounded personalities that induce in their pupils the desire to learn, as well as displaying the kind of enthusiasm for education that is so contagious in any classroom."⁷

The teachers who lived and learned with Sybil Marshall in that thirteen-week experiment wrote letters to her after it was over which helped her to see that they had experienced personal and professional growth. Their responses indicated that they deeply appreciated the opportunity to expand their creative horizons by delving into their own innermost selves to find resources they were unaware of previously. One student mentioned that the increasing length of time after the conclusion of the course only re-affirmed its value. Several wrote of the course

⁶Ibid., p. 45.

⁷Ibid., p. 7.

as a memorable adventure because of its exacting demands which triggered exciting responses from the individuals involved. Several members of the group expressed great satisfaction in their ability to create more stimulating classrooms for the students they taught. Some wrote of their joy in trying new forms of self-expression. These adult students commented that their eyes were opened anew to everyday experiences which they had formerly taken for granted.

The author finds these acknowledgments made to Sybil Marshall to be of real significance. The qualities which Marshall's adult students discovered and expanded are some of the very qualities which seem so important for open education teachers to possess, or develop. The ability to look for new interests, to find deep satisfaction in developing hitherto unknown aptitudes or skills, the need for teachers to experience the creative activities available to both adults and children, the personal security which risks making mistakes for the sake of learning, and the realization that learning involves many disciplines and is, in reality, integrated--these qualities add depth and joy to a teacher's life.

A corresponding kind of educational experience was that of Charles Rathbone when he took part in an in-service training course organized by the Education Department Advisory Section of the Loughborough University of Technology. This lasted only one short week, but in many ways was a much-shortened version of Marshall's experiment. Rathbone discusses this experience in his article "On Preparing the Teacher: A Lesson from Loughborough." Rathbone says, "What this special work allowed

was a self-multiplying set of options."⁸ He describes the minimal organization of the course, the five or six workshop rooms which were crammed with materials for art and science and mathematics, English, and music, combining also a number of highly-skilled fellow students ready and willing to help. Staff teachers were present but were quiet and unobtrusive and only evident when they were called upon. There were some group activities, but these sessions were always voluntary. The members of the group were "treated as though we had both the competence and right to make important decisions about our own learning. . . . Learning at every turn was individualized; flexibility the watchword."⁸

Rathbone confesses that he experienced difficulty with some of the materials provided because of a "fundamental inability to release myself to the learning situation. . . . Try as I might, I was unable to approach those materials in the unassuming, unpresuming, honest ignorance that was required for me to learn from them."⁹ Rathbone concluded that he found a psychological "climate" in the environment at Loughborough that somehow caused new insights to occur, and

. . . in respect to at least three relationships--of myself to the materials, myself to teacher-figures, myself to my own image of myself as a learner--I came to see myself more clearly, and that insight into what already existed made new changes possible. So in the end, the lesson I took from Loughborough was a lesson about learning.¹⁰

Obviously, this experience provided a means for personal growth for Mr. Rathbone.

⁸ Charles H. Rathbone, ed., "On Preparing the Teacher: A Lesson from Loughborough," Open Education: The Informal Classroom (New York: Citation Press, 1971), p. 158.

⁹ Ibid., p. 164.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 167.

In "The Wellsprings of Teaching,"¹¹ Edward Yeomans discusses one of the early workshops held in this country to acquaint teachers with the basic philosophy of the British open movement, and to allow them to explore and learn from some of the techniques for implementing the approach. The premise was much the same as that which underlay Sybil Marshall's "Creative Adventure" and also the Loughborough session Rathbone attended. The goal was to provide opportunities for the participants to learn from each other, from the assembled staff (one British administrator, Roy Illsley, some American teachers and administrators who had been involved with the Integrated Day approach), and from the environment, with a minimum of distraction.

Headmaster Illsley's narration of the assumptions under which the workshop was planned are so appropriate to a review of literature pertaining to the personal and professional growth of the teacher, that the author must attempt to summarize his statement, found in its entirety in Yeoman's "Wellsprings." The plan was to give teachers a month in which to think and feel as persons, to reappraise their functions as learners and teachers--"not to be a series of tips for tired teachers"¹² but time to explore their own learning and question the entire educative process through discovering an area of interest and following that interest wherever it led. This process can be very threatening to those involved, although the workshop intended no evaluative process of the participants. Because all people are individuals and yet members of a community, the

¹¹Edward Yeomans, "The Wellsprings of Teaching," Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 263.

¹²Ibid.

workshop was planned to make available to the participants times for freedom to be and work alone and also times for the comfort and privilege of community life. Real freedom was planned, freedom to choose to do or not to do, to use the materials provided or venture forth in search of their own. The search by each member of the workshop for the "well-springs of teaching" was to be promoted through immersion and exploration, carried on individually, into art, music, movement, sculpture, dancing, mathematics, science, and any other creative activity which appealed to an individual. That this plan was successful is attested by the subsequent statements made by some of the teachers who participated:

The most wonderful thing about this summer was the way in which everyone was a source for everyone else. If only we can be the same way with our children.

.
It was one of those rare experiences that has affected my total self--not just as a teacher but as a human being. . . The whole atmosphere was conducive to building self confidence, bringing out creativity and giving me courage to be daring.¹³

Bussis and Chittenden write about seeking personal growth in their article, "Toward Clarifying the Teacher's Role:"

The importance of personal and professional growth is stressed again and again by advisers, by teachers, by various publications. Growth is defined in ways which go well beyond the type of definition (common to some school systems) that equates professional development with the number of credit hours a teacher may accumulate.¹⁴

The pursuit of information--particularly information regarding the physical and cultural characteristics of the surrounding community is a valuable growth promoter. Teachers need to be aware of the many natural

¹³Ibid., p. 274.

¹⁴Anne M. Bussis and Edward A. Chittenden, "Toward Clarifying the Teacher's Role," *ibid.*, p. 129.

starting points for learning in the available environment. Also, they must be aware of the new materials and equipment on the market, and explore for themselves the possibilities these materials may hold for learning. Then, "finally, and in some respects most important, is the teacher's involvement and growth in some area of purely personal interest, be it music, learning how to fly an airplane or photography. It is assumed that the adult who continues to grow personally is an adult who exemplifies what she hopes to promote in children."¹⁵

David Armington states,

Modern education offers teachers the opportunity for a new vision of their professional role . . . learning requires that teachers, as well as children, adopt the spirit and style of the experimenter. . . . The teacher must be, first of all, an investigator of his students, secondly, he must have the opportunity, indeed the responsibility, to continue his own learning.¹⁶

In Open Education, A Study of Selected American Elementary Schools, there are many references to teacher growth, both personal and professional. In this study, Sealey states, "The most critical variable in open education is the quality of the teacher; demands made upon [open education] teachers are extraordinary, for that is the nature of the approach, yet little serious consideration has been given to their developmental needs."¹⁷ Teachers questioned about opportunities for professional growth replied that most courses offered were superficial and that teachers were not offered depth. "Often no special provisions are made for staff who are at different stages of development, so teachers who have progressed beyond the level of merely being informed about open education and its

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 130.

¹⁶ David Armington, "A Plan for Continuing Growth," *ibid.*, p. 78.

¹⁷ Sealey, Open Education, A Study, p. 63.

practice feel their own growth and development has been stunted."¹⁸ Sealey reports that teachers requested differentiated forms of staff development which accommodate to levels of experience, depth of understanding and day-to-day responsibilities, and he warns that if this does not happen, the best people may give up the battle. The study concluded this portion of the report with this statement: "Teachers must accept the fact that their professional growth must be continuous and staff development must be financed and designed so that it responds to the real needs of individual teachers."¹⁹

Joel Burdin addresses the issue of professional and personal growth of teachers in stating, "Teachers should continue to explore and secure some excitement to learning new things, whether directly related to teaching or to personal development."²⁰

Sylvia Ashton-Warner's book, Teacher, chronicles her years of professional growth in New Zealand, where she worked to develop a system of learning she terms "organic."²¹ This approach to learning to read and write grew out of her belief that learning must be so vital to the learner that it grows from inside and is related to his deepest being. The job of the teacher in organic teaching is to draw out from the pupil words that have vital meaning for him, and to base his reading and writing on those words which express his deepest thoughts and feelings. She refers to a

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Joel Burdin, "Preparing Educational Personnel for Open Schools," in Current Research and Perspectives in Open Education, p. 145.

²¹ Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Teacher (New York: Simon Schuster, 1963, Bantam Books, 1971), pp. 25-36.

formula she has found useful: "Release the native imagery of our child and use it for working material."²²

Ashton-Warner was invited to Colorado to teach in a new, private school built by parents who wanted their children to have the benefit of the most enlightened education possible. She arrived in Colorado full of enthusiasm and confidence and anxious to bring her organic theory of learning to American children. Her book, Spearpoint, is a personal reflection on this educational adventure. She expected to continue to grow professionally and welcomed the opportunity to grow personally in a new part of the world. She recounts, instead, a devastating failure. Professionally, she found that American children responded differently to the educational process than did New Zealand children. She felt that American students began to learn from the outside rather than from inmost feelings, and she experienced difficulty helping them to acknowledge their inner feelings. She states, ". . . formula which suits one country well does not necessarily suit another. . . . Children differ profoundly from country to country . . ." ²³ She reiterates this impression many times in the book.

She found Americans warm and friendly, but unready to accept authority or responsibility for strong self discipline. Throughout her year in Colorado she felt frustration in her efforts to establish a real learning climate in the school, and she questioned her own beliefs and philosophy continuously. She school failed to receive a grant for a

²²Idem, Spearpoint, "Teacher" in America (New York: Vintage Books, Division of Random House, 1974), p. 17.

²³Ibid.

second year, and Ashton-Warner concludes her account of the venture thus: "But all I see are pieces of dreams, severed, segmented and fragmented. . . ." ²⁴ It is possible to read into this account her personal growth in spite of professional failure.

Roach van Allen advocates teachers' taking course work in anthropology, in ceramics, in music and in other disciplines and subject areas so that they learn more about themselves and their world. This is a kind of key to open education--"an open mind unlocks the door to an open classroom." ²⁵

For a number of years, Edith Biggs has been a guide to this author. Although her work is in the field of mathematics, much of what she says is relevant to open education in general, and often is particularly relevant to the growth of the teacher. She has stated, "The acceptance by teachers of the responsibility for a truly professional approach to teaching has led them to seek new knowledge and new techniques that will improve their competence in the classroom." ²⁶ She suggests several ways for teachers to "keep up to date" such as: travel, private reading, service on curriculum committees and participation in curriculum research.

The open education approach depends upon shared decision-making, active learning and skill acquisition within a humane environment and

²⁴ Ibid., p. 223.

²⁵ Roach van Allen, "Search and Research," in Current Research and Perspectives, p. 148.

²⁶ Edith E. Biggs and James MacLean, Freedom to Learn: An Active Learning Approach to Mathematics (Reading, Ma., London: Addison-Wesley Canada, Ltd., 1969), p. 201.

leads children to a high degree of independence as learners. An integral part of the approach is the intent to maintain the natural integration of learning. Teachers who foster this kind of learning must have personal learning experiences which lead them toward that same kind of independence as learners.

It becomes clear that a fairly complete review of the literature could be accomplished by referring to this first item alone. (As yet) Roland Barth, Lillian Weber, Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Molly Brearley, Bud Church, Barbara Blitz, George Dennison, John Holt, Herbert Kohl, David and Frances Hawkins, and a host of others, have not been mentioned in this context.

Each of the above-mentioned writers speaks to the personal and professional growth of an open education teacher, either directly or by implication. Virgil Howes states simply, "The teacher must be an intellectually authentic person."²⁷ Anthony Kallett expresses it thus, "In short, teachers must become learners and must be seen as learners by the children in their classes. . . . We need to find ways to help teachers continue their own education and think like learners."²⁸ Anne and John Bremer say, "Our task is to enable children to love learning and revel in its mastery. To do this, we must be the chief learner--that is all."²⁹

²⁷Virgil M. Howes, Informal Teaching in the Open Classroom (New York: MacMillan, 1974), p. 99.

²⁸Anthony Kallett, In Our Experience, the Changing Schools of Leicestershire, ed. Stewart C. Mason (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1970), pp. 4-5.

²⁹Anne and John Bremer, Open Education, A Beginning (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), p. 10.

Sylvia Ashton-Warner and Elwyn Richardson and Sybil Marshall each exemplify the teacher who is a learner, who grows professionally and personally. Richardson refers often in his beautiful book, In the Early World, to his continual returning to an earlier base of thinking and then venturing forth on new tangents.³⁰ Sybil Marshall talks about the need she felt to find new ways to bring a love of learning for its own sake into the lives of the children and herself in the Kingston County Primary School in England. She, who had not been able to attend a university because of lack of money, gradually evolved a method of teaching and learning that evidenced her continual process of academic and personal growth.³¹ Sylvia Ashton-Warner in New Zealand worked at finding new ways to approach the task of teaching Maori children along with white New Zealanders and found herself growing and changing every year of the twenty-four she chronicles in Teacher.³²

The TDR Report, produced in 1971 by Herbert Walberg and Susan Thomas, deals with many aspects of the growth of teachers, including: the teacher seeks further information about the community and information about new materials; experiments herself with materials; views herself as an active experimenter in the process of adapting ideas and materials; sees herself as a continual learner who explores new ideas and possibilities

³⁰ Elwyn S. Richardson, In the Early World, with a Foreword by John Melser (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964), pp. 16, 32, 42-45, 51, 117, 145.

³¹ Sybil Marshall, An Experiment in Education (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1970), Section I.

³² Ashton-Warner, Teacher, passim.

both inside and outside the classroom, and values open education as an opportunity for her own personal growth and change.³³

Peter Wilson's dissertation deals with the identification of those teacher competencies which are necessary for effective teaching in an Integrated Day situation. The Integrated Day is based on open education philosophy, so his conclusions are relevant to this study. He devotes a section to the teacher's seeking opportunities to promote growth, and he states:

Clearly, the implication is that the teacher as a professional is engaged, committed to something far beyond its being merely a job. . . . It is essential that the teacher's perception of herself as an active experimenter and learner not be divorced from the perception she has of herself in the classroom alongside the child.³⁴

Wilson summarizes the section thus:

Basically, this theme speaks to the whole area of the teacher's professional commitment . . . the teacher sees herself as a learner. . . . Her commitment is further manifested in her active involvement in seeking out new materials and new possibilities with material she already has. She also explores the school neighborhood, seeing the community, particularly parents and relatives, as an important resource.³⁵

The review of literature pertaining to the personal and professional growth of the teacher establishes several points. Professionally, it is important for teachers to experience themselves the kinds of learning they want children to experience. Teachers need to experiment

³³Herbert J. Walberg and Susan Christie Thomas, Characteristics of Open Education: Toward an Operational Definition (Newton: TDR Associates, Inc., 1971), Appendix A, Items 51-54.

³⁴Peter Wilson, "The Identification of Teacher Competencies Central to Working in an Integrated Day Approach" (Ed.D. dissertation, School of Education, University of Massachusetts, 1972), p. 5.

³⁵Ibid., p. 15.

with materials and with the environment itself, to explore new possibilities for learning. They need to become aware of the many possibilities inherent in everyday experiences in order to capitalize on available opportunities for children's learning. Teachers need to see themselves as learners alongside their students. The teachers interviewed in Sealey's study requested opportunities for professional growth, and asked for courses in depth, relating to open education.³⁶

Personally, teachers feel the need to develop new interests outside the classroom. It is important to experience new avenues of creativity, not only to become better teachers, but to expand and grow as human beings. It is satisfying and exciting to discover new possibilities within oneself, and to develop skills with which to enjoy new avenues of expression. Some of the teachers who participated in creative workshops reported that they realized greater feelings of self-confidence and received courage to try new ideas. The literature supports the Bussis and Chittenden statement that "the adult who continues to grow personally is an adult who exemplifies what she hopes to promote in children."³⁷

To conclude this section, it would appear from the literature reviewed that teachers must have opportunities for both personal and professional growth in order to develop fully rounded personalities, to become more complete human beings and therefore to become competent and effective both in the classroom and in the area of personal living.

³⁶Sealey, Open Education: A Study, pp. 16-17.

³⁷Bussis and Chittenden, in Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 130.

Perhaps Harold Lyon's statement that "when learning is a function of the inherent needs of the individual it becomes a joyful experience"³⁸ could be amended to state, "When learning is a function of the inherent needs of the individual, the final achievement of the learning task, although not necessarily the act of achieving, becomes a joyful satisfaction."

Self-Concept of the Teacher

It is important for a successful teacher to establish and maintain a sound self image. This is particularly true for teachers in open classrooms, for their new role allows them to be humanly fallible. A feeling of self confidence, readiness to try new ideas and to risk making mistakes, should be the hallmark of effective open teachers.

Brown and Precious speak to this characteristic of successful teachers in The Integrated Day in the Primary School: ". . . a teacher needs to be an adjusted, resilient and sympathetic person having a fund of humour and common sense. . . . She must be sensitive to other people's feelings and attitudes as well as being aware of her own personality, limitations and capabilities."³⁹

Vincent Rogers, posing possible themes for research, states:

The sixth research theme concerns the teacher and her optimum development. One of the most moving experiences I ever had as a

³⁸ Harold C. Lyon, Jr., Learning to Feel--Feeling to Learn, Humanistic Education for the Whole Man. Studies of the Person, eds. Carl R. Rogers and William R. Coulson (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1971), p. 116.

³⁹ Mary Brown and Norman Precious, The Integrated Day in the Primary School (New York, Ballantine Books, by arrangement with Agathon Press, 1973), p. 19.

teacher educator was participating briefly in a teacher workshop conducted by Vernon Hale, a British headmaster who had come to the University of Connecticut one summer. Vernon succeeded in getting these teachers, by the end of six weeks, to believe in themselves as people who could do things, who could make things, who could write poetry, who could even dare. . . . It is important to develop teachers who believe in themselves, to become what I call real professionals, because so much of what we are talking about in open education depends upon a teacher's operating this way.⁴⁰

Surely teachers who can believe in themselves enough to dare to try new paths must have solid concepts of self. In a study of "Personal Characteristics of Teachers that Affect Students' Learning" done by Robert Fox and Ecbert Peck and presented at the annual meeting of American Educators Research Association in Toronto, Canada, in March of 1978, the authors report that there was "significant relationship between teacher level of self acceptance and teacher classroom effectiveness," and that "student performance correlates positively with childrens' perception of the teacher's positive feelings."⁴¹ This research provides an interesting reason for teachers to develop a positive concept of self, when related to the students' success being dependent in part on *their* perception of the strong self image of their teachers. Sybil Marshall says that teachers should be "spiritually healthy and physically tough, with strong, full personalities."⁴²

Brown and Precious refer often to the necessity of teachers having confidence in themselves in order to venture forth with the children they teach. They state:

⁴⁰V. Rogers, in Current Research and Perspectives, p. 24.

⁴¹Robert B. Fox and Ecbert P. Peck, "Personal Characteristics of Teachers that Affect Students' Learning," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Toronto, Canada, 27-31 March 1978 (Bethesda, Md.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 156 644, 1978), p. 71.

⁴²Marshall, Adventures in Creative Education, p. 5.

As well as being intelligent and well trained, the teacher needs to be an adjusted, resilient and sympathetic person having a fund of humour and common sense. Teaching could be classed as an art and a science. Perception and creativity are the two essential characteristics possessed by the inspired teacher. She must be sensitive to other people's feelings and attitudes as well as being aware of her own personality, her limitations and capabilities.⁴³

A well-developed sense of personal identity makes this kind of personality possible. There is much in this book about the relationship between teacher and child, which is closely akin to parent-child relationship, but more objective. Teacher and child become friends, and partners, but the relationship must not become demanding or presumptuous. Teachers with strong self concepts can regard the children they teach in this way without needing the dependent affection which some children bestow on their teachers and which is an obstacle to real growth on the part of the child. The authors add, "It is important, too, that the teacher is not afraid for the children to know that she is a human being and so has weaknesses as well as strengths."⁴⁴ This is in contrast to earlier perceptions of the teacher role which demanded that teachers must never show 'a chink in the armor'--and it followed that the weakness of the 'chinks' would be cause for lowered self concept on the part of the teacher. Brown and Precious further state, "The teacher must have real conviction and understanding of the underlying philosophy [of openness] and have the confidence in herself to carry it out, feel secure in her ability as a teacher, enjoy the thought of the unexpected happening in her room and of the classroom scene changing hour by hour."⁴⁵

⁴³ Brown and Precious, The Integrated Day, p. 19.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 22.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

Bussis and Chittenden speak about the teacher's need to look to her own feelings in determining what is good and bad, and as she reestablishes the "self" as a legitimate source for guiding behavior, she places great value on freedom of choice--for herself and for the children she teaches.⁴⁶ These teachers are able to be honest with children about their own feelings, which encourages children that there is nothing wrong with admitting human limitations, that it is acceptable to express lack of understanding, fear, and uncertainty. But only a person who has already established her own sense of self confidence, in spite of human limitations, can function in this open and honest way with students.

When Roy Illsley described the workshop plan referred to in Edward Yeoman's chapter, "The Wellsprings of Learning," he stated that one of the purposes of the workshop was "to allow teachers to become aware of the new security which comes when a teacher is prepared to become psychologically mature, and accept the facts of uncertainty and ambiguity."⁴⁷

The Open Classroom, Making It Work, by Barbara Blitz, devotes Chapter Two to a discussion of teacher attitudes and values. She cautions against over-identification with children, as well as over-identification with the teacher's own self when a child. She advises teachers to seek honest reappraisals of their feelings and values and develop the ability to deal with them from inner strength. She concludes, "None of us is the perfect person we would like to be in all areas, but awareness and

⁴⁶Bussis and Chittenden, in Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 131.

⁴⁷Yeomans, in Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 264.

planning in the areas which dissatisfy us can help to create the kind of classroom we want to have. With planning and retraining of our behavior, our dreams can become reality."⁴⁸

An interesting book entitled Opening Hearts and Classrooms, by Jane Bernstein and Kay Fried, discusses the desirable qualities of a teacher in this way:

It is important for each teacher to assess her own strengths, limitations, and ability to love and to relate to . . . children. Thus, the prime requisite is the teacher's knowledge of herself. Her accurate insight into her limitations and strengths are critical factors in this self-understanding and self-acceptance. To know ourselves means to become aware of our potential destructiveness as well as our great capacity to build and support. The ability to grow and to be able to see oneself objectively is essential to teaching.⁴⁹

Objectivity does require courage. They quote Arthur Jersild: "The teacher's understanding and acceptance of himself is the most important requirement in any effort he makes to help students know themselves and to gain healthy attitudes of self-acceptance."⁵⁰ They discuss the security in oneself that enables the teacher to have the courage to take risks, the readiness to accept pain and disappointment that dealing with children invariably provides.

Peter Wilson identifies characteristics of effective Integrated Day teachers which pertain to the self and states that the way a teacher sees herself determines the way she will use that self. He quotes from many sources to develop characteristics of self image, and concludes that

⁴⁸ Barbara Blitz, The Open Classroom, Making It Work (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1973), p. 47.

⁴⁹ Jane Bernstein and Kay Fried, Opening Hearts and Classrooms (Hicksville, N. Y.: Exposition Press, 1975), p. 30.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

effective teachers feel good about themselves, see themselves as able, liked, dependable and worthy.⁵¹

Sylvia Ashton-Warner's experience in Colorado attests to the demands made upon a teacher's self concept when faced with serious educational obstacles. She describes her arrival at the school: "I'm agog with confidence in my own work, knowing it like ABC. . . ." ⁵² Then Spearpoint details the gradual erosion of that confidence: "I'm having trouble with the dream I brought of a former infant room; I cannot relate it at any point to what I find here."⁵³ Her self image is shaken by the lack of the children's response to her; she wonders if her accent is at fault, if perhaps they may never respond to her at all. " . . . the days are a matter of survival and my work is XYZ."⁵⁴ It requires a strong sense of self to withstand such a test.

An individual's value system is closely related to his or her concept of self. In the case of Ashton-Warner's disappointing venture in Colorado, a question arises about the extent to which her own value system may have contributed to the lack of success of the project. The author offers no facile answers, but deems this an issue worth future investigation.

Carl Rogers, in Freedom to Learn, discusses what he terms the "fully functioning personality:"

He's able to live fully, in and with each and all of his feelings and reactions. He is able to permit his total organism to function

⁵¹Wilson, "The Identification of Teacher Competencies," p. 15.

⁵²Ashton-Warner, Spearpoint, p. 4.

⁵³Ibid., p. 21.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 4.

in all its complexity in selecting from the multitude of possibilities that behavior which, in this moment of time, would be most generally and genuinely satisfying.⁵⁵

This seems to have a strong relation to the positive concept of self as a worthy and capable person.

Teaching involves an outpouring of self for the teacher. The self she brings to this task must needs be resilient, sturdy enough to withstand obstacles to success and small and large educational disappointments, yet still feel capable to carry on. When Sylvia Ashton-Warner felt her self confidence shaken, she questioned her own ability to achieve the dream of the new school. She worried that her own unrest would contagiously affect the children. She continued to strive, in the face of what she considered great odds, and still her efforts met only partial success. It could be postulated that a teacher with a weaker sense of self might not have survived the year.

The literature stresses the need for teachers in innovative, open forms of education, to develop strong and positive concepts of self, in order to function most effectively both in and outside of the classroom.

Attitude Toward Professional Career

If a teacher is to be successful in an open classroom, it is reasonable to assume that she must have a healthy, hopeful, positive and enthusiastic attitude toward teaching; an attitude the author describes as a childlike eagerness to "get on with the job." In looking for literary references to this assumption, it was quickly ascertained that

⁵⁵ Carl R. Rogers, Freedom to Learn, Studies of the Person, eds. Carl R. Rogers and William R. Coulson (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1969), p. 288.

there weren't many! It may be that the few cited here might have "fit" better in some other category, but for current purposes, they shall remain here.

"An Interview with Dorothy Welch," conducted by George Hein and reported in Open Education by Nyquist and Hawes, tells of the replies of a science teacher in New Hampshire when asked why she made the change to a more responsive teaching style. "To be perfectly truthful, I was just bored with being a teacher. I was unhappy. I wasn't just unhappy, I was miserable."⁵⁶ She tells of accepting a new position with the hopes that her attitude toward teaching would change, and seeing a folder for a workshop at ESS in Massachusetts she decided to give the workshop a try, and "I've been going straight ever since."⁵⁷ She discusses her growing sense of how children learn and how necessary it was to blend art with social studies and allow children to work with materials, "Basically [children] can recall what happens to them when they touch it, when they feel it, when they look at it and can have something to look at."⁵⁸ Her attitude toward her career was materially changed by attendance at that workshop and the interview rang out with the 'eagerness to get on with the job.'

To quote Edith Biggs again, "The acceptance by teachers of the responsibility for a truly professional approach to teaching had led them to seek new knowledge and new techniques that will improve their competence in the classroom."⁵⁹

⁵⁶George Hein, "An Interview with Dorothy Welch," in Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 155.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 155.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 156.

⁵⁹Biggs and MacLean, Freedom to Learn, p. 201.

Charles Silberman in "It Can Happen Here" talks about the advantages of open, informal teaching and how it relieves the teacher of the awful burden of omniscience--of the obligation of having to know everything and trying to teach the entire range of abilities all at one time--as well as the necessities of being a time-keeper and disciplinarian. "The release of the teacher's energy is incalculable. She is free to devote all her time and energy to teaching itself."⁶⁰ (The author will respond to this in Chapter IV.) "The result is a kind of professional satisfaction and reward that is simply not found in the average formal classroom."⁶¹ He quotes a North Dakota teacher describing her experience of being "retreaded:" "It has not been painless. I've cursed and blessed the New School inwardly--sometimes simultaneously. I am not satisfied with what I am doing, but I could never go back to what I did before."⁶²

A report by Raymond Legrand and others describes a study to re-educate veteran teachers to understand and conceptualize child-centered, informal education as preparation for new open settings in their school. This report, "Teacher Renewal for Informal Education, A Cooperative Inservice Model," presented at John Carroll University in December of 1975, included a model planned with a six-step program including: one day of needs assessment, three days training, a planning day for a day of

⁶⁰ Charles Silberman, "It Can Happen Here," in Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 77.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

simulation when the teachers and classes moved into all-purpose rooms designed to simulate the open classrooms in the new school, followed by a day of debriefing and goal setting. After eighteen days in the new building there was a follow-up session. The results: teacher attitudes regarding the new school changed from doubt, uncertainty, and anxiety, to more positive ones. (Just what the "more positive" attitudes were, were not explained!) This study does detail a genuine attempt to ease transition for teachers and help them establish constructive attitudes toward their teaching assignments.⁶³

In All Things Bright and Beautiful?, Ronald King describes the feeling of typical British teachers of young children. "Being an infants' teacher was not without its conflicts, strains and problems, but most teachers expressed considerable satisfaction with their job."⁶⁴ These teachers are seen by King as secure in their ideologies and their sense of the demands of the job. Their relationships with the children are marked by professional pleasantness, affection and equanimity. "It's our job to keep them happy."⁶⁵ These British teachers look at their job as being concerned with the most critical age of education, and implied that this was a satisfying value to them.

In 1973, Julius Buski wrote a dissertation entitled "A Study of Matters Teachers View as Important in Preparing for Working in Open Area

⁶³ Raymond A. Legrand, et al, "Teacher Renewal for Informal Education," (Bethesda, Md.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 117 078, 1975), p. 1.

⁶⁴ Ronald King, All Things Bright and Beautiful? (Chichester, New York, Brisbane, Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1978), p. 72.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 71.

Schools."⁶⁶ Dr. Buski's goal was to identify those matters (skills, competencies, knowledge, understandings) which teachers in open settings believe should be given top priority in preparing to work in open area schools. The author attempts to see this in the light of educational openness, although it is not clear that this was intended. The "matters" which teachers reported as priorities were: being cooperative, being flexible, serving a period of internship in an open area, knowing how to take part in cooperative planning, possessing empathy for children and co-workers, showing tolerance, knowing how to teach listening and comprehension skills and having student teaching experience in the open area. An additional six items were added: capability of providing for individual study habits for children. This report is more interesting than helpful. All the "matters" (perhaps "characteristics" would be a better term) are applicable to open education teachers, and surely there is no quarrel with that, with the possible exception of the last of the second set--"providing individual study habits for children." Somehow, to this author, this is not a condition one can do "to" or "for" children; they must be helped to work this out for themselves as they begin to assume more responsibility for their own learning. Also, the ability to teach listening and comprehension skills, while commendable, seems to have little particular implication for moving into open classroom teaching. Nonetheless, perhaps these characteristics might fit the category of a teacher's attitude toward her professional career.

⁶⁶ Julius Stephen Buski, "A Study of Matters Teachers View As Important in Preparation for Working in Open Area Elementary Schools" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 1973), Dissertation Abstracts International, 1973, 34.094, p. 5771, University Microfilms, OP 74 6811.

The literature appears to support the desirability of teachers' having a positive attitude toward their chosen career. A sense of the inherent value of teaching in an educationally open situation lends strength to the educational commitment. Teachers who see open education as a challenging and fulfilling way of working with children are deeply involved with their work and are interested and eager to "get on with the job."

Creativity

Much of the literature explored so far in this study has implications for creativity and teaching. Sybil Marshall based her whole project of in-service experience for teachers on the need for them to allow themselves to be creative. She wished them to free themselves of the ingrown inhibitions which prevented them from "releasing their own creative potential," and she succeeded in her goal. The progress of creating was extremely important to Mrs. Marshall, but the product also was valued for what it meant in terms of growth to the individual involved. [Emphasis added by author.] Her "guinea pigs" came to the experience as many American teachers would, feeling ill at ease, awkward, embarrassed, incapable of real creativity. Together, the group experienced a true rebirth of skills and talents. These "highly intelligent, experience-hardened, tough and mature adults"⁶⁷ began to use paints, clay, words and music to express the ideas they were generating and exploring. Teachers who "couldn't draw" did so to the expressed pleasure of the others, those who "couldn't dance" learned to move in new and unique

⁶⁷ Marshall, Adventures in Creative Education, p. 38.

ways, those who "couldn't write" composed poetry and stories of quality. Non-artists made clay bowls, and made and re-made them until they could find satisfaction in something of worth. Mrs. Marshall expresses her belief in the value of creative experience this way:

One teaches art because man has always symbolized his experience graphically and will continue to do so; the children are being given a key to past human experience as well as a means of symbolizing their own. This is equally true of mathematics, of language, ⁶⁸of movement, of music--of anything, in fact, in the school curriculum.

This same emphasis on creativity--on adults freeing themselves to express feelings and ideas, of familiarizing themselves with many kinds of materials, was the foundation for the other two workshops reviewed in the section on personal and professional growth. At Loughborough, Rathbone found himself hesitant, insecure, unsure about attempting to use unfamiliar art materials. He was anxious in his relationships with the staff instructors because of his feelings of inadequacy in regard to the materials and opportunities offered. Rathbone's "fundamental inability to release my self to the learning situation"⁶⁹ caused him to look to the teacher for cues on how he was supposed to define and solve some problem. He says, "To discover where you are in respect to lino blocks and to find that you are still at the eight-year-old level is disconcerting. . . . Becoming aware of where you stand can be humiliating; the process of growing and changing, of suddenly moving away from an earlier position, can be profoundly shocking."⁷⁰ And so, through facing creative possibilities, man can

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 144.

⁶⁹Rathbone, Open Education: The Informal Classroom, p. 164.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 166.

learn to face himself, in his deepest self, and the next step is moving outward and forward.

Much the same relationship to creativity was the foundation of the workshop described by Edward Yeomans. He and Headmaster Illsley discussed the workrooms full of materials that held wide possibilities for use, as starting points in the minds of those who might use them. They posed this question, "How can you know or gauge the amount of time that is required for genuinely creative work by children if you have never felt the timelessness of your own sustained exploration?"⁷¹

Teachers, writing of their reasons for attending the workshop, said:

I need to work with many kinds of materials and be guided by those who understand them better than I do. I need, for awhile, to be freed from responsibility as a teacher and to become a learner in much the same way that children are.

.
 . . . I desperately need to become involved in materials and ideas at my own level so that I will be more ready to help and believe in children as they come to my class next fall. . . . I need to spend time finding myself and how I can best work with children in this way.⁷²

Again, Illsley says,

I know that in both the art and music and dance studios the same kinds of things became evident, and perhaps the most rewarding aspect of work in all three classrooms was that teachers who felt that they were artistically and musically illiterate suddenly found this not to be true. A point of entry into the learning situation had been made.⁷³

Long ago, Froebel said:

⁷¹Yeomans, Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 265.

⁷²Ibid., p. 267.

⁷³Ibid., p. 273.

The purpose of teaching and instruction is to bring ever more out of man rather than to put more into him; for that which we can get into man we already know and possess as the property of mankind. On the other hand, what yet is to come out of mankind, what human nature is yet to develop, that we do not yet know.⁷⁴

Carl Rogers, in discussing creativity, states that creativity in learning is best facilitated when self criticism and self evaluation are primary and evaluation by others is secondary.⁷⁵

This author has been addicted to the book, In the Early World, by Elwyn Richardson, for many years. It is a most eloquent testimonial to creativity. Richardson, himself, is obviously an artist and sees the world in artistic terms. He is no sentimentalist who provides a climate for the development of art for children only because it is a beautiful and aesthetic activity, but because he believes that this is the way for children truly to learn. John Melser states in the Foreword, "Children will grow and develop fully in imagination and aesthetic insight only in a classroom where high standards prevail, and where their work will be tested by the critical insight of others."⁷⁶

Richardson was a teacher, and an untried one at that, when he assumed the teacher's position at Oruaiti, a country primary school in the north New Zealand countryside. He was a scientist with aesthetic tastes, and in his eight years in that small school he charted a path of expression through arts which elicited amazing creative response from his students. He gave children the "opportunity to reach their full

⁷⁴ Friedrich Froebel, The Education of Man, trans. W. N. Hailman (New York: August M. Kelley, 1970), p. 279.

⁷⁵ C. Rogers, Freedom to Learn, p. 163.

⁷⁶ Richardson, In the Early World, Foreword, p. vii.

height as artists, as craftsmen, as scientists and as students, through the establishment of a community where self respect demanded this generosity of giving and receiving."⁷⁷ As teaching becomes more conscious an art, the journeyman will move closer to the satisfactions of this kind of teaching, and new generations of children will learn to recognize and understand the value of work into which love has flowed. John Melser, in the Foreword to the book, also says, "From their paintings, their prints and their pottery they learn answers to the question 'Who am I?' They are then free to respect others for their achievements and their insight because they themselves, standing amid the work of their hands, take a solid pride in their own craftsmanship or artistry."⁷⁸ Richardson's school functioned as a community of artists and scientists--with the teacher leading and directing, but at the same time, "humbly ready to learn from the children."⁷⁹ He states, "I found one of the best ways of starting off a new technique . . . was to start to make something for myself. Very soon I would have as many as genuinely wanted to work in that material."⁸⁰ All of them, children and teacher, pursued the same goal--to realize precisely and to express adequately their growing awareness of the world around them. A glance at the work displayed in this book will convince the most skeptical reader that creativity is a necessary component of the growth of a true human being.

Writers reviewed in this section appear to agree that the opportunity for creativity is essential for the most effective functioning of

⁷⁷ Ibid., Foreword, ix.

⁷⁸ Ibid., Foreword, v.

⁷⁹ Ibid., Foreword, vii.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 69.

an open education teacher. Creative experiences help teachers to know themselves more deeply, and engender a spirit of venturing into new avenues of expression. Teachers who free themselves to become more creative bring to their work, and to their recreation, vitality and enthusiasm. These qualities are contagious in a classroom and those teachers who exemplify the spirit of creativity are likely to infect their students with enthusiasm for creative adventures of their own.

Interaction and Cooperation with Colleagues

Again, Sybil Marshall has something to say. She took the position of teacher in the rural school at Kingston, England, and she was alone. Alone, she battled to bring some order, art and learning into the lives of the children there. She succeeded, and yet not entirely alone, for she had a friend--the school cleaning woman with whom she worked during all eighteen years--and she had the children. But except for visits from the county advisory staff, she had no colleague with whom to talk, to share moments of joy or sorrow, no one with whom to plan and prepare ideas for enrichment. Mrs. Marshall made it alone, and Sylvia Ashton-Warner had only her husband. Elwyn Richardson made it alone, but for most teachers, the need for interaction and cooperation with colleagues is a vital need.

Dorothy Welch, in the Interview mentioned previously, says, "The isolation of the teacher in the classroom leads to great feelings of inadequacy. . . . The support teachers have felt as a result of classroom

visitations and informal meetings with like-minded teachers has proved beneficial."⁸¹

Lillian Weber discusses the needs of teachers in her presentation at the National Research Conference on Open Education held in January, 1972:

Something I think is basic, in adult learning--is that social interaction is not just a socializing, humanizing process . . . of knowing how to take your turn, but is embedded in the cognitive process; that just as the exchange between children is vital to their learning, so is the exchange between teachers vital to their learning. . . . It is important to break through the isolation and closed door of the teacher.⁸²

The Open Corridor Project thus can be seen to serve the needs of teachers as well as of students.

In the Sealey report on selected American elementary schools, this statement has direct bearing on the topic of interaction:

Just as open education appears to have contributed to bridging the gap between home and school, so it has brought teachers closer together. The changes implicit in the approach have led to much closer relationships among the staff in regard to their professional work. Ideas, once kept secret, are now willingly shared. . . . The degree of mutual support exhibited by the teachers was remarkably high; in every instance teachers, and involved adults, helped each other with alacrity and ease, indicating that such behavior was customary. Competitiveness and tension appeared to have been replaced by concern and friendliness, and this was confirmed by many of our conversations with teachers.⁸³

Teachers reported that they approved of the open approach because of the mutual support and regard it engendered among the staff, and because teachers had time to talk to children and adults and relate to them honestly.

⁸¹Hein, Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 257.

⁸²Lillian Weber, "Practical Applications of Research," in Current Research and Perspectives in Open Education, p. 116.

⁸³Sealey, Open Education, A Study, pp. 56, 35.

Sealey found that "at every site teachers spent a significant amount of time in preparation and followup outside school hours, and they enjoyed taking part in a great deal of discussion, both formal and informal."⁸⁴ Ewald Nyquist in his own article in the book on Open Education addresses the need for teachers to have meaningful and supportive interactions with colleagues, particularly when they are just beginning to try the open approach to teaching. He says that the key elements for a dynamic, ongoing process must be built in. Some of these elements are:

1. The involvement of parents, teachers and administrators at every step.
2. Meaningful in-service education activities for teachers and other school personnel.
3. Built-in personal support for each teacher, including the approval and encouragement of the administrator, *at least one other teacher who shares her attitude and goals* [emphasis added], and hopefully [sic] someone similar to a "teaching head" coming into the classroom as a co-worker, not supervisor.⁸⁵

Carl Rogers devotes a chapter of his book to inter-relationships. He discusses the satisfaction of truly communicating with another person, when he has felt really close to, in touch with, someone else. He talks about really hearing others, and being heard, and the dissatisfaction it is not to be successful in this area. He refers to the need to be real and to give of himself in the sharing, of appreciating others and being appreciated, of accepting and giving love (in a classroom, teachers might define this as "respect"). Rogers speaks of a "climate" which makes it possible to grow and change. This climate, surely, can be a

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 40.

⁸⁵ Ewald B. Nyquist, "Open Education: Its Philosophy, Historical Perspectives, and Implications," in Open Education, A Sourcebook, pp. 89-90.

facilitator in teachers sharing ideas, giving and receiving support and helping each other grow.⁸⁶

The two teachers involved in the Paired Classes program describe, in Opening Hearts and Classrooms, interaction between colleagues. They say that no matter what approach is used, if more than one adult is involved, there must be cooperation, mutual respect, and the ability to praise and receive constructive criticism. They add that "there will be times, of course, when one of the paired teachers may disagree about something or might prefer to be on her own in a 'self-contained' classroom situation. Therefore, there must be a willingness on the part of both partners, or any member of a team, to be flexible, sensitive and committed to the desired goals of the team."⁸⁷

New Rochelle schools encouraged teachers who were interested in the open approach to open up their classrooms, and in 1969 appointed Jenny C. Andreae as director of open classrooms. Her report is interesting and relevant to many aspects of teaching in open classrooms, but particularly she makes clear the need for teachers to talk and work together. She believes that when several teachers work together, the variety of their strengths are used to benefit the children. Teachers especially interested or skilled in an area share that skill with children from several classes. She states:

Such arrangements required much interaction and discussion, both valuable for the teachers and the children. Children benefit from interacting with other children and teachers; teachers benefit from the observations of other teachers about their children. A team

⁸⁶C. Rogers, Freedom to Learn, chap. 7 passim.

⁸⁷Bernstein and Fried, Opening Hearts and Classrooms, p. 58.

approach along these lines also relieved pressures on each teacher to cope individually with many diverse activities, and enabled all teachers to plan and work with children (and each other) in greater depth.⁸⁸

"Opening Up and Making It Work: A Case Study," is a summary about an open approach to education of young children in North Haven, Connecticut. Throughout the report, the need for close interaction, collaboration and cooperation of the three teachers involved is made clear. They worked together from the first stages of thinking about the project through the actual implementation of the first years, and "it can't be overemphasized how important it was during that first year for the three teachers to have each other for support during all the moments of doubt and frustration."⁸⁹

Not all interaction is reinforcing, however, at least not in the beginning. Edith Biggs speaks to the topic of teacher interaction by recognizing that the role of the innovator is often a lonely one:

It is possible that some colleagues will view new methods as a threat to their own security. They may be critical or uncooperative. . . . As you gain confidence in your work in your own classroom, your enthusiasm may kindle interest on the part of fellow staff members. Of course, teachers who work as a team will have opportunities for an interchange of ideas and for the comparison of children's work at different stages. This mutual reinforcement lightens the load considerably.⁹⁰

She then suggests ways for teachers to interest their colleagues in the new approach they are implementing--such as displaying children's work

⁸⁸ Jenny C. Andreae, "Developing Open Classrooms in New Rochelle," in Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 230.

⁸⁹ Rogers & Church, "Opening Up and Making It Work: A Case Study," Open Education, Critique and Assessment, p. 44.

⁹⁰ Biggs and MacLean, Freedom to Learn, p. 57.

outside the classroom and initiating informal and sometimes formal discussions with other teachers about the work in the classroom. She also suggested workshops as a good means of communication and interaction.

Don Skinner made this brief mention about interaction at the conclusion of his article about the environmental study on violence conducted at a British school. While assessing the positive social developments that occurred as a result of teachers and children working together in unfamiliar surroundings, thereby leaving their familiar "boxes" of the normal school situation and striving together to achieve a goal, he added,

Less happy is the undeniable fact that relationships at times can and do break down. A teacher can become dissatisfied with the standards and efforts of a colleague, with whom a previous harmonious staffroom relationship had [sic] been established. (I heard of one teacher from another school who left the staff because of this.)⁹¹

Rogers and Church share thoughts of teachers and principals with whom they have worked in the chapter, "Teachers and Principals Speak." Under the sub-heading "Of Failures, Problems, and Frustrations," is this report:

I think my worst moments have been those times when I have felt alone and isolated. While I am willing to accept (and am rather proud) that my classroom may be different and unique, I am uneasy with the possibility that I may be, not only in my own boat, but on my own sea as well. Being within a public school, I want to feel a part of the whole, and have parents, colleagues and administrators feel this too. But when a parent requests his child be removed from my care; when a colleague reproaches my work without taking the time to understand it; when students from other classes talk down our program; or when one of our students takes a downward turn either academically, emotionally or socially--all of these situations tend

⁹¹ Don Skinner, "Joint Study on Violence: Joint Environmental Study," in Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 184.

to elicit a feeling of frustration and isolation, even though I know that circumstances are part of teaching.⁹²

In "Romance and Reality: A Case Study," Roland Barth details the disappointing failure of an open education project of which he was director. This project was conducted in two public schools in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1968. There is much information to reflect upon in Barth's summation of this ambitious plan which did not succeed. Perhaps the strongest message relevant to this particular study is in the area of interaction, communication and cooperation of colleagues. The six teachers and the director were enthusiastic, lively people, committed to the philosophy of open education for all children. They came to their task with a multitude of ideas and materials. "Although short on experience, they were long in ability, energy, confidence and idealism. They dared to believe radically different things about children, learning and knowledge; they were now prepared to act on their beliefs."⁹³

But the dream came apart, the project bogged down, the teachers experienced a feeling of separation and loss of communication. Interaction between the staff members was hindered from the beginning because of the polarization of the staff itself into either/or camps between which, under the conditions existing, there could be no meaningful exchange of ideas and goals. The staff was polarized into black/white, young/old, experienced/inexperienced, school people/university people,

⁹²Rogers and Church, Open Education, Critique and Assessment, p. 67.

⁹³Roland S. Barth, Open Education and the American School, with a Foreword by Joseph Featherstone (New York: Agathon Press, distributed by Schocken Books, 1972), p. 110.

traditional educators/open educators, out-of-towners/people from the city. In a situation where the success of the project hung on successful cooperation between all the many members of the community ("over a thousand administrators, teachers, parents and children participated in the first year of the Lincoln-Attucks Program"⁹⁴) the necessary cooperation appeared all but impossible. Support for each other was missing, understanding of the differing positions among the staff was also missing, and the organization which might have brought all the sparring members into some kind of working order was not forthcoming. In such a situation, successful interaction and cooperation of colleagues was unfortunately impossible. This deplorable lack of cooperation was, in some part, responsible for the failure of the project.

The literature reviewed for this topic emphasizes the need for teachers practicing open education to have meaningful interactions and cooperation with colleagues. Dorothy Welch found that isolation led to feelings of inadequacy and that interaction with like-minded teachers proved beneficial. Lillian Weber expressed the viewpoint that exchange between teachers is vital to their learning. The Sealey report states that open education has brought teachers closer together and that concern and friendliness replaced competitiveness and tension. Carl Rogers stresses the importance of inter-relationships, and the satisfaction of true communication with other persons.

Writers also underscored the problems which can occur because of the lack of meaningful communication between colleagues and an extreme

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 108.

case of lack of successful cooperation was seen in the failure of the Lincoln-Attucks Program.

Administrative Support

This topic relates very closely to the former one of interaction and cooperation. Teachers in innovative classrooms are quite understandably unsure about themselves and their effectiveness, particularly in the early stages. Reassurance and assistance from administrators does much to relieve the anxieties which are part and parcel of the practice of open education. A climate of mutual trust is desirable for the optimum functioning of the teacher.

Lilliam Weber says a teacher will have a "fumbling period" at the beginning, and the beginner must examine every step of the way.⁹⁵ Therefore, she stresses the need for principals to trust and support their teachers. In fact, she says, "the principal must foster an open relationship with his teachers if the teachers are to have an open relationship with the children."⁹⁶ When teachers want to change to more open methods, systems can encourage their teachers along by offering professional libraries, workshops and discussions.

Sealey speaks to this need for support and trust in his study of American schools when he states that teachers' individual ways of working must be validated. He quotes one advisor:

There is an element of faith that open classroom teachers, for the most part, have in their students. And there is a certain amount

⁹⁵ Weber, Current Research and Perspectives in Open Education, p. 118.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 121.

of faith that most principals and many parents have in the teachers. But it only goes to a certain place. It stops short, asking for closure, asking for standardized check-ups, not quite trusting the informed assessment of the teacher, wanting some "official" assurances that the children are learning.⁹⁷

Such constraints, says the report, are grossly inhibiting. They lead to a great deal of heart-searching among teachers. Vincent Rogers says, "There are an awful lot of schools where this [administrators encouraging teachers to make decisions] just doesn't happen, where principals get the message across very quickly that they don't have much faith in their teachers."⁹⁸

Further, the report states that "open schools in the study were by no means free of many pressures upon teachers to produce good results as measured by conventional achievement tests."⁹⁹ The fact that in order to continue to pursue open educational practice, proof must be continually forthcoming in conventional measurement terms is frustrating to teachers. Added to the pressure from administrators is pressure from parents for children to achieve well in conventional terms.

Martha A. Norris in The Role of the Advisor in Open Education talks about giving non-partisan, non-threatening aid to teachers in the form of advisors. These advisors could provide leadership in helping teachers change, and assistance in planning and scheduling of time and room arrangement. They could lead weekly discussion groups with teachers on curriculum and organization and children. They could help teachers

⁹⁷Sealey, Open Education, A Study, p. 60.

⁹⁸V. Rogers, Current Research and Perspectives, p. 31.

⁹⁹Ibid.

learn to observe and evaluate individual children. Advisors could provide a helpful role as liaison between administrators and staff, as well as interpreting the program to parents and even suggest ways parents might participate. At all times the advisor must work to support teachers' morale.

Norris says, "One must be keenly aware of the subtle stresses and strains on the teacher who is revising her methods and techniques . . . pressures--self-imposed and external--are exceedingly heavy on those teachers who have established a reputation as a good teacher. There is much self doubt."¹⁰⁰

Vincent Rogers, when questioned about ways to help teachers develop optimally, talked about teachers' centers, where teachers can go to exchange ideas with other teachers. Administrators should encourage the development of such centers, but not direct them, nor should the teacher be sent to a center for an administrative purpose.

Several sources refer to the fatigue, frustration and anxiety that seem to accompany the practice of open education. Brown and Precious say, "Only those who are working in schools because they feel it is worthwhile and satisfying are able to cope with the frequent exhaustion and occasional frustration which is inevitable, . . . [teaching] is very demanding and even more demanding in the integrated day situation."¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Norris, The Role of the Advisor in Open Education, p. 3.

¹⁰¹ Brown and Precious, The Integrated Day, p. 19.

Roland Barth says:

The teacher in an open classroom is always learning, but someone must be on hand to help him learn, someone to encourage mature, humane, reflective, sensitive, resourceful qualities - someone who can provide at once strong political cover, pedagogical insight, and personal support. . . . The natural and preferable person is the school principal, but a helpful person from outside the school is far better than no one at all.¹⁰²

In Opting for Openness, Robert Anderson says, "Over and over, both British and American educators emphasize the necessity for providing support for the teaching staff."¹⁰³ He also stated, "Let us accept the fact that it is very demanding on teachers' resources to work within the open framework, . . . the probability of stress and strain remains high."¹⁰⁴ Anderson feels that since opting for openness will undoubtedly create serious pressures and challenges, adequate supporting resources are crucial to the success of the venture. He advocates a particular kind of help that principals might provide, "not the hit-or-miss, sporadic, scatter-shot supervision for which most teachers are forced to settle, but rather a focused, continuing, clinically-oriented, and highly individualized program of inclass support. . . . No other so-called profession leaves the development, even the survival, of its members so much to chance."¹⁰⁵ Anderson also speaks positively of the role playing by the advisory system in England and mentions teacher centers as being very helpful and important. He adds:

¹⁰² Barth, Open Education and the American School, p. 213.

¹⁰³ Robert H. Anderson, Opting for Openness (Arlington, Va.: National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1973), p. 39.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Another interesting fact of the British experience is that in general, teachers enjoy a greater amount of sincere respect in Britain than they apparently do in America. This is evident in the usual courteous, mannerly behavior of British children and adults toward school personnel, in the optimistic assumptions about teachers' motives and skills that inhere in typical regulatory policies. There is an element of trust not only in the school heads but in the teachers, that accompanies respect and that undoubtedly makes itself felt in the lives and morale of all of the people involved with the school. Without belaboring the point, let us simply admit¹⁰⁶ that in the United States teachers occupy a somewhat lower estate.

In the TDR Report by Walberg and Thomas, one of the characteristics of the open education teacher is summarized in the statement, "The teacher makes use of help from someone who acts in a supportive advisory capacity," and the report quotes Silberman saying, "Teachers are bound to need a good deal of continuing help, support, and reassurance if they are to make the change comfortably and successfully."¹⁰⁷ Three other writers are quoted--David Armington, John Blackie and T. Borton--all of whom elucidate the role of the advisor program in England, and program assistants in America. Blackie states that the teachers gain from the advisor's visits because they are able to show and discuss their work with someone who is also a teacher; Armington discusses the unique role of advisors as facilitators of change, who have extensive knowledge of the learning process, familiarity with curriculum and materials and practical experience as teachers. Borton states that teachers must have experience with ideas and techniques at a personal level, an adequate supply of materials, and then "finally, the teacher

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁰⁷ Walberg and Thomas, Characteristics of Open Education, p. A-49, item 54.

must be given tremendous support both in the form of backup personnel to help when he gets into problems and in the form of comfort if his efforts fail."¹⁰⁸

It is useful to refer again to Barth's report about the failure of the Lincoln-Attucks Program in connection with the administrative support needed by teachers in open education situations. The six open education teachers found no clear administrative support for their classroom efforts, but instead "a power vacuum caused by the lack of a clear plan and strong leadership."¹⁰⁹ Also, the administrators in the program expected respect and obedience from their teachers, not independent decision-making. The teachers asked for support, both philosophically and in the matter of supplies, but the administrators responded with more directives and evasions about producing the materials they distrusted for use in the classrooms. While both groups made mistakes in their functioning in the program, the conclusion remains that the teachers needed support from their administrators but received neglect and/or resistance instead.

Open education, like all serious approaches to the business of helping children learn, requires administrative support, and suffers if this support is lacking.

Independence and Locus of Control

Teachers need to have a sense of controlling their own destiny. The feeling of control can be conceived as spread out along a continuum;

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. A-50.

¹⁰⁹ Barth, Open Education and the American School, p. 157.

at one end internal control, which connotes the attitude that one can manipulate environments to produce positive outcomes, and at the other end, external control, the attitude that all that happens is the consequence of chance, forces and events beyond the person's control.

Obviously, no teacher can completely control the conditions of her position, but a place on the continuum somewhere closer to a feeling of internal rather than external control is most desirable.

Horwitz' study showed mixed results about children in open classrooms, but some studies did show greater internal control among those children. The author searched for literature that would relate to conditions affecting teachers' feeling of control over their own educational and personal destiny.

Returning to Edward Yeomans' "Wellsprings of Teaching," Roy Illsley is quoted as saying:

The key word for any meaningful educational innovation is autonomy. It is autonomy which must be passed down through administrators, principals, and teachers, to the children in the classrooms. I am quite aware that this far-reaching innovation at all levels could result in seeming anarchy, but if one had to choose between such "anarchy" and apathy, the former would be to me more healthy and desirable.¹¹⁰

Edith Biggs refers to the teacher's need to decide what she wants to do educationally, and how she wants to do it. She says, "The deciding factor is the teacher. The particular method selected must be the teacher's personal choice. Each one must be free to adapt the basic principles to suit his own personality and capabilities and those of his pupils."¹¹¹

¹¹⁰Yeomans, in Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 268.

¹¹¹Biggs and MacLean, Freedom to Learn, p. 55.

The statements from teachers and principals reported in the Rogers and Church book on open education contain examples of the frustrations teachers experience when they feel locus of control slipping away from them. To quote two of these angry or disillusioned statements:

I feel my largest frustrations have come from principals who have mandated uniformity throughout the school in class organization, structure, and curriculum--principals who have said, overtly or covertly, "Teach as I say."

.....
 Five years later we remain hopeful but angry, not with our students, not with the parents, but rather we are angry with the built-in inhibitors--the educational bureaucracy. The educational bureaucracy resists change not only in the area of curriculum, it resists violently any movement to better understand itself. It can be reported that five years later the bureaucracy has slowed the pace of change for me, not the direction of change within me.¹¹²

The teachers interviewed for Sealey's study state that one of the reasons they approve of the open approach is because they have freedom to determine the curriculum in response to the needs and the aspirations of the children, and that they feel it essential to be granted autonomy to develop what they teach and how they teach it.

Gerald Knowles makes a point of the importance of internal locus of control in children's learning. He states that the child's feelings about his ability to control his own destiny account more for his achievement in school than all other factors, teachers, curriculum and material and physical supports. He quotes Prescott Lecky who maintains that it is not what one is actually capable of doing that governs his actions, but it is what one *believes* [emphasis added] that he can do that has persuasive control over his behavior. If this is indeed true for

¹¹²Rogers and Church, Open Education, Critique and Assessment, pp. 69, 73.

children, then surely it must also apply to teachers. They need to feel that they can achieve the goals they set for themselves. A connection can be drawn between internal locus of control and the concept of self, both necessary for a "fully functioning teacher."¹¹³

Barth's report about the Lincoln-Attucks Program has pertinence for this topic. The six open education teachers believed that the locus of classroom and curriculum control should reside with them. "All decisions concerning substantive issues, such as curriculum, report cards, discipline, homework, or rules, should be group decisions" (group meaning their group, not including administrators). But the administrators saw the situation very differently. Their "decisionmaking model was not only authoritarian, with themselves in the position of authority, but also consonant with the parents' military academy model."¹¹⁴ The teachers rejected rules and policies which were handed down to them by administrators and which they had no part in formulating. They felt increasing lack of independence and realized that the locus of control became more and more external. This situation induced feelings of frustration in the teachers and helped to bring about their disassociation from the project. Barth notes that "none of the open educators was asked to stay with the Program for its second year. Of the seven who started the school year in September, three saw the last day of school in June, two teachers and the instructional coordinator."¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Gerald Knowles, "Open Education and Internal Locus of Control," in Current Research and Perspectives in Open Education, p. 94.

¹¹⁴ Barth, Open Education and the American School, pp. 157-158.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 173.

Open education teachers see value in freedom to determine what goes on in their classrooms. They feel that externally-imposed rules and regulations tend to be unrelated to the particular needs of their particular groups. Because they believe in curriculum emerging from the interests of children and teachers, they resent externally-imposed curriculum demands and directives about methods to reach curricular goals. They feel the need to make decisions independently about the conduct of their classes because of the implicit philosophy of open education itself. Open educators expect to assume responsibility for guiding the processes of learning that occur in their classrooms. Therefore, the literature reviewed appears to support the author's premise that internal locus of control and independence in educational matters is important to the felicitous functioning of open educators.

Financial and Job Security

Literature was lacking in relation to this topic. About the only reference the author could find was Silberman's article, "It Can Happen Here," in the Nyquist and Hawes book on open education. Silberman discusses the rewards of teaching as being intrinsic rather than otherwise. He says that in teaching, effort has very little relation to extrinsic rewards such as higher salary or status, since these are geared largely to length of service and number of courses taken and degrees acquired. While "ancillary rewards" such as job security and long vacations may attract people into teaching in the first place, they are relatively unimportant once a person has become a teacher, since they are identical for almost everyone in the field. "Intrinsic rewards, such

as satisfaction or pride of accomplishment, on the other hand, are related to effort. It is not surprising, therefore, that teachers show more concern for intrinsic than for extrinsic or ancillary rewards."¹¹⁶

The only other references to this topic come from Sybil Marshall's Adventure in Creative Education. She includes letters from her students after the course was completed and they all had returned to their respective school assignments. She states, "Most of my students, in their summing up, gave economic reasons for 'looking for some course leading to a real qualification.' 'I can't be altruistic about it,' one wrote, 'I wanted to be a head: still do.' Another said, 'Having a few pieces of paper does--unfortunately, in many cases--count for something in some academic circles.' 'I felt it would help the possibility of promotion, as it has become obvious that evidence of further study is becoming more and more important.' 'I readily admit that I saw the possibility of helping my own promotion chances.' 'I needed more qualification for promotion purposes." Marshall reacts to these honest confessions about motives for undertaking her course in this way: "(I liked their honesty in this. If any were going to become starry-eyed, it was at the end of the course when the stars were on account of the exciting new possibilities ahead, not because of altruistic devotion to a profession in which the only reward is often the virtue of belonging to it.)"¹¹⁷

She quotes from a final letter:

'I think every member of the course would have to admit to a utilitarian reason for undertaking the course. Equally so, I believe that

¹¹⁶ Silberman, in Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 78.

¹¹⁷ Marshall, Adventure in Creative Education, p. 194.

none of us had just this sole reason. . . . Whilst it is not possible in this country to make a career in the classroom, a real enthusiast's main aim must be to reach a position where he can put his theories into full application, i.e., a headship or a position in a Training College or other advisory position. It is becoming increasingly obvious, that to reach these high places one must be able to offer some other qualifications than the common or garden certificate. So there are high principles coupled with the professional ambition! The two are inseparable, but I long for the day when it is generally recognized that the classroom is the main basis of all educational operations, and when excellent people are unwillingly being tempted away from it.'¹¹⁸

Although these last comments are from teachers in England, and the educational system is somewhat different, nonetheless the message is applicable to teachers in the United States also.

Rest and Recreational Refreshment for Body and Spirit

These teacher needs are but scantily referred to in literature about open education. Brown and Precious, in speaking of how demanding the profession of teaching is in the context of the integrated day, state,

It is essential that a teacher should have a life outside school which will contribute to her personality and which will preserve her freshness of outlook and influence her work. The most successful teacher functions like a champion swimmer who uses 50% effort and 50% relaxation. This fine balance between using the right amount of drive without anxiety has remarkable repercussions in the classroom.¹¹⁹

Sybil Marshall exemplifies, in all her writings, the strong commitment she has to teachers' needs for refreshment of spirit. She discourses on the lack of attendance at some in-service offerings and explains in this way:

Perhaps the most significant cause is a feeling of despair at the continual lowering of the prestige of the profession. Ill-paid by comparison, overworked and drained physically, mentally and

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Brown and Precious, The Integrated Day, pp. 18-19.

emotionally by the nature of the task they do, they have no stamina left to follow new ideas. There comes a time when the strongest and most 'courageous members of the profession begin to 'take it all lying down.' . . . In a school, one refreshed teacher is worth five worn-out-with-work-and-anxiety.¹²⁰

Sylvia Ashton-Warner, in her disillusioned and bitter book Spearpoint, confesses her need for refreshment of spirit out there in Colorado. She takes walks as balm to her soul, but she is so bound up with concern about her problems with the school that she cannot gain the release she seeks. Then come days when she can "wander alone around strange corners, staring at the heights of purple mountains."¹²¹ She is so attuned to the physical beauty in the natural world around her that she seems to go very naturally to that world for her rest and recreation. She says, "I never miss walking alone on Sunday with the snow falling. . . . I simply love to walk abroad in the snow, and the more it is snowing the better. . . . To feel it on my face and to see the limitless whiteness is something catalytic."¹²² Unfortunately, not all the rest, refreshment or recreation available was enough to save Ashton-Warner from the disappointment of a failed dream. For American teachers, hopefully not on quite such a collision course, the prescription should provide the renewal they need.

Current messages are appearing through the periodical literature of 1979, that teachers are indeed in need of support and help. In the January 1979 issue of Instructor, a professional teaching magazine, there is an article entitled, "Teacher Burnout--How to Cope When Your World

¹²⁰ Marshall, Adventure in Creative Education, pp. 23, 26.

¹²¹ Ashton-Warner, Spearpoint, p. 69. ¹²² Ibid., p. 38.

Goes Black,"¹²³ and in Learning, the magazine for Creative Teaching, January 1979, another article on the same subject appears as a cover title, "Teacher Burnout, How to Recognize It, What to Do About It,"¹²⁴ and in the Thursday, April 19, 1979, issue of the Christian Science Monitor newspaper, a lead article is, "Teachers, You Don't Need to 'Burn Out'."¹²⁵ All of these articles refer to the apparently common ailment known as teacher exhaustion, or "burn out." The Monitor says that the problem is reaching epidemic proportions, and that it is causing teachers to leave the teaching profession and seek career changes. This newspaper gives suggestions to teachers such as: looking at the profession in wide terms, realizing that dealing with students bring inevitable problems, seeking changes within the classroom. One of the changes Joseph Reynolds recommends is to put the learning process on the shoulders of the students. He says that students should take responsibility for their own learning. He suggests that teachers should seek change also, even asking for a sabbatical leave or working out an exchange teaching situation with another school system or abroad. He advised teachers to read and read, and tells them not to isolate themselves, but to avail themselves of the strength, example and teaching ideas of colleagues.¹²⁶

¹²³"Teacher Burnout: How to Cope When Your World Goes Black," Instructor LXXXVIII (January 1979):56-62.

¹²⁴Barbara Hendrickson, "Teacher Burnout: How to Recognize It; What to Do About It," Learning 5 (January 1979):36-39.

¹²⁵Joseph Reynolds, "Teachers, You Don't Need to 'Burn Out'," Christian Science Monitor, 19 April 1979, p. 23.

¹²⁶Ibid.

The Instructor diagnoses the "burn out" in three stages:

First-Degree Burn (mild)--short-lived bouts of irritability, fatigue, worry and frustration;

Second-Degree Burn (moderate)--same as mild but lasts two weeks or more;

Third-Degree Burn (severe)--physical ailments occur such as ulcers, chronic back pain, migraine headaches, etc.¹²⁷

Leroy Spaniol of Boston University states that burn out disproportionately strikes those in the helping professions, and is related to stress. The article identifies reasons why this situation is occurring: excess of paperwork, outdated training, isolation with children and not enough interaction with adults, lack of support, lack of status in the eyes of the public, and on and on. Suggestions include taking a sabbatical, holding meetings with other teachers for fresh ideas, making a career change, getting involved with things outside of school. Some schools are actively helping; they allow teachers to switch grades, initiate courses in new ways to teach, provide teacher advocates (similar to British advisors), and encourage teachers to try new out-of-school activities. The conclusion of the Instructor article is that one answer lies in raising the status of the teacher in the professional field.

In the Learning article, Barbata Hendrickson recognizes that this condition is epidemic but takes the position that it is an occupational hazard that all teachers are exposed to sooner or later. Some teachers leave the profession, some burn out but stay on the job, hating it, and others learn coping skills that enable them to face the stresses and not only endure but grow with them. Burnout is described as

¹²⁷"Teacher Burnout: How to Cope," Instructor, p. 57.

physical, emotional and attitudinal exhaustion by Ayala Pines of the University of California and quoted by Hendrickson. Pines describes the onset of the disease as "the joy of teaching begins to slip away, not just for a day or a week but permanently."¹²⁸ Teachers often experience minor physical maladies and become depressed by their symptoms. Eventually, things start to fall apart in school and teachers' self concept drops to a new low. If unchecked, burnout can result in total emotional breakdown. Burnout results from factors outside the teacher's control and can be coped with by teachers who recognize the problem, face the symptoms squarely, and realize that they are responsible only for how they respond to the crisis, not for the external factors that caused the burnout. Pines recommends the following suggestions to fight burnout: teachers should reach out at school for companionship, arrange to get away on retreat with colleagues, plan to take an in-service course in something that interests them, and not directly related to classroom responsibilities, try something new, change grade level, perhaps find someone to team teach with, take a day or two off, join a support group to evaluate and try to solve problems too difficult to deal with alone, lighten the load outside of school.

It is interesting that all three articles have come out so recently, all dealing with a serious problem facing teachers. Although the teachers referred to in the articles were not necessarily open education teachers, all the symptoms could refer to them also. Perhaps the suggestions, which shared a sameness, would be useful in helping open classroom teachers as they seek the opportunity for rest and recreational refreshment of body and spirit.

¹²⁸Hendrickson, "Teacher Burnout," Learning, p. 37.

Conclusion

The review of the literature pertaining to the person of the teacher practicing open education affirms the author's position regarding the items relating to teacher satisfaction. Publications substantiate the need for teachers to continue to grow personally as well as professionally, to maintain a sound self image and to exercise their creativity and independence. Writers emphasize the need for teachers to have a healthy and positive attitude toward their profession and toward their colleagues. Administrative support appears to be a necessary foundation for successful open classroom teaching. It is doubtful that teachers can remain committed to open classroom teaching if their jobs and financial security are threatened by such a commitment. Authors unanimously endorsed the premise that teachers involved in open education situations needed time away from teaching concerns for rest, recreation and renewal.

C H A P T E R I I I

THE EDUCATIONAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN OPEN EDUCATION TEACHER

My educational teaching odyssey began with a telephone call in 1943 from a superintendent of schools in California. This was wartime, and teachers of any kind were at a premium. The superintendent played upon my sympathies a bit and induced me to "just go out there and teach that little fifth grade class. I know you can do it." Well, I surely didn't share her faith in my abilities, for I had never taught anything, anywhere, anytime. I was equipped with a Bachelor of Arts in English and History, and one baby. But "out there" I went, somewhat enamored of the idea of being a teacher.

The first day that I met this little class, one of the children said to me, "We've got rid of eight teachers this year, and we can get rid of you, too." The group seemed to concur enthusiastically with this statement. My reply was very sure and certain (though inwardly quaking), "Well, children, I don't know about you, but I can tell you that I will be right here at the end of the year, and I hope you'll be with me." Brave words.

My knowledge of the techniques of pedagogy was zero. I just *tried* and *tried*, and went home exhausted in mind and body daily. Gradually, I figured out a very important fact: We needed to become a community, not opposing factions in a battle. We struggled, those children and I, all twenty-five of us. I began to lay down ground rules, and within those limits, we learned and laughed together.

The subject areas of the curriculum were dull, boring, and completely artificial. In order to spark things up for myself, I attempted to inject a bit of familiar realism. This consisted of such simple changes as the use of the children's names and familiar situations in the math problems instead of the textbook, bringing in candy Easter eggs for math use during the Easter season, writing letters to each other and to brothers of the children who were in military service for language, writing the children's names for penmanship. Every morning we sang contemporary songs together and shared current news. I brought in items from the newspaper pertaining to the country at war, and we used these items for vocabulary development. The children responded, not with alacrity--they were too immune to the expected boredom of school life for that--but they did read with a little more interest, and a little less problem behavior. Outdoors, I played with them on the playground, and they began to emerge as likeable individuals with varying gifts and skills and needs.

Inside the classroom we staggered through the long schedule of academic musts. It never occurred to me to change the order of desks (bolted in rows to the floor of the room), or to integrate the curriculum, which was carefully compartmented into time slots for about eight subjects. But within the given situation, we spread our wings a little and found some enjoyment in learning.

Art and music appeared to be unimportant and were scheduled only rarely. The schedule for art seemed to coincide with the visits of the art supervisor supplied by the county. I bought clay and extra crayons and sneaked in time for art at least twice a week. We dared to go

outside and look at the wild flowers growing along the edges of the schoolyard and then tried to sketch them. Perhaps the obvious fact that I was no artist myself encouraged the children to go ahead and try, and the fact that we tried together helped them to see me as a person, not just a teacher.

Our progress was uneven, to say the least. There were many hard times and difficult days. I was often discouraged and just as often very angry. I was also honest with those children, and when I was angry they knew why. And there were many times we laughed together, and the emotions we shared seemed to build a real relationship between us. I do not think I was aware of "the need for mutual trust between teacher and child" because I was not even familiar with the term, but in retrospect, I believe that is exactly what I was doing--establishing trust.

The result was that when school ended in June, we were a close-knit, affectionate, working unit. And to top it off, these children pooled their resources and gave me a pretty little compact as a parting gift, one which cost \$5.00, they proudly informed me, and \$5.00 was a lot of money in those days. I would not give up that compact now for \$500.00.

What did I learn from this first foray into the field of education? I learned that children were not a "class," but many unique people, and that they must be reached through the heart as well as the mind; that artificial "lessons" left them bored and bent on mischief; and that learning must be related to their needs and interests. I didn't know very much, but I knew those facts.

Possibly because I did not train as a teacher and so entered the classroom without a set of prescriptions for teaching the elementary curriculum, and because of a really unruly group of youngsters, found my attention focused on children, rather than educational subjects, I was forced to teach through the heart as well as the mind. In order to survive the experience, I just had to discover ways to get those children involved in activities, not mischief, and being very young myself, it wasn't difficult to come up with ideas to try. I had younger sisters and a brother and so was pretty aware of the kinds of activities which did and did not appeal to children.

I spent another year at that little country school, and I grew a bit bolder, and did tamper with the physical arrangements--a little. I moved those rows of desks and tried out various configurations; put my own huge, ugly, overwhelming desk in the far background; put up pictures from magazines; brought in a radio so we could hear the news. This being wartime, the children shared my agony when my husband was shot down over Germany and reported missing, and we used maps to follow the Russian Army as they marched toward his prison camp and eventually liberated the camp. We shared happy times, like picnics, we dared a school party or two, we sang daily, tried art projects and displayed the results all over the room, carved a Halloween pumpkin--we stretched. I ate many meals in the homes of my children and came to know them in their family settings. These may not sound like earth-shaking changes, but in that time, in that school, indeed they were just that. Once again, the result was that the sixth grade was not a class, but a living, learning community.

With the happy return of my husband from a German prison camp, we began our true military life, which lasted twenty-two years. At one point I ventured into nursery school teaching, basing my qualifications on a brief sojourn in the college nursery school as an observer-participator for a growth and development course. There I felt at home. I read and studied all the information I could obtain on the philosophy and methods of teaching very young children. The head teacher was a Merrill-Palmer School graduate and a wonderful source of information and suggestions. As time went on, my life took me to many Bases and places, and I found myself establishing nursery schools and teaching in them. My teachers were the children themselves and all the available literature concerning young children.

Eventually I advanced from nursery school to kindergarten and found it equally challenging and pleasurable, much the same as nursery school but with a bit more scope.

As I moved about I taught wherever there was a need, and found myself in secondary schools a few times. Here again, usually students seemed bored and restless, and again they responded to a genuine interest in them as unique persons, and a stretching-out of the prescribed curriculum to include problems of relevant interest. Always, the changes I made were very simple ones. While teaching a state-mandated course on government, we applied the text lessons to our local situation, and also to the national campaign and election that occurred during the term. As drama director, I often invited a cast to my home for line rehearsals and we grew to know each other as persons aside from our teacher-student roles. As high school librarian, I kept bulletin boards current with

displays concerning school activities, calculated to arouse students' interests, then inserted stimulating and relevant book ideas as well.

I must confess that my changes were introduced without prior permission from the administration authorities and the changes themselves seemed to have been overlooked, because I was never called upon to explain or defend them. Usually, the students involved responded by doing a good job in each situation, so that the results spoke for themselves. The drama groups consistently won top honors in competition with other districts, students were quietly involved in the library and all passed the required civics tests.

I made the exciting discovery that we also could achieve a community status, within clearly established limits. We could flex our minds and begin to find learning fun and rewarding. As with the little ones, it seemed to be a matter of basic respect for each other, a determination to try for the best we could produce, and a willingness to bend, if only a little, the demands of the curriculum. I learned another valuable lesson. I tried for popularity, a comradeship with the students, and found that I made no real gain until I dispensed with that goal and sought ways to reach them through better teaching. It used to bother me that, in general, high school students weren't enjoying school and that very few teachers seemed aware of or concerned about this fact.

I returned to the arena of the nursery school after a long absence and made another discovery. Television had come into general use and I learned the effects of this firsthand. There was a difference. I found it necessary to update my self-taught methods. The children

seemed to want entertainment, not involvement. When I tired of this role of entertainer, I was forced into some rethinking about early childhood education. A productive learning environment for young children must be one that involved them; it was more than providing a good place to play and listen to stories, and certainly a television set need not be an essential piece of equipment. I needed to grow! I looked for newer materials that would stimulate more creative use by the children, and that limits of behavior must be clearly. Children deserved more choices about their activities and less interference by adults with their use of the planned environment.

Gradually an organization of the classroom materialized which seemed more successful than my aping of Captain Kangaroo--surely less wearing on me! With a good supply of creative materials available, children spent the greater portion of their school day in activities of their own choice. Frequent cooking experiences were added to the program and were very popular. Puppet shows and dramatizing of favorite stories occurred often, usually spontaneously. Children could come and go to the outside playground as they wished and only once each day were they called together to listen to a story, sing some songs and fingerplays. Both teacher and children seemed relaxed and comfortable.

Next I was chosen to teach kindergarten in a college laboratory school. This was my dream position. The routines were comfortable and well established. The curriculum was simple and appropriate. The children were all from college families. In the safest of all possible settings, I began at last to learn my trade from experts. If I questioned

the "givens," it was only on minor matters. But the situation in itself was ideal. And I was happy. I remained in this setting four years, and it came to me gradually that I wasn't challenging children enough. I wasn't expecting enough of them.

I moved into a public school kindergarten spot and I had plenty of opportunity to try ideas, and a fairly adequate supply of materials to try with, and no helpful aides to which I had grown accustomed in the college situation. It was a learning year in many ways. I had forgotten how difficult it is to offer a multitude of choices to young children when there is only one adult in the classroom. It is a real challenge to cook applesauce with one hand and clean up a huge paint spill with the other! But I was determined to offer an enriched program to these kindergarteners, particularly determined, because it was the first kindergarten program in this public school. Since I had never before taught kindergarten in a large public school, I had much to learn about schedules and bus routines. Somehow, they just did not fit into my idealized kindergarten program. And for the first time in many years, I found myself defending my educational beliefs against very different ideas. Colleagues in the school were unfamiliar with the theories underlying kindergarten education, and could see no value in the program I was conducting. They frowned with disapproval when they saw my children moving around freely; they shook their heads at the great waste of paper and art materials that decorated the walls outside our room, and they asked me repeatedly when I was going to move the children through the six weeks of first grade readiness work, so that they would not have to spend time on that in the fall.

I attempted to explain my philosophy but with little success. The difficulty was intensified by the fact that the other two kindergarten teachers in the building inclined to the more traditional methods and their children were progressing page by page through readiness workbooks. I hoped for vindication in the fall when my children entered the first grade, and indeed, had the enormous satisfaction of hearing from one first grade teacher that she had never enjoyed such an interesting, challenging, responsive group as those lively kindergarteners from my room.

By the end of this year with public school kindergarteners, I was sure that children must learn in a carefully planned, enriched environment, in an atmosphere of acceptance but with much expected of them. I knew they must be offered alternatives to help them acquire the skill of decision making, and that there must be time and space for them to move and communicate freely.

Another splendid opportunity came my way just before the conclusion of the above school year. I was offered a teaching position in a kindergarten which was serving as a model for state-wide kindergartens, recently mandated for the public schools. This was in Mark's Meadow School, in the Amherst, Massachusetts, School District. This proved to be the real turning point in my educational odyssey. The public school in which this kindergarten functioned was located in a building belonging to the School of Education of the University of Massachusetts. Therefore, we had the best of two worlds, and countless opportunities to learn from colleagues both in the elementary school and in the School of Education. It was a fine exposure to many unique minds and much expertise.

Teaching in this kindergarten was a joy. The equipment was of superb construction, and plentiful. I had opportunity to learn to use many new manipulative materials, and I did learn so much. The teaching load was ideal in that one taught half day and the other half was used for record keeping, parent conferences, talking with visitors, and studying. An aide was provided under the funding so individualizing could be a fact and not just fancy. The children were recruited from the geographical area surrounding the school and so were fairly typical, multicultural five year olds.

During this year I watched an ambitious teacher fail. She desired an open classroom for her seven year olds. She ended up with chaos, complete disorder and children enjoying license instead of freedom to learn. She neglected to establish boundaries and expectations, and the children had no feeling of community. As I observed the disintegration of this class, it gave me much to think about. I decided that the more individualized the approach, the more essential it is to instill in each member of the group a feeling of belonging to a community and of responsibility to that community.

As the year progressed, we began to wonder about the future for these kindergarteners. We realized the benefits of the enriched, responsive situation we had attempted to provide for these five year olds. We were reluctant to see children pressed into a more formalized mold for their next year of school. Gradually it became clear to us that we could structure a situation of fluidity for them if we manned both a first grade and a kindergarten. In a situation of this kind, we

could ensure that children could move freely back and forth as their needs indicated. Those six year olds who needed more time to use blocks, manipulatives and the housekeeping corner would be able to do so, and those kindergarteners who seemed ready for more formalized reading and writing activities, could move equally easily across into the other room for parts of the day. We were alight with this idea and began making plans. While involved with this planning, one of us happened to read about an approach being used in England called the "Integrated Day." This seemed to mean an untimetabled school day in which children made many decisions about how and when to make use of the rich provisioning of materials for their learning; where curriculum emerged from the children themselves and was not artificially fragmented into compartments but remained whole and therefore integrated into the lives of the children, and in which the teacher's role was dramatically different and she became a guide, facilitator, challenger, provider, supporter and learner alongside the child.

We obtained all the information we could concerning this approach, and one query brought an exciting response. An educator directed us to Dr. Vincent Rogers, of the University of Connecticut, who was just then scheduling a summer seminar-workshop in England for teachers interested in this integrated day approach. We met Dr. Rogers, observed in a school in Connecticut which was moving in the direction of an integrated day, and decided this was for us: we need not plan classrooms where children could move back and forth according to their specific needs. We could plan a classroom for both five and six year olds which could meet the

needs of both groups in one location. Once we thought about this, it made absolute sense. So it was on to England that summer.

The summer experience in Oxfordshire was probably the most exciting educational adventure of my life--and it remains so in my mind to this day. We left the United States with high hopes of learning so much--and the experience was even better than we could have imagined. There were about fifty of us, teachers from various parts of New England, all eager to discover the integrated day. We visited many schools in Oxfordshire, but always stayed at least two days in a school. We saw schools in all stages of progress toward the ideal integrated day. We saw some rather ordinary schools, some very grand schools, some large schools and some tiny country schools. We were never bored. There was a world of information to be gained from every visit. We saw teachers of all kinds, sizes, ages and both sexes. We saw teachers completely involved with the children they were teaching. We saw schools with a wealth of materials and equipment, and schools with very little. But we saw schools and materials and teachers being used for children's learning. We found an atmosphere of openness--openness of communication, of movement, of methods, of relationships, of *ideas*. In no two schools did we see the same curriculum being approached in the same manner--in fact, in no two schools did we see the same curriculum evident. The curriculum obviously emerged from the children's interests, and therefore differed in every school. Although broad educational goals were evident, approaches to these goals were interestingly different. Children were busy, involved with their work, relating to each other without undue

dissension or distraction, appearing to take pleasure from their endeavors. They were encouraged, challenged, supported, and assisted by their teachers. The discipline of the classroom seemed to be a joint responsibility, and because almost all classrooms were composed of multi-aged students, older ones seemed to assist the younger ones, not only with their work but with their growing management of themselves as well.

Although I did not go to England to see results only, the results of this educational approach were exciting and impressive. I had never seen such splendid creative writing, or such delightful art work, or such imaginative dramatics. Apparently this system produced results of high quality, in whatever discipline children engaged. I questioned a headmaster about this and he replied, "It's the early art of observation you know. The youngest children learn to observe carefully and skillfully, and as they mature, this results in work of high quality." I had to believe he was correct, for I was seeing fine work by children in the middle ages (nine through eleven years). The two colleagues with whom I went to England were each visiting different schools, so in the evenings after our seminar discussions with the total group, we talked long into the night about what we were observing and what were the implications for us in our plans for the coming year. In fact, we talked at such length into every night that all three of us were just about completely exhausted, yet more and more excited at the possibilities for our program "back home." My recollection of these late-night sharings is that I must have been the most determined to get the most out of every minute, for there were nights when I found myself talking to the quiet

rhythmic breathings in the other two beds. At any rate, we watched, and listened and discussed and thought, with high enthusiasm for our own venture.

One of the finest experiences of the English seminar was the opportunity to meet other educators and share in lectures and discussions. The highlight of this was meeting and listening to John Coe, the top educational advisor for Oxfordshire. This man is an inspired leader whose priorities for the best possible lives for children are utterly evident when he speaks. Many of his statements are graven on my mind and heart for all time. He could say, "Our goal is to generate happiness in children," and one fell under his spell. He referred to joy, to the thrill of learning to learn and to manage oneself, as happiness, surely not to a soft sentimentality which sees children as cute objects. Ever since that summer, I have measured myself against what I think John Coe would want me to be as a teacher. I can't measure up yet, but I can keep trying. When he later came to our school to talk to our teachers it was both a thrill and a shame to take him through my classroom. He expressed satisfaction with a job being attempted. When I complained that I knew I wasn't obtaining the quality of work from my children that I had seen and appreciated in Oxfordshire, he replied that I was impatient. He insisted that it took years to build a school into the kind of place where children produce work of such high standards. He urged me just to keep trying, to avoid discouragement, to rely on the faith that children, given this kind of environment would, in time, execute beautiful work.

To return to the England summer, at the conclusion of our seminar together, we were given a few days to use as our own for sightseeing or

whatever might appeal to us. I went down to Devon to visit young friends, and had written previously to ask that they arrange for me to visit a school or two if possible. And, good hosts that they were, we went to an infant school the very next morning after I arrived. We had been there only a few minutes when the headmistress was called to the telephone. She returned to ask us the most surprising favor. She and her teachers had just been invited to a workshop for the following three days. They could only go if the school were staffed in their absence. She knew my young friend and I were both teachers. Would it be at all possible for us to assume the responsibility of the school for the following days? My friend looked startled; she hadn't taught since she had married and was at that time expecting a baby in a few weeks, but seeing the look of desperate pleading on my face, she agreed. There was no question about my answer!

So we two spent that night planning and preparing materials, another late, late evening. The next morning we were at the school bright and early and were met by the aides (there were two of them), who looked rather suspiciously at us and announced that our rooms were ready for us. We had a brief and somewhat vague schedule on our desks, and that was it. The children began arriving and some of the "Mums" as well. These mothers also looked at us rather uncertainly as we explained our presence there.

We have all heard about the difference between theory and practice, and I found it out for a certainty in that small school in Torquay. The children, although British, were still children, and took the usual

American child's delight in trying us out. I had qualms about my ability to handle this job I had been so eager for, when the first few little ones began to run wildly about the room, climbing upon the chairs and hopping down upon one another. Ah! This wasn't the way it was supposed to be! This wasn't the way it looked in Oxfordshire! But it most surely was the way it was looking in Devonshire. So, I pulled myself together and began doing some very American kinds of things to help children get themselves in control--and before long it was a functioning classroom, although functioning along different lines than I had been used to at home. It never takes long to discover which children need the most help, the most attention, the most love, and which ones can putter along on their own pretty constructively. I soon had formed a small group of children to play a game with me, and rotated my favors throughout the morning, and it all went pretty well. Then came the scary time. I was to "lead the assembly." What do the assemblies consist of? Some prayers, a moral lesson perhaps, some discussion about a moral topic, maybe a small spot of creative art--performing, or critiquing, or discussing. I just grabbed a book and waded in. I don't remember the story, but it had a moral, and we discussed that moral and we sang some songs and we made a Friendship Circle and that was the assembly. Whew! My young pregnant friend looked on approvingly--but I later teased her about not taking it over. She confessed that she was "scared," although she actually had taught in English schools the year before her marriage!

Our second and third days went much more smoothly, so much so in fact, that the aides, who had been rather distant, became ever so helpful,

even insisting on setting up our lunch table out in the sunshine so we could relax and enjoy our break! One thing I did discover about the conditions under which teachers pursue their jobs in England was that they are much helped, much appreciated and much respected.

At any rate, we concluded our brief teaching experience with a feeling of satisfaction. The children seemed genuinely sorry to say goodby to us, the aides told us they had not seen children so happily occupied before! And I knew for a fact that I had a great deal to learn before I could classify myself as an Integrated Day teacher. As a small postscript to our experience there in Torquay, we never received payment! This was, indeed, a labor of love!

Although we did seem to interest and help children to keep busy, I found that there was an enormous groundwork of structure to this integrated day business. Plans had to be made for almost any eventuality, materials prepared in abundance although probably only a small percentage were actually used. I needed a large store of information at my fingertips about any number of things, and children needed to know that we expected a great deal of work from them! And they needed to know also that we would not accept slipshod or shabby work. This last was very important. I was sure that we did not accomplish as much in our three days as the regular teachers would have done; we needed to work into this with the children much more gradually. The foundations were laid long before our appearance on the scene, and would continue to be laid each day of the year. Reading seemed to be a rather haphazard affair, yet I was comfortable with it, for I felt that the results I had seen

everywhere justified this approach. The general tone of the school was one of much to be explored, much to be accomplished, and all done in an atmosphere of respect for each other and for the many materials.

I returned from England in a state of euphoria. I had seen the light and I was determined to produce the same situation in my classroom. I lived, breathed, dreamed integrated day--to the neglect of any and all other aspects of life. I spent countless hours creating materials like the ones I had seen in use in England. I made literally hundreds of work cards and small books for specific concepts and charts and posters. Together with my team-mates I put in long hours of discussion about various aspects of the planning. We decided together to color code the entire curriculum so that the children and adults would be able to record and assess what was being done. We worked over schedules and classroom arranging. We urged each other on, we supported each other's productions, and we argued (oh, how we argued!) about the ways to accomplish our goals. By the time September arrived and we began the actual setting up of the classrooms, we were already pretty well tired out! But we did not lack enthusiasm--we were both highly excited and scared to pieces. I had nightmares about not being able to teach every child to read, and various other concerns.

So the opening of school was upon us, marred only by the usual frustrations. We had decided to accept only six year olds the first three days and then take in the kindergarteners. After struggling to find the exactly perfect way to arrange all the areas, materials and visuals, the carpet layers arrived the day before school opened and

announced that they were now ready to lay the promised carpet! Everything was removed, carpet laid, and late in the evening the room re-arranged into its pristine beauty. Flowers were massed in large bowls, tables invitingly spread with interesting materials, my own minute-by-minute schedule and reminders taped on the wall where I couldn't miss it--and no sleep that night!

When the six year old children arrived the next morning I was in a state of shock, so numb with the excitement of it all that I had the smile frozen on my face and couldn't have told anyone my own name, let alone any one of theirs. However, most of them had been in kindergarten with me the year before, and they came in smiling and clutching the little notes I had mailed to them a few days before. Bit by bit, I relaxed and began to function. The beautifully prepared room served its purpose for sure, because I hadn't needed to function at first, the materials did the job. I looked around after thirty or forty minutes, and children were busily exploring the environment, exactly as I'd planned and hoped, and all was well.

The day went along somewhat as planned. I did take the children on a tour around the room after the newness had worn off a bit, so that we could decide together how each area might be used and how many children could profitably use it at one time. Then we sat in a circle and played a game about our names, and I explained the routine and expectations for them. Of course I said too much and it all needed much repetition later on, but the ideas were expressed. It was a happy first day of school. I was a bit tense throughout, because I was so anxious

that all should go well, but I managed to enjoy it even so. We all relaxed with a good story (Are You My Mother?¹) at the end of the morning and children left, puzzling over a riddle I had asked them, looking pleased and relaxed.

Then: As I was gathering up my strength, ready to mull over and assess the day, two obviously angry parents strode through the door looking for "the teacher of this mess!" The father was so angry, in fact, that he was beet red and shaking! They did not like our idea of an integrated day, they did not like it one bit, and they wanted it to cease and desist from then on. I suggested they might move their little boy, whom I was delighted to have in my class, into another first grade somewhere in the system. I accepted their rage, but was firm in my decision to try this approach. I found myself defending, with all the power within me, the philosophy we had imbibed in England. Before the discussion ended I, too, was red and perspiring profusely, and trying to maintain my sense of fair play and some semblance of humor. They refused to consider removing their child from the class; I refused to consider changing the approach; we parted very tensely, and this time, I was shaking. I was exhausted, physically and emotionally. It was a bit much for the first anxious day! (Incidentally, this little boy remained with me for two years; his mother became very supportive of the program, his father did not, the child made excellent progress but could have accomplished even more, I think, had we all been united in our objectives. He was a very bright boy and an interesting one as well. He read

¹P. D. Eastman, Are You My Mother? (New York: Random House, Beginner Book 18, 1960).

Shakespeare and one day built Hamlet's father's coffin out of unit blocks, laid himself therein and told the entire story to the rest of the class.)

We had three days before our five year olds arrived to join us, and in those days, children just familiarized themselves with the environment and the materials. I mentioned the technique of hanging colored tags on their personal hooks to indicate areas worked in, but did not enforce compliance. I did insist that every one make a notebook, and put something in it every day. The choice of what went in was left to the children, but the expectation was very clear that it must be done. And most children drew or scribbled something with crayons. I attempted to take down some dictation from each of them concerning their work. I did not take a hard look at these notebooks for about three weeks.

(Later on this was to change.)

Looking back, I see those first three days of the first year's trial of integrated day (with the exception of the angry parents), as a kind of Utopia. The children were happy and interested, there were no discipline problems of any magnitude, the children were there for the morning only, so the afternoons were spent in preparation for the next day, and there was time for team sharing of ideas and assessments. It was a lovely, serene time. We did have all the kindergarten parents and their children in for meetings during the afternoons, but this was pleasant also and very informal and sociable. By Friday, we felt we were a tiny bit launched on our program, and were anticipating the kindergarteners on Monday.

And on Monday they came! Tilt! Oh, what a change! Where did it all go? All the beautiful, busy involvement, the quiet buzz of happy children at work, the smiling teachers feeling somewhat successful in this new venture? We had eight little five year old children, none of whom had ever been in school before. They arrived full of energy and knowing no bounds to their enthusiasms or behaviors. One of them rather literally climbed the walls--and my extremely effective aide and I flew around in nervous bewilderment. What should we do? Somehow all those wildly rushing little bodies had to be dealt with and the other children, about nineteen of them, were equally affected. Our nicely laid plans began to evaporate, and we held emergency councils and TOOK CHARGE of the little ones. They were grouped in a circle--it took a bit of doing--while the other children were encouraged (urged) to return to their individual self-set tasks, and we two adults proceeded to attempt to indoctrinate the kindergarteners. We toured the room much as we had done before, explaining how areas could be used. We returned to the circle and sang a song or two and performed a fingerplay and then allowed them to choose where they would work. And we did stress the term *work*. It seemed an eon of time, but eventually the little ones did get themselves involved and busy and things settled down acceptably.

We were anxious that this group not be polarized into two separate parts, although we had done what seemed absolutely necessary at the beginning, and so we all went outside together, after a short discussion about the equipment and some safety limits. That worked fine, and when we came back inside, it was time for a story before lunch for the

all-dayers (the six year olds) and going home for the fives. That worked well, too. The children all sat comfortably on the floor and I sat with them, leaning comfortably against a wall, to read. It was a pleasant conclusion to a busy morning. The aide took the sixes down to the cafeteria, and I took the kindergarteners to their bus. We had decided that I should ride the bus to deliver the morning children and pick up the afternoon kindergarteners so that all children would feel secure. I think I carried a sandwich with me; I cannot honestly remember.

All went smoothly. We actually delivered each kindergartener to his appropriate stop where a mother was waiting to receive him. Then we began picking up the children who were to attend school in the afternoon. As we approached the stop for one little boy, we could see him obviously being held firmly by his mother while he was attempting to retreat! As the bus door opened and I leaned smilingly out to gather him in--he broke loose and yelled, "I ain't going! I told you I wasn't goin' and I ain't goin'!" and ran backward. A quick conference with his mother invited her to grasp Billy in one hand, her baby in the other and step into the bus with us. We promised to return her and Billy later that afternoon. She was embarrassed to have curlers in her hair, but we insisted that she was just fine. We knew we'd never get Billy at all if we didn't capitalize on the moment.

Little did I know it then, but Billy was the least of our problems. When I returned to school with the afternoon kindergarteners, all the morning children had finished lunch, been outside to play and came bouncing in, ready to go to work. There we were again, a new group of

children who had no experience of group dynamics! Also, by this time, the children who had worked so industriously in the morning had begun to run down a little and needed different kinds of activities, but the new five year olds needed all the same vigorous, active kinds of activities that the morning had offered. This presented a challenge that we never solved, and this remained our severe problem throughout that entire first year. We never achieved a satisfactory way of resolving it to the children's benefit, or our sanity. We tried everything--at least everything that we could dream up. And nothing worked well. Always we felt we cheated one group or the other of the children, and we knew for sure that the afternoon kindergarteners never melded into the learning community as did the morning fives. It was a built-in failure. We did the very best we could to give all children a good, successful year, but we never felt we had truly achieved that, and we knew for certain that it was disaster for the teachers. We lived in a state of exhaustion. We had not one minute without children during the entire day. When the morning children ate lunch, we ate with them, and then the afternoon children arrived at 12:15--so we hadn't time even to powder our noses between groups. If we learned nothing else that first year, we learned never, never to plan for two separate groups of five year olds each day in a vertical age-grouped classroom.

As the year went along, our beginning euphoria subsided into: one, a more down-to-earth feeling of a job to be done, and two, into a feeling of despair. We worked twelve to fourteen hours a day! We taught all day and prepared all night. We hadn't developed any tools for

assessment, and so began to feel a nagging worry that the children really weren't learning! We had few discipline problems with our sixes to be sure, but we found that we couldn't see any proof of their learning to read. Were they actually learning to read as well as children in a more conventional program with all the structured basal approaches? Those notebooks I was so keen on--what did they really prove beside a growing ability to draw with crayons? Where were all the math and reading and all the rest of the curriculum goals? Children certainly were having a good time and obviously enjoying themselves, and they weren't running wild or mis-using the equipment or mistreating each other, but WERE they learning?

And of course the two parents were still with me! And they spent long hours up in the observation corridor, some of it with me as guide as to what was happening below (and why would *their* little boy be the one to lie idly dreaming under a table?). As they expressed their deep concerns about whether their child was learning anything worthwhile, I was experiencing pretty serious concerns myself.

And the school administration was expressing concerns also. They were tolerating our experiment, not condoning it, at this point. And the local newspaper began to write about us, albeit in a very supportive way, but it did bring attention to our venture, and this motivated much response from the citizenry. Letters pro and con our approach were printed in the paper. The school board sent a representative to observe us; we were "in the news," and felt the necessity to defend this program continually. Even our colleagues in the school looked askance at us.

They noted our fatigue, our long hours, our doubts and worries, and allowed that they would never get involved with the Integrated Day! It was about this time, near the middle of the first semester, that one of the members of our team became ill from overwork and had to be replaced. Where did we go from there?

We just kept trying. We began to see ways to improve our pedagogy. We reached out for resources to give us help and comfort. We brought in people of proven expertise in this way of working with children. Mr. Ed Yeomans, a leading exponent of the Integrated Day, came to observe our classes and talk with us. He gave us much reassurance that our children were indeed learning. He insisted that we were farther along in our route than we realized. He watched, with us, as our children worked busily in their classrooms without our presence, and he told us that this was a wonderful proof of the validity of the concept and our implementation of it. He said that we would be overworked and tired out the first year, still concerned about results the second year, and at ease with the procedure by the third year. We felt better after he came!

We invited two women from eastern Massachusetts to come as consultants to us. One was involved with an integrated program near Boston, and the other was a first grade teacher in a beautifully open, warm, first grade classroom. Both expressed support for what we were attempting. Both felt we were making satisfactory progress, although one insisted that we must change the policy of having new kindergarteners in the afternoon. She felt that this was an untenable situation and should be resolved at

once. We concurred, but we were unable to effect any change at all that year. These resource persons gave us much good advice, practical suggestions and support. And so we went along.

A high point of our first year was the late spring visit to our school by John Coe, the Educational Advisor for Oxfordshire, who had so impressed and inspired us in the summer seminar in England. He toured our classrooms, as I described earlier, and said encouraging things to us. He also gave an evening presentation on the British Integrated Day approach which was open to all who were interested. Our team was disappointed that none of the top administrators in the school district came to hear him. We knew John Coe could state the case for open education far more clearly and convincingly than could any of us.

We had a bit of a problem to solve concerning the use of special teachers for art, music and physical education in our kind of program. We felt that the creative arts should take place naturally and spontaneously in the classroom as part of the true integration of the curriculum. So we decided not to avail ourselves of the special teachers' time this first year. This worked well for art and music, because our day was full of both. But physical education was another matter, and while we took our children outside daily, and into the gym two or three times a week, we were not as sure that they were receiving a satisfactory physical development program. But we did our best, and studied, prepared and offered physical activities as part of the program.

And so the year moved along and routines were established and adhered to, and if things did not improve regarding the incoming children

in afternoon at least they became no worse. We did put in too many hours, we sacrificed too much of our personal lives to the school and we worried that children, while happy, might not be profiting optimally in the academic area. We were directed to give our children standardized tests and we objected. We thought testing of this kind was a complete contradiction of our basic philosophy. We had taught the children to help and support each other and to be effective and successful members of this community, and we feared the techniques of testing would undo all we had tried to establish. Also, we were concerned that children would think less well of themselves if the tests proved frustrating or frightening. However, although I sent back the tests with a polite note of refusal and my reasons for refusing, the tests were returned to me. That time I wept with disappointment and frustration and the lack of understanding of what our program was all about, but to no avail. There was no way out; I must, and did, give the tests. Results of the testing were inconclusive, as we had anticipated. Our children tested out in reading about the same as did the other children in the system and a bit higher in mathematics.

During the spring semester of this year, the School of Education offered a course in the Integrated Day, to which we were invited to participate. Our classrooms were used as the course location, and we were encouraged to share our on-going experiences with the other students in the course. This was a valuable experience. It is always good to share experiences with others in the same field of endeavor, and we benefited by this sharing. Also, we received much support from the instructors of

the course, who were the directors of the Integrated Day program in the School of Education. At one point in the course, however, our team decided to try to add up the pros and cons of this approach--from the point of view of ourselves, not of the benefits to our children. The lists were long on each side, and we were left in a quandary. (At the end of the year I decided to take another position; I felt I owed it to my family to find a spot where I didn't work fifteen hours a day and weekends, too. So I almost signed a contract with another school system, and then my sense of leaving a job undone forced my conscience to refuse the contract and stick it out one more year--that turned into five more.)

There were many good things that first year. At the top of the list, of course, was the fact that our children were not only happy in school, but so enthused and excited about school that they rebelled at staying home even when they were sick. Also, we held parent conferences right in the classroom during the day's work, and this gave parents a chance to observe their own children in the setting, and to see their children's work first hand, while sharing in the general atmosphere of the room. By the end of the year, almost all the parents were solid in their support of our program. The children became a tight community of learners who respected and valued each other and each other's contributions. This last was modified somewhat by those eight afternoon children, who never quite belonged as thoroughly as did the entire morning group. But what we could see affectively on assessment, was truly good.

The second year of the Integrated Day program began with less fanfare, and proved to be better for the teachers, both physically and emotionally.

For one thing, we knew a little more surely what to expect. Our summer was not quite so frantic with the making of materials for three reasons: One, we had accumulated quite a store of task cards, books, charts and games; second, we were learning that often the best materials were those prepared at the time a child or group of children indicated a particular need, then the materials could be geared to the specific situation; thirdly, we had a group of children who also knew what to expect, and came to school ready to work in a familiar pattern. These children were helpful to the new five year olds, and this made a real difference. Also, we enrolled all five year olds for the morning session. While this meant a heavy morning, it worked to advantage for both teachers and children. All were involved in the learning community from the beginning of each day, and the afternoons were spent in a more relaxed manner. The reading conferences could occur peacefully and frequently without adults having to sandwich them in between kindergarten-type offerings, except as these occurred naturally.

A slightly different work structure emerged in the second year as expectations and achievements began to mesh a bit more successfully. The workhorse of the Integrated Day, the individual Notebook, assumed its rightful importance. I checked the notebooks carefully each day and began to use them as communication vehicles also. I wrote notes to the children in their notebooks: "Sarah, no SRA for three days! Why?" In return: "But Mrs. H., I don't like SRA!" (I took the cue and offered different materials.) This communication method was an excellent means of ensuring more reading comprehension and practice in writing as well. I began to comment more frequently, and provided better feedback to the children.

In this year, several kindergarteners began to read; the credit for teaching them belonging more to the six year olds, than to me. The sight of two children sitting, arms around each other, poring over a book, and the six year old saying, "Now, come on, you can get it; what does that start with?" was a common and delightful one. The fives were more naturally exposed to the sixes' activities and more often joined them. Group activities were less polarized and usually common to the entire group.

An interesting comment: While the fives used the doll corner less and less as the year unfolded, the six year olds used it steadily. They seemingly could not give up the support and pleasure of role explorations and dramatic play.

In this second year, the special teachers opted to join our program, and it was agreed that they would come into the classrooms and work informally with the children in much the same way as the regular teachers. The art teacher would bring in materials, set up shop in a corner, and work with those children who were interested. She based her plans on projects in which the children were currently involved. Usually, most of the children decided to work with her each session, on an informal basis, and this seemed a good solution to us. The music teacher found it more difficult to work musically with just a few children at a time, and she was noticeably more comfortable when the entire group gathered around her. The physical education specialist valiantly tried to fit into the program with visits to the classroom, but we all found this difficult. It was decided that the outdoors and the gymnasium were much better suited to the development of physical

skills! This teacher did attempt to provide choices and alternatives in his program.

Standardized tests again made their appearance at the end of this second year. This time I didn't attempt a refusal. I knew they were inevitable. I prepared the children effectively as best I could. I explained testing as a skill, and taught them how to function in a test situation, made a clear distinction between taking tests and our usual working approach, that of helping each other. I tried to make it equally clear that the results of the test had no relationship to the children's value as persons. I did not try to teach material to be covered in the tests as preparation. That seemed morally wrong to me. But I worried! I feared our children would not show to advantage with those children who had been working in a traditional manner in basal textbooks whose contents were the general basis for the tests. My concern was unfounded; our children did just about as well as other children in the system. While we would have rejoiced to see sensationally high scores as a proof of the value of the Integrated Day, we were satisfied that our children were able to cope with such an unfamiliar procedure without apparent damage to their self concepts. And they showed their test-taking skills to be equal to that of their peers in the school district.

The second year ended with happy children, mostly satisfied parents, and teachers a *bit* less frazzled than the previous year. We felt we had far to go, many problems still to solve, and with a selling job still remaining with segments of the administration, school board and community members. Yet, as a teacher, I was more convinced than ever

that, although I had much to learn about my successful performance of the role, this approach was valid for children, and superior to any other I had tried. So we decided to expand our program to seven year old children. This would give us family groups of five, six and seven year olds, normally classed as kindergarten and grades one and two. We preferred not to use the grade classifications if possible.

By the beginning of the third year, I felt comfortable enough with the program, and sure enough of the children's responses, that I decided to try something I had long thought about. In order to give children the feeling of responsibility for the classroom, and ownership of it, my plan was to allow them to furnish the room themselves. In preparation, I moved all the furniture and equipment out into the hall and stacked it alongside the wall. Then I placed all materials in the back of the room behind screens. Arguing that music and books were important to me, and I belonged in the room, too, I left the piano inside, and stacked a few books on a portable shelf. The room looked very big and bare, and I wondered with some apprehension how this was going to work. But I felt right about the idea, and felt also that the children would justify the attempt. On the first day of school, children came in, smiling at me, hugging me, laughing at each other and then stopped and looked around. "What's happened? Why isn't there anything in the room? It looks funny. Where is everything? etc." We sat in a circle and I explained my idea to them, underscoring that I felt it only reasonable that if they were to live in this room also, they should have input into the way it was going to be used and arranged. They appeared interested, if a bit bewildered. Then I asked my leading questions, "What

do you expect to do this year in school? What will you need to accomplish this? Where will you put things?" And they contributed a list of goals, which included reading, math, writing, science, cooking, art, music, dramatics. Then they began to think about what they would need to do all this, and I listed furniture and equipment and materials at their dictation. The last question, "Where will you put things?" was hard--they looked at me as if to fathom my mind on this weighty matter, and I insisted again that it was their job. So they suggested forming committees, in order to make these important decisions. Committees reflecting the academic goals were then set up, and each committee gathered to talk over its responsibility. We assembled together again in a very few minutes, to work out the locations of each area. This proved very interesting because when I questioned the placement of their cubbies, one child said, "Well, they have to be *there*, because that's where the cubbies always are." I countered with, "But they can be anywhere you want them, if the children agree." He looked at me with amazement, and comprehension dawning on his face as if to say, "She really means it, yes she does!" And from that moment on, the job of setting up the classroom went on without me. Groups went in and out choosing which pieces of furniture or equipment they felt they needed for their area of concentration. I kept a tight hold on my tongue so that I wouldn't give advice where none was asked. I thought some of the decisions were simply unworkable, but knew that if they were, it would become clear to the children themselves. This settling in took about three days to accomplish the main job, smaller details were attended to over the next two weeks.

(The only time restriction I had made was that we must be ready for the five year olds who would be arriving in about ten days.)

There were many interesting incidents connected with this project. Just one example is: Two little girls were obviously upset about their assignment. They kept talking heatedly, going in and out of the room, and moving furniture around and back again. Finally, I asked them what their problem was and they answered that my beauty spot was exactly in the spot where the cooking corner had to be, because of the electrical outlet and positioning for the cooking equipment. I could see the sense in this argument and replied that I would move my beauty spot immediately. They beamed smiles of relief and went to work setting up the cooking corner with speed and pleasure. They were right, of course--it was the only sensible location for cooking. I managed to hang my tapestry and place my plant and driftwood piece in another spot in the room, so all was serene.

One of my goals in trying out this project was that of helping children assume more continuing responsibility for their classroom. I reasoned that if it were truly their own situation, and they were solely responsible for the shape of their room, they might show more interest in keeping it picked up, orderly, and replacing materials where they belonged. In this I was wrong. I did not see any giant enthusiasm about the house-keeping chores. It seemed that I had to work as hard as ever to develop good habits of putting away materials. However, this was the only disappointment in my project. I was truly impressed and pleased with the efficiency and dispatch with which they attacked the job, the lack of

serious quarreling, the successful outcome of their work--a room we lived in effectively. Of course changes occurred all year long, and this was to be expected and sought, but my faith in their ability to do the job was completely vindicated. They rose to the challenge with enthusiasm and determination.

As I assessed this project, success appeared to come from the careful planning the children and I did together before they started to move any equipment. Their idea of choosing committees to share the work was excellent. The discussion was very thorough about goals and needs and locations. I, as the teacher, was very careful not to advise unless asked to do so, and even then, tried to explore ideas only, and leave the decisions to the participants.

In conclusion, the classroom was ready for the five year olds, and it looked cheerful, interesting, comfortable and pleasant. Many areas seemed oddly placed to me, but yet as we worked in the room it all became workable and livable. Some placements were an improvement over my ideas of the years before--the math corner was much better lit and worked out extremely well all year long. So, the experiment was a success and I was glad I had attempted it.

The third year of the program brought a new element again, that of having three age groups. The teaching team had grown to four. Our concern was that perhaps we wouldn't be able to meet the needs of such a wide age range. However, this particular concern was partially solved by the children themselves, who were delighted to be again with their old friends and teachers, and who took over the task of initiating the new

five year olds into the classroom. The seven year olds assumed the job of helping the sixes to read and we began to realize the power of shared energy.

There was a little boy who had been in my class the year before who had shown no interest whatsoever in the business of learning to read. I hadn't pushed or pressured him, for I felt it would only ensure his developing a dislike of the activity and a disinclination to learn when the proper time came. His birthday came early in the year, and I made him a little book for a birthday present. "The Boy Who Liked Bugs" was a great success, and he insisted that I read it to him over and over. And then, sure enough, he became the classic case. He began to read! It was very exciting for him and for me, and he read and read and read. He would settle himself comfortably in some cozy corner and read away for long periods of time. Many times I had to pull him out of his den and insist that he come along to lunch with the rest of us! He carried books out to the playground, and read. He read everything in sight and by the time the first glow of satisfaction had somewhat worn off and he was able to engage in some other activities, he had more than made up for his slow beginning and could read books appropriate to his age level, with great pleasure. This incident convinced me even more surely that it was important to "let children be the guides when opening the door to learning!"²

By this time, we felt comfortable about notebooks and task cards being chief learning tools, along with many individual projects and

²Quotation the author finds meaningful; source is unknown.

activities. The notebooks were an excellent source of communication between adult and child, and I began to insert more questions and suggestions that encouraged action of one kind or another. I decided that once a child showed an interest in an area, and a capability for the next level of learning, I would stretch him by providing questions and materials to lead him on. This is the ideal way to proceed in an open learning situation, and very difficult to accomplish. The process of diagnosis is a delicate one, not easily achieved. Dialogue between student and teacher, careful assessment of daily work kept over periods of time are the best tools for this kind of diagnosis. And one just isn't always sure! I had, and have, a long way to go before I can feel really skillful at this demanding task. And it is a delicate task as well, for children must be stretched far enough to find challenge and yet not too far because they can be discouraged if the task is really too great. And discouragement leads to failure, not success.

By this third year I found the problem of record-keeping almost insurmountable. It was absolutely necessary to keep records of many kinds, yet the time to do so just wasn't available. I tried anecdotal records the first two years and knew they were the best kind of record, but that took inordinate amounts of time. I tried charts on the wall; small charts for each curriculum area; a notebook, tied around my neck in which to jot down notes as I went about the room. None of these was successful because I never found the time to follow through. The notebook-around-the-neck idea worked beautifully for some of the teachers but not for me. I would get so involved with the children and whatever was occurring in the classroom, I would forget all about any jotting down at all.

I finally tried a Tick Sheet--on which I listed all the children, divided it up into curriculum areas, and simply ticked where I saw them working. I added comments to this, very brief, shorthand notes, which helped to fix in my mind the particular situation or problem. This, together with the colored tags we still insisted upon for the children's own record keeping seemed to be the best I could manage. I discovered an interesting fact about the colored tags, which recorded for a child what he thought he had accomplished--they were just about right for the six year olds, it was expecting a bit too much of the fives to keep that kind of record accurately, and it was not very appropriate for the sevens as they progressed through that year. The sevens grew out of this type of recording--and more and more of their achievements were visible in their notebooks. I found this to be true in the following years as well.

I tried variations of record keeping for the children themselves during this year--any procedure becomes boring if relief upon forever. So sometimes I made a huge chart, divided it into colored areas, and as children completed a job in an area, they would write their names on that color. The reverse of this method was to write children's names on the colored areas at the start of the day, at their direction, and then as they finished tasks, they would check off their names. Sometimes we would have colored containers on a shelf, and children would write their names and drop them in the appropriate color as they completed jobs in that area. We even tried pinning the colored tags on the children to show finished work. We tried as many variations as I could think up, none of which was entirely successful. Record keeping remained a challenge throughout my years of Integrated Day. I found the tick

sheet the most effective for me, but the time needed to correlate all those ticks into solid records of progress was still a problem.

Some really good things happened that third year, and I'm sure they occurred because we had extended the program to the seven year olds. One day the children asked me if I would please step outside the room after lunch, as they had something to discuss privately--privately, all of them and not me! I of course complied and stood out in the hall with the door closed--somewhat nervously, for there was plenty of noise coming from inside! There was great discussion going on, arguments and raised voices. And every now and then I would hear a particular child's voice saying, "Now be quiet! We have to *decide* this! Be quiet!" And even, occasionally, "Shut up!" Other teachers passing me in the hall looked questioningly at me, one with raised eyebrows, and I just shrugged my shoulders and tried to smile knowingly. Eventually I was called back inside, and no more was said about the affair. We went to work as usual. By the next day I had forgotten all about it. After lunch, again, I was asked to withdraw, and this time I did so quite reluctantly--that nagging worry with me, "What if they're trying to pull something decidedly inappropriate--what should I do?" At any rate, after another period of muffled and not-so-muffled noises and bustling sounds, I was importantly called back into the classroom. And I just could not believe what I saw. There was a large banner which stated "TEACHERS DAY" in many colors, there were several small banners, a circle had been arranged and plates and cups placed there--with punch and cakes and cookies. A crown lay at my place, and the party was on! The children explained that they had

realized that there were many parties for them during the year, but that never had I been surprised by a party--so they remedied the situation! Mothers had generously contributed baked goodies, and on their own, the party was planned and carried off. This said more than any record-keeping ever could have communicated--they were able to act independently to solve problems! I felt the whole vindication of our philosophy in that one afternoon.

Although I thought I had learned much faith in children's ability to make decisions about their own learning, I found myself surprised over and over again by their abilities. A social studies project that year was the study of peanuts, initiated during a study of Black heroes. As we talked about George Washington Carver, the children became very interested in the whole subject of peanuts. They decided to explore their interest in depth, and with the help of a student intern, planned and went to work. Before I knew it, we were roasting peanuts, making peanut butter, and peanut candy, eating peanut butter sandwiches, baking peanut butter cookies. Much research was done about growing peanuts, and charts, posters and reports were constructed. One group decided they must do a play about George Washington Carver and the peanut--so they worked away industriously for many days. The intern assisted them by monitoring the rehearsals and putting in a judicious word now and then about reasonable goals. When this group was ready to perform, they gave the play for our class, to great applause. This was so heady, they insisted on presenting the play for the entire primary wing. And that wasn't enough; they invited all the class parents in to see the play and

enjoy peanut refreshments afterward. There was much bustling back and forth to the stage, much printing of recipes, collecting of ingredients, and actual cooking, much drawing and painting for decorations and stage sets. The entire class was in a whirl for another week. On the appointed day, we all went to the school auditorium. The dramatists giggled behind the curtains, and one little girl came out, sat herself comfortably on the apron of the stage and announced the play. Then she proceeded to read the biography of George Washington Carver while the characters came and went portraying scenes from his life. Her voice was clear and lilting and utterly confident. The performers performed, completely without adult assistance, and the audience, including the teacher, nearly burst with pride and appreciation. Following the performance, students and guests returned to the classroom where we all partook of the many peanut delicacies, and admired the decorations. Now that is proof of children's ability to undertake, sustain, and complete a project with a minimum of adult assistance except for praise, support and an appropriate question now and then.

Occasions such as the two described above are rewarding to both children and teachers. These provide the high moments of success and are savored. But the euphoria that accompanies these peaks, evaporates between them!

As a teacher I was still unsure of many things. I felt great insecurity in the field of reading and handwriting. I knew the children weren't achieving the daily quality I hoped for. I wasn't sure about "capturing the elusive teaching moment" and felt concern that I wasn't

stretching the children enough academically. Often I was uncertain about "next steps" and less patient about children's self-set tasks. Were they really learning at their fullest potential? Was precious learning time being wasted?

The situation concerning special teachers was not resolved except for the physical education teacher. The music specialist was not satisfied with our arrangement, and the art teacher expressed equal dissatisfaction during the year. She felt that sequential learning was impossible in our open classrooms and requested the children come to her on a regular scheduled basis in the next year.

In the spring, a second opportunity came to spend time in England again, visiting schools and sharing and learning from colleagues. I eagerly grasped this chance to return to British schools to learn more and to measure my current understandings against the models.

Again, three weeks proved too brief a time; I wished that I could have stayed on for several more. Yet I went with somewhat different questions this time, and with very specific areas of interest. As before, we saw schools in all stages of change, some more effective than others. This time I went, not to Devon, but to Leicestershire, well known for excellence in the new way of working with children. I was as excited as before although more discriminating in my approvals!

In one beautiful school there in Leicestershire, I felt children were accomplishing good things, but that too much of the obvious art work was done by the teachers, allowing children to add their bits and pieces only after the groundwork was well laid by superior craftsmen. The creative writing there was superb, however. The reading program was

stilted and not very impressive, yet the program for the late fours and early five year olds was splendid. The lunch time procedure was particularly memorable. The children ate at separate tables seating about eight. They were mixed in age with one of the oldest children as the table head. The food came in family serving bowls, and the older child assumed the responsibility of serving the others. He encouraged the little ones to taste everything, cheerfully supplied second portions to those requesting them, and kept up a flow of interesting conversation directed generally at all his table companions. It was an inspiring experience to be part of this luncheon.

I visited an old school in Leicestershire, housed in a rather shabby building with few conveniences. This school was operating in a genuinely open manner and the children seemed intensely involved in their work. The evidences of this involvement were scattered throughout the old building, with truly wonderful displays of their projects that year. The children were friendly and outgoing, happy to show and explain their work to us and unselfconscious in their enthusiasm. This school became a highlight for me to remember.

The other highlight of this trip was a special visit to Queen's Dyke School in Oxfordshire. On my first trip to England I had seen the blueprints for this school; it was to be a model institution architecturally. I had met and visited the projected headmaster and respected him as a man of high ideals and hopes for children. So I was determined to visit his new school, and I was not disappointed. Queen's Dyke is an architectural beacon for schools everywhere, but unfortunately, it became so expensive to build that its like will not be seen again very soon. It

was planned so that children had full use of all facilities, yet each small group had a nook of its own. Levels were used to create this sense of belonging to a cozy unit. The grounds were planned so that from every window, there would be beautiful things for children to see during all seasons of the year! There were lawns to play upon, gravel walks and gravel fields, sand areas for the little ones, and trees and shrubs and plants and flowers in great abundance. One had to see this to believe it! Inside the building, the view was as impressive as it was without. Several hundred children were busily involved, there were wings, made up of community areas and group bays, and in each wing there was a happy bustle of activity. One of the teachers of the youngest children said to me, "You know, it's really the unobtrusive teaching that counts, isn't it?" And the Headmaster generously gave me a substantial portion of his busy day and answered my many questions, and offered opinions of his own. I observed the six year olds adventuring on a science expedition around the school yard. They collected bugs of all varieties, then brought them inside and observed, discussed and sketched the insects.

I came away from Queen's Dyke, knowing that I had much to strive for, that I was yet far from carrying out any true open approach to education, that I had so much to learn. But also, in dialogue with fellow students, I saw ways in which we in Massachusetts seemed to be meeting some needs of children that the English schools were not meeting. I felt, rather than saw, a different attitude toward children. I think we all agreed that Americans care a great deal about the children they teach and care about the effect of their actions upon each individual

child. This is a generalization, of course, but the British appeared to care a great deal about the academic impact of their methods upon the children rather than about the affective growth and development of their students. At any rate, the trip was extremely worthwhile, and the company of colleagues with like interests and questions was very satisfying.

The arrangement and provisioning of the classroom of the children had seemed so successful that I decided to begin in the same manner for the next year. Other teachers questioned whether it wasn't more effort to empty a room and allow children to set it up than just to prepare the environment for them. I readily agreed that this procedure occasioned greater effort on my part, but that it seemed worthwhile to allow children to assume that much responsibility. However, previous success must have made me careless, and I didn't plan as carefully with the children before they actually began the job of choosing materials and setting up. The project didn't work out as well. This, however, was my perception. The children seemed completely satisfied. We used the classroom successfully; it served our educational needs. But it seemed to me that there was more contention and argument, less agreement and cooperation. As I assessed the project when the room was completed I pinpointed my error, not the children's. I didn't allow enough time for real input in the planning of committees. In the previous year, we had discussed at length the need for materials to carry out our academic goals, and the satisfactory positioning of areas. I think I was overconfident that this groundwork had been covered sufficiently. Clearly, that was not the case.

This year began with children who were familiar with the particular structure of this classroom, who looked forward to the arrival of the new five year olds, and who were ready to do their part to assist in the kindergarteners' education. As the teacher, I was still concerned about successfully meeting the needs of both the five year olds and the older children. The fives learned to read more quickly because of the abundant help from their older classmates, and their academic motivation was obvious. But I wondered if I was providing enough of the typical kindergarten activities. And the older children profited through their teaching of the younger ones, but were they getting enough of the academic stretching from me? I often felt torn between these concerns, and I seemed to veer first one way and then another in expenditure of my time and effort toward all the children.

Subtle changes seemed to have occurred within our program without our being aware of them. The notebooks had assumed even more importance, and I found myself taking every one home every single night and looking for more specific information. At the beginning of the venture, the notebooks belonged completely to the children, and they were encouraged to use them exactly as they wished. I read them for interest and always politely thanked each child for the privilege. Now I found that I was inserting questions and challenges as well as pertinent comments. At times I tucked a work card into the page for the next day, or I inserted a page of math problems. I began to demand a little more output from the older children and sometimes drew frowning faces to indicate my lack of satisfaction with their work for a day. I'm not sure whether this came about because I was by now too familiar with the structure and

therefore thought children should do more and more, or whether it was the result of my honest concern that precious learning time might be wasted. The children rose to my challenges, usually, so I received positive reinforcement for this procedure!

In discussion with team members we all found that we were exacting more specific work from our children. We still felt pressure to prove that the program worked academically, although all of us felt perfectly comfortable that it did work effectively.

During this year we decided to avail ourselves of the school-provided television programs that were applicable to the ages of our children. None of us was extremely enthusiastic about this project, but the programs were being offered at considerable expense to the schools in the District and we felt we should try to take advantage of them. We studied the offerings and prepared the children for the broadcasts. Being true to our philosophy, we offered the programs but didn't insist on attendance. We set up the television in a large corner of the room, and invited the children from two other groups to join us. The novelty of the situation insured success at first. Most of the children chose to watch the first program. They sat reasonably quietly and seemed interested in the cartoon about the muscles inside their bodies, and joined in the song at the conclusion. However, as the weeks wore on, attendance became more and more sparse. Most of the children preferred to continue at their own pursuits, and eventually we abandoned the idea. No one asked what had happened to the TV programs, no requests came for their reinstatement. In all honesty, I must add that I was uninterested

in the programs and although I attempted to go through the exercises suggested in the pre-viewing booklets, my own lack of enthusiasm probably was obvious to the children. My feeling then was that the TV programs were substitutes for children's interaction with materials and each other. Children value what the adults they admire value, and this became clear in their gradual disinterest in the TV situation.

Somewhat reluctantly our team agreed to allow the children to go to art and music on a weekly scheduled basis since the special music and art teachers were very vocal in their dissatisfaction with the arrangement of the previous year.

Now we said, "John, you must stop painting. It's time to go to art." And, "Mary, please leave the piano. It's time for music,"--and our independent creative workers went to the special half hours set aside for them to learn musical and artistic skills in sequence. This pattern continued throughout the next three years--and caused us much distress. It was sad, indeed, to hear, "But I don't like music" from a child who sang and danced freely and happily every day!

In this year I began to measure myself against my own standards. I realized more and more the difference between my situation and the schools I had seen in England. Our children were not British children; they arrived at school with somewhat different expectations and customs. Their parents had different expectations and feelings about the school experience. Now I reached toward conclusions of my own. I became aware very certainly that I could not, nor should, transfer the Integrated Day approach intact from England to Massachusetts. Rather, I needed to look

closely into the needs of my children in their own society, and try to find ways to meet these needs educationally.

This involved re-thinking once again. In fact, now I was beginning to see that re-thinking was part and parcel of the whole process forever. And this was knowledge worth achieving. During this fourth year, I tried to match my provisioning to the actual needs of my children, rather than to the children I had seen functioning in British classrooms. I did not lose the dream, but I tried to make it work a bit more effectively for me, as well as for the children involved.

During the summer that followed, I had much to think about since I was due to move into a new classroom in the fall. I had lived and worked in the big room for five busy years (one year in kindergarten and four years attempting a version of the Integrated Day) and now I was being compressed into one about half as large. I thought and planned and figured throughout the summer days, drawing tentative plans in the sand as I enjoyed the beach once again. I was concerned that the program would be adversely affected by the change, and not at all sure I could operate in much smaller quarters. For this reason I chose to arrange the room myself this time, instead of allowing the children to do so. This may have been a mistake; they might have come up with better solutions to the problem that I did, but I knew I wouldn't be comfortable until I had struggled it out for myself. I prepared many centers in my mind, and then tackled the actual room a week before school was to begin. My efforts met with failure and discouragement for the most part, and I would work far into the night, moving and changing furniture and

equipment around. The usual demands of water proximity, proper light, and exits all had to be considered and I had a very difficult time indeed. When school opened, the room looked attractive and welcoming, but I remained unsatisfied. Nonetheless, it functioned for the children and me, and before many weeks had passed, it became home.

During this year and the one to follow, I noticed another subtle change in the implementation of the program. In some ways, it was smoother than ever. Expectations were pretty generally understood, our approach to children's learning was accepted by most of the staff and some of the administration, we were no longer an item in the weekly press, and we could just go about the business of education.

However, it seemed to me that there was a change in the children themselves. The school population reflected a societal change over the years. A substantial percentage of our children now came from single parent homes. Some of these children seemed less secure in their attitude toward life, and less able to manage themselves successfully. Again, this is a broad generalization, but the change made itself felt in the atmosphere of the school room. It was more difficult to help the children make decisions; they seemed less able to cope with responsibility for their own learning, and certainly less able to relate constructively to one another. Whether or not all this was fact or whether it was my faulty perception of the situation remains unclear to me. But my perception of a change was real to me, and I struggled during the ensuing two years to find ways to help children achieve a more stable self-image and therefore relate more meaningfully to one another, and also to help them handle the responsibility I felt the program should offer them.

The result of my concern was that I became torn all over again about the most successful way to implement an integrated day. I tried many remedies, but remained unsatisfied with my answers to the children's needs. I felt so strongly that a good program for children must be a good program for all children, and I knew there must be a way to manage this if I could but find it. I discovered that I no longer spent frequent periods of time in the observation corridor enjoying the bustle of activity in my own classroom without my presence. This saddened me. I attempted to work as individually as always, but I felt that I was not achieving the affective success I had enjoyed in earlier years. Academically, children were learning, perhaps not meteorically, but learning was present and observable.

The composition of my group of children changed for the last two years also. I was anxious to see how eight and nine year old children would handle the open approach, and to determine whether an integrated day could answer the academic needs of children a bit older. So I chose to include six, seven, and eight year olds in my classroom, excluding, for the first time, the fives. There were many questions in my mind about this age range and I was eager to try it out. Our teaching team now numbered seven, and two of us decided on the six, seven, and eight year mix. After the first year of this range, the other teacher decided it was counterproductive, so I was left alone with an age range of three years. Perhaps three years is too wide a range for young children if the oldest are beginning more complex academic challenges, and maybe this contributed to my own sense of failure to meet the needs of all my children during those two years. However, I still feel that the age

range was reasonable; I just didn't find the proper methods to achieve success for my particular children.

At the conclusion of the sixth year I resigned my position because of an impending move to another state. I had deep regret about leaving before my job was completed. I certainly had not found all the answers I sought, yet my faith in the soundness of an educationally open approach to children's learning was unshaken. I knew the problems could be solved, given enough time and effort and study.

I am currently enjoying a professional situation which seems made-to-order. As a faculty member of the education department in a small university, my assignment is to teach courses in the area of Early Childhood as well as teaching the laboratory nursery school for children three, four and five years of age. Since the time of Susan Isaacs, good nursery schools have been operating in rich, open environments. I feel comfortably at home and able to pursue my educational odyssey in a supportive climate. A uniquely successful first grade teacher once said, "There's no problem about finding effective open education teachers for elementary grades--just give me teachers with a nursery school background. They *know* how to teach children."

C H A P T E R I V

IMPLEMENTATION OF OPEN EDUCATION

This chapter examines the central problems which arose during the author's six years of implementation of open education in family grouped classes, and looks at the steps taken to correct these problems. Also, it will be appropriate to look again at the assumptions for teacher satisfaction outlined in Chapter II and to determine how this particular teacher's experiences interlock with the items listed. To conclude this chapter, the author analyzes those experiences in order to draw some conclusions concerning the demands made upon open education teachers and the personal and professional rewards which can accrue through commitment to this philosophy.

Problems and Solutions

Time

The educational autobiography detailed in Chapter III indicates that the path of open education is not necessarily a smooth one, nor is it free of problems. The main problem this author encountered was that of time. Somehow, in those six years there was never enough time to accomplish what seemed necessary to do. The problem arose in the summer before the program began, when the teaching team went to England to learn more about the Integrated Day approach. There were so many schools to see, so much to think about, so much to discuss with each other, that no day was long enough, and dialogue continued until late at night, when

the teachers fell asleep from sheer exhaustion. The pattern of over-filling each day and night continued after the return to Massachusetts, and the remainder of the summer was spent in preparation for the new program to be in the fall. Learning materials were constructed by the teachers in a frenzied attempt to be ready for any and every possible learning need that five and six year old children might evidence. These teachers literally thought, spoke, and dreamed of nothing but school. They were inspired by the possibilities glimpsed in good British schools and determined to strive for the superior attainments of British children--immediately. It is quite in order to say that families, and all other concerns, rated lower on the priority scale than the new Integrated Day--Mark's Meadow version of open education. The author was aware of the inordinate amount of time she was spending in preparation for September's school opening, but explained, to herself and interested others, that it was because the whole project was so new and there was so much to do to be ready.

For at least two weeks before the opening of school, every day was spent at the school arranging the environment, meeting with team members, planning, planning, planning. All of this preparation consumed time; again, no day was long enough.

Then school began and the open program was launched. The teacher left home in the mornings about 7:00 and returned about 6:00 or 6:30 each night, and then spent two to four hours working to prepare for the next day. There were days when the total time occupied by school concerns totaled fifteen hours, and many totaled thirteen or fourteen. Obviously this teacher was tired, exhausted even, in those first weeks.

Why did it take so many hours to do this job? At the time, the author would have answered differently than she does today. In retrospect, she can see that although the demands of open education are heavy and the time needed is always inadequate, there are some answers.

The out-of-school time demands were unbelievably heavy--part of the reason for this is that many of these were internal, rather than external, demands. For one thing, the author's expectations were unrealistic. She tried to accomplish far too much in terms of teaching.

1. She attempted to evaluate each student's progress too soon, too often, in much too detailed a manner. She insisted on writing anecdotal records for every child every day--and there were about thirty-six children! And she also tried to jot notes all during the day to be sure she missed NOTHING that was happening in the classroom.

2. She tried to think through everything for every child, every night, as she prepared at home.

3. She attempted to evaluate each area of the curriculum at the end of each school day.

4. She studied. She read every book available on the Integrated Day, and any and all open classroom sources.

It's not too difficult to see that no day had enough hours in it to make all this possible. She was battling the "never finished" syndrome.

And, although many of the above demands were internally imposed upon the teacher's time, there were also many externally imposed responsibilities:

1. The teaching team needed much time to talk together and share experiences, concerns and possible solutions. Many days, they met after school for this purpose, and discussions continued for hours.

2. It was desirable, and even necessary, to talk often with parents. There was so much anxiety on the part of parents as to what this strange new program was all about, that they frequently dropped by the school to talk with the teacher. This was a legitimate concern and there was need to take time for these discussions.

3. Because of the publicity engendered by the new approach, the teachers were asked to speak to community groups, and doing so was both a pleasure and a chore; a chore because it took time to prepare for a presentation, and then time to give it.

4. The schedule worked out for two groups of kindergarteners who joined the classroom made it impossible for the teacher to take any break at all from early morning until the last child left in the afternoon. And so those little moments of time during the usual school day when teachers might prepare some material--after lunch, during playground time, or mid-morning break--just never occurred, which meant that all preparation, evaluation, record keeping, must be done at the end of the day.

5. There were school district expectations to be met also. Some in-service courses were offered at night, on a weekly basis, and the author was scheduled for one of these. It was not voluntary. Since every hour was precious, this class was felt as a pressure.

6. The year before this open classroom program began, the author and fellow team teachers had given workshops for the Commonwealth of

Massachusetts in the area of kindergarten curriculum. (This was because these teachers were part of the Model Kindergarten program, funded by Massachusetts). So it followed naturally that the same teachers were called upon to continue to give workshops dealing with early education. It was enjoyable to do this, but again, consumed large amounts of time.

7. Probably, a reasonable conclusion is that all the teacher's activities consumed more time than would have been necessary to accomplish them if the teacher hadn't been overly-fatigued and therefore not performing efficiently.

A time constraint which did not occur in the first year of the program, but did make its appearance in later years, was that of a teacher education program undertaken by the staff at the author's school. The staff agreed to provide not only classroom experience for pre-service teachers, but to assume responsibility for much of their educational course work as well. There were many splendid advantages to this program to teachers, children and the student interns themselves. And the format of the program was planned so that teachers, who would have two interns in their classrooms, would be freed to conduct workshops for the University students. This proved to be rather difficult to manage logistically, and teachers found that the benefits were great, but the disadvantages were equally strong. The workshops entailed serious preparation, as for any university course, and this consumed precious hours. The meetings with the education students were stimulating and enjoyable, but the author often experienced concerns about the functioning of her classroom while she was absent for several hours. At one time the author had six

interns in her classroom. This became the proverbial "too much of a good thing," and the teacher was driven to great lengths to arrange meaningful learning experiences for each intern, as well as according the children in the room adequate opportunities for independent learning! This particular teacher has promoted the use of pre-service teachers in her classroom, feeling that it benefits the children, so this is not an indictment of the general procedure for training teachers, merely an explanation of why this one training program consumed much time.

The problem with the amount of time necessary to accomplish the teaching job was never satisfactorily solved during the six years. However, there were adjustments. As the program expanded to include other classrooms, the teachers worked out a system of sharing time after lunch, so that two teachers would be outside with all the children from the team, and the other two would have that precious thirty minutes free to plan, prepare, meet a colleague, or just powder their noses! This was a help. Later, they tried to pool their resources and assign two or three members of the team to take all the children to lunch and give the other two or three teachers an opportunity to eat lunch quietly in their classrooms. This didn't work out as successfully as the playground schedule, for most teachers felt more comfortable eating with the classroom children, since lunchtime tended to be a boisterous situation requiring adult assistance for control.

As the years rolled along, teachers slowly internalized the lesson that a teacher's job truly is never finished, and she must learn to live with that. Eventually these teachers realized that even if they

worked twenty-four hours each day on classroom related tasks, they still wouldn't feel "finished." And so common sense helped to dictate a more relaxed attitude about the amount of work needed to keep an open classroom functioning. Gradually also, teachers began to trust children to do what the teachers had said they could do--assume more responsibility for their own learning, and that meant less preparation on the teacher's part and more preparation by the children.

The author discovered that it was not only impossible, but defeating to the philosophy of the program, to try to do "everything for every child every night," and this realization helped conserve time.

She continued to read for information and suggestions on implementing the program, but she learned to confine her reading to weekends. (It was a long time before she allowed herself to read anything that was not connected in some manner with open education, and she developed a bit of a martyr complex about this, for she had been a voracious reader all her life!)

The team decided to limit their interminable conversations about open education and its functioning in their school, to officially planned meetings once a week. This was a great time-saver, and accomplished the purpose of sharing information and obtaining helpful suggestions just as well as the lengthy unstructured dialogues. The author was one of the "interminable talkers"--she who had talked her teammates to sleep night after night in England with her enthusiasm for the philosophy!

During the first year, parent conferences were regularly scheduled, and the author held those conferences in the classroom during the

school day. This did save a bit of time, but the procedure was not established for that reason. She felt that if parents spent some time in the functioning classroom, sensing the atmosphere, talking with the teacher and their own child, their concerns might be allayed. This was a satisfactory solution, for children were proud to bring their cubbies full of their current work to share with their parents, and it gave the teacher an opportunity to reinforce the child's feeling of accomplishment while the parent looked on. There were, of course, some tense moments when parents were in the room and classroom incidents occurred which didn't look or sound like the glowing reports in the books about Integrated Day! But the teacher reasoned that since she was not attempting to "put on a show" for parents, but simply to give them an opportunity to see the class function normally, that's what they would see--normal functioning of busy five and six year olds.

The press of speaking engagements lessened as the years wore on. The Integrated Day was no longer the biggest piece of educational news in the community, and so although teachers occasionally gave presentations, these did not take the amount of time they had consumed in the first year.

District expectations continued to bid for time. This was not an exclusive open-education problem, however, for all teachers had district commitments on committees and felt the need to take in-service courses.

In the honest reappraisal, this teacher must conclude that the time constraints were enormous and draining, that the problem was never

solved completely, but that she, herself, was responsible for at least half of the time expended, because of unrealistic internal demands for excellence.

The author remembers Kathleen Raoul¹ speaking about the pressure of time in the open program at Shady Hill School. She said that for many months the staff involved felt they must not attend any social function or spend the evening at the theater or with friends because every minute had to be devoted to the program. Late in the year, she was invited to a concert, and with much misgiving, she accepted. She thoroughly enjoyed the evening, came home refreshed and happy, and the children survived the next day very nicely; from then on, she managed to establish a better balance of work and recreation.

At one point in the first year, when the author was feeling the stress and strain particularly intensely and fatigue was overcoming enthusiasm, Dr. Masha Rudman of the University of Massachusetts offered a solution. She suggested that five to ten minutes be found in the middle of the day for the author to lie down, close her eyes and simply rest. Even this seemed impossible, but with some juggling, children were taken outside by the co-worker occasionally and the author followed Dr. Rudman's prescription. Even that little time out was beneficial.

Virgil Howes states that "finding time to implement fully the personal interactions of informal teaching is always a problem,"² and indeed this teacher found it so.

¹Personal conversation with Dr. Kathleen Raoul, April 10, 1971.

²Howes, Informal Teaching in the Open Classroom, p. 117.

Schedule for Five Year Olds

Probably the second most frustrating problem of that first year was the arrangement for two groups of five year olds to join the classroom each day. This constituted a major planning error and was a serious one. The morning group of "fives" arrived at the same time as the six year olds, and presented their own challenge as to how best to provision for them. At no time was it felt that the desirable solution had been found. But the morning situation did become a workable one and all the children seemed to feel part of the group. The older children accepted the younger ones and proudly helped them to gain skills, the younger children looked naturally to the six year olds for support and assistance, and there were many lessons in living that the two ages taught each other.

This situation changed after lunchtime, however. The six year olds had reached a high point of effort and involvement in the morning; projects involving both fives and sixes had been under construction, and when noon came it signalled a natural break in the day's routine. Upon returning to the classroom after a short playtime outside, the older children were ready to pursue quiet activities and generally adopt a slower pace. This quieter atmosphere was not possible, however, for immediately after lunch the new five year olds arrived. Because it was their daily beginning of school, they came with all the vigor and vitality and eagerness of normal five year old children. They were entitled to an active, busy beginning and continuation of the same. But the six year olds needed a different tempo and a resolution to this problem never occurred. The afternoon children didn't find the same

welcome place in the group for they hadn't been in on the activities of the morning; the sixes resented the stepped up pace at the (for them) inappropriate time; the situation remained a misfit.

The teachers tried many attempts at solving this problem. They cancelled outdoor time for the sixes so that they could have a quiet time with the teacher before the afternoons arrived. This seemed to be the only time for peaceful reading. But the drawbacks to this plan were that the six year olds needed the active playtime outside, and it allowed not one minute of free time for the teacher between morning and afternoon sessions, and this was almost untenable. Then the teachers tried combining two groups of fives in one room with one teacher and the two groups of sixes in the other room with the other teacher. This wasn't successful, for neither teacher was eager to begin all over again with a double group of younger children, and the children didn't respond well to the changing. Teachers understood their reaction. Also, under this plan, the goal of family grouping was completely eliminated. Even so, the teachers tried combining both groups of younger children with both teachers, and trusting the sixes to manage on their own for a portion of the time. This failed; the sixes were not ready yet to assume so much responsibility. After each attempt, the teachers would re-think the situation, searching for a workable solution. None ever appeared. This was the greatest disappointment in the first year's program. The only solution came in the following year when all five year olds attended in the morning. The author believed then and still believes that many five year olds could profitably stay for the entire day at school in an

open classroom setting, and yet because of the large numbers of younger children at that time, it didn't seem feasible to attempt such a plan.

This author felt a nagging concern throughout these years of teaching that the vertical group arrangement was not meeting the needs of the five year olds satisfactorily, particularly after the group was extended to five, six and seven year olds. The solution was to separate the youngest children for portions of the morning session and provide for them the appropriate kindergarten kinds of activities. During the last two years of the author's participation in the program, she taught groups made up of six, seven and eight year old children and the kindergarteners attended a separate class. The pressing problem of trying to meld two separate groups of five year olds into an on-going group of sixes was solved, but the deeper problem of optimal provisioning for five year olds has remained a question in this teacher's mind.

Personal Anxiety

There was a pervading element of personal anxiety that accompanied the first year of the program. The teaching team was excited, enthused and highly motivated, but it was a new adventure, and none of the teachers felt secure in taking the plunge into the planned version of the Integrated Day. Throughout the summer preceding the first brave attempt, the teachers tried to share knowledge and gain support from each other. But there was a level of concern long before the children arrived. *Would they really learn to read? Would the environment stimulate them to meaningful activity? Could they begin to make decisions about their own use of time, space and materials?*

Once the program was functioning these questions haunted the staff. There was so much public focus on what was happening in this school, and members of the community were asking the same questions, so the teaching staff felt very much "on the spot." The school board was discussing the issue of educational openness as it was being applied in this particular school, and not all members were enthusiastic. The administration of the school district was watching the program with much interest also. All of this caused anxiety for the teachers. They had to prove the assumptions of open education not only to themselves but to many segments of the public as well. An added strain was the teachers' feelings of inadequacy due to their lack of experience in an open classroom of any kind, let alone a multi-aged one.

Academic success hung in the balance, and the author added to that concern standards of excellence. She measured herself against the good English schools and so expected too much, too soon. She kept asking herself why the products of her children didn't more closely resemble children's work she had seen on display in English schools. John Coe's visit, described in Chapter III, helped allay this specific worry, because of his insistence that superior quality came only after several years of openness had penetrated a school.

Added to these concerns was the realization that personal interests were being relegated to the bottom of the priority list. There just was no time or energy left over for family needs. The teachers in the program were fortunate in having very understanding families, but even the most supportive family members began to lose patience when the

situation showed no signs of abating after the first months! The author felt guilty about the state of affairs but was unable to remedy the situation.

In response to the anxiety felt by each member of the team, outside "experts" in the open approach were invited to the school to observe the functioning of the program and to provide helpful advice. In this way, the team had the advantage of dialogue with Edward Yeomans, who lent strong support. Then Kathleen Raoul spent a day with the team and offered practical suggestions and comfort! Later on, the teachers visited the classroom of Mrs. Jones in a Newton, Massachusetts, public school and found inspiration and renewed optimism. The staff then invited her to come visit and critique the program. Mrs. Jones brought her enthusiasm, her lively appreciation of what was being attempted educationally, her support, and her daughter, who taught the children some old English folk songs to the delight of all. The author has treasured a statement made by this fine teacher: "We want to change the quality of life for these children. Our goal is to produce Renaissance men and women."³

As the second year commenced, levels of anxiety were somewhat decreased, and while personal concern about results fluctuated throughout the entire six years, the intensity of concern felt during that first year was not repeated.

In spite of John Coe's assurance that standards of excellence would be reached in due time, the author's students never achieved the results she had hoped for. This lack of success must not reflect on the

³ Personal conversation with Mrs. Jones, May, 1971.

children, for they appeared to do their best, but this particular teacher has not found the key to this objective as yet.

Colleagues' Attitudes

Another problem encountered by the teachers during that first few years was the attitude of their colleagues. No blame can be attached to the other professionals in the school, who looked askance at the teachers who were putting in such incredibly long hours at school, had no time for any recreational activities, showed such obvious signs of fatigue and anxiety, and yet insisted that the Integrated Day was the most wonderful educational innovation since John Dewey!

One day, about 5:50 in the afternoon, the author was just beginning some preparation for the next day as most of the teachers in the building were leaving, following a meeting. A fellow teacher looked at the author and remarked, "Don't ever expect me to try your Integrated Day! You're plain crazy!" And at that moment, this teacher was in no position to argue.

Other comments in the same vein occurred frequently, and were not supportive, to say the least. One teacher stopped in one afternoon as the children were just finishing a busy work period, glanced around the room with a most disapproving expression and asked, "How in the world can you stand this mess?" and departed, without waiting for an answer. The teaching team was well aware that if teachers in their own school were feeling this critical about the venture, surely teachers in other schools in the community were thinking and saying much the same things. However, time worked on the side of openness in Mark's Meadow, for

gradually, and all in good time, most of the teachers in the school adapted some of the ideas of the open classroom. When the author left the system, the entire school was operating in varying degrees of openness. This probably would not have occurred without the dogged and persistent determination of the completely-convinced teachers who began the adventure and persevered in spite of obstacles.

Record Keeping

Breathes there an open classroom teacher with soul so dead that she never to herself has said, "How can appropriate and necessary records be kept of all these children?" This constraint persisted throughout the years of the program. The first question is one of possible techniques for evaluating children's work, and the second query is how to find time to utilize the techniques. In six years the author did not discover the answer. She tried many approaches to this troublesome problem. Open education, because of its very nature, makes record keeping more essential than ever, but because of the very nature of the open approach, it is more difficult to keep records.

The author mentioned previously the attempt to keep anecdotal records for all the children daily. This was an impossible task. The attempted solution was to write brief notes during the day and write them up once a week. This didn't work, because the teacher usually became so involved with what was going on in the classroom, it was so *interesting*, that she forgot to jot the notes! Then she tried jotting notes on the activities in just one area of the curriculum for a day or two at a time. She always felt that valuable learning going on in some

other area was missed. The next attempt was to keep records on only a few children at a time, and hopefully "catch" them all over a long period. Again, things were happening with other children that needed recording. Nothing seemed to work! The problem was frustrating and persistent. The solutions arrived at by this teacher are still in the developmental stage and need much refining. But she chose to keep the daily tick sheet (mentioned in Chapter III) for all children. She separated the curriculum (which was antithetical to her belief in integration) into broad curriculum areas and simply checked against the list. She wrote *brief* notes of clarification on this checklist and tried to reconstruct the learning situations for more complete information at the end of the school day. Separate checklists were designed for main math and language skills and kept current with children's progress. She read reports on evaluation and record keeping at other schools practicing open education, and marveled at the inclusiveness of some of the processes, but could not emulate them. One strategy which has been suggested to this teacher is that of precise, detailed observation of one child over a long period of time. It is possible that through close scrutiny of the growth and functioning of an individual child, valuable information can be gained about children in general.

One of the most ambitious attempts at record keeping the author initiated was a plan for recording all information with cassette recorder. She purchased a cassette for each child, labeled each one, and enthusiastically began talking a few minutes daily about each child at the conclusion of the school day. When that took too much time, she tried talking about each child over the weekend, and interestingly enough,

soon found that she spent almost the entire Saturday and Sunday with the microphone in hand "talking about children." As the cassettes filled up with information, she realized it would be a superhuman task to retrieve it again! Just the time involved to record dates and numbers on the tapes, and then to actually play back the words, was enormous. One more good idea which simply did not work had to be discarded. (During the next year, these same cassettes were used as vehicles for the children to use themselves, and the teacher took pleasure in playing the tapes for parents when they came in for conferences. This idea did work, and was revealing of children's interests and progress in some areas.)

All teachers kept samples of the children's work throughout the year, and even into succeeding years. (The author saw this technique in some British schools. Notebooks and other samples of the children's work was kept from year to year and used as a main tool for evaluating progress during parent conferences.)

This teacher believes that record keeping is a very personal task, and that the only successful, or partially successful, solutions are those that an individual teacher feels comfortable with.

In summary, record keeping continued to be a concern and the solutions arrived at were not accepted as final answers, but the author developed an ability to accept the best she could do and not worry unduly about the compromises in this area.

Administrative and Curricular Demands

Demands of an administrative or curricular nature are mentioned in almost every report of an open education project. The tenets of the

educationally open situation reject pre-planned curriculum to meet pre-established goals in a pre-decreed manner. The team of teachers who launched this particular project were surprisingly free of demands of this nature at their own school level. Their principal urged them to adhere to their convictions that curriculum should emerge from children and adults together in their interaction with the environment and the world in general. They agreed with him that goals for children should be individual and on-going. And so these teachers were free to pursue goals that they judged appropriate for each child. This was a substantial advantage. The pressures exerted upon the teachers for curricular progress by all children came from within themselves. Pressures there were, indeed, but they were mandated inwardly, not from an external source.

The teachers were aware that district administrators were observing the program with careful scrutiny. This was reasonable and to be expected. During the first year the only administrative demands which conflicted with the teachers' philosophy was the insistence upon the children taking standardized achievement tests. This demand was resented strongly. The teachers felt it was unacceptable on four counts:

1. Testing itself was contrary to the values the teachers had tried to instill in the children; helping each other was the rule, rather than the exception. The idea of competition had been eliminated as much as possible.

2. Children who had spent the year building good concepts of themselves as successful, competent individuals, whatever their academic talents, might see themselves as inadequate if they didn't feel successful in the test-taking.

3. The teaching staff were convinced that standardized tests were not constructed to measure the factors the teachers thought were important.

4. The teachers felt that since their children had not been using the standard curriculum materials used by children in all the other schools, possibly their children would not be as successful with the tests, thereby causing the administration and the public to judge the program a failure. The consequences of such a mis-judgment might mean the early demise of the program altogether, so this last concern was a deeply disturbing one.

However, as noted in the autobiographical section, the teachers submitted to the administrative directive after much protest, and administered the tests, and continued to do so for the duration of the author's tenure at the school. She has no knowledge of the results of these tests ever having been used either to benefit or harm the existence of the open classroom venture.

Other administrative demands were reasonable ones, having to do with system curriculum committees and meetings, albeit the open classroom teachers felt the need to spend every out-of-school hour working on their own classroom concerns, and regretted time spent otherwise.

A serious problem which increased, rather than diminished, over the years, was a growing requirement to teach certain curriculum programs which were introduced by the school system administrators. These programs were commercially produced and in the author's opinion, were contradictory to the principles of open education. They were also very time-consuming. Dozens of small, separate skills in reading and

mathematics had to be ascertained for each child in a prescribed, sequential manner, and the programs were ongoing throughout the year. The effect of this demand was to require open education teachers to manage two programs for reading and math, side by side. The message that became clear to the author was that while she had freedom to teach in an open education classroom, she was responsible for meeting all the requirements of the pre-planned, pre-sequenced program as well. Testing for the reading program was to begin as soon as possible after school opened in September so that information about each child's reading level could be immediately obtained. This caused frustration for the author who found it antithetical to her beliefs about children and the beginning and continuance of a school year.

Report cards also constituted a problem for open education teachers. The author holds a firm conviction that the only effective and honest report is an anecdotal summary of the child, comparing him only with himself, and stating his strengths and progress in total growth. In fairness to the Amherst School System, it must be stated that the system was endeavoring to find the most successful answer to the report card question. New formats for reporting was tried several times during the author's tenure with the school. None proved to be ideal. (One format contained over two hundred-fifty separate skills to be rated for each child and was composed of seven separate sheets of paper for each individual.) Reducing a child to a collection of letters or numbers or grade levels or check marks is inconsistent with a belief in the uniqueness and dignity of every human being.

Another problem the author found frustrating grew out of the administrative concern to provide services for all children with special needs. The goal of helping all children is a most commendable one and the author wholeheartedly approves of it. However, as the services expanded and the zeal to implement the services grew, more and more persons appeared to screen more and more children for possible needs. Again, this in itself was a good project, but the frustration came when the beginning of the school year meant children being tested by special education personnel to the point of absurdity. Many times a specialist removed a child from the classroom for a test, and a second specialist came to ask for that same child before he returned from the first testing. Then, still a third specialist came to ask for the child, only to be told that she or he was now third in line!

The author realizes that exhaustive screening is not only necessary but a distinct advantage to best serve the children, but she wonders if the screening could be stretched out over a little more time so the children being tested wouldn't be exposed to quite so many people quite so fast. It has always seemed very important to this teacher to use the first few days of school to set the tone of interaction and feeling of community. She wants children to feel welcome, interested, happy and enthused about the new school year. She feels that these days are the time to get acquainted with each other and begin to explore the environment. Her preference would be that no child would be isolated from the classroom activity at any time during the first two or three weeks of school. In that time, the patterns for living together and attitudes

toward work are being established, and every day spent together is precious, and valuable, in its influence on the rest of the school year.

If it were possible, in the planning by administrators responsible for special services for children, to delay the screening process for two or three weeks after school begins in September, this teacher feels it would be in the best interests of the children.

Obviously, this problem was not solved, but instead increased markedly in degree over the six years under consideration.

The author holds the same convictions about testing for academic levels during the first few days of school. She believes that academic diagnosis will come in good time and that it is more important for the right attitudes toward school to be developed in the early days of the year. She disagrees vehemently with those colleagues who lace the child's first days of school each September with tests to discover his exact reading level (as if one could anyway!) and just which math skills the student possesses. Given time and openness toward learning, the teacher will discover all she needs to know without benefit of formal testing.

Changing School Population

During the six years covered by this study, the population served by the school changed. As the numbers grew, and the community expanded, new housing construction expanded also and the living limits of the town extended in all directions. When clusters of apartments were built near the school, the population of school age children increased greatly. This made yearly re-adjustments of boundaries determining school districts necessary. One result was that the school housing the Integrated

Day program saw a large increase in the numbers of the youngest children, and thus the number of classrooms allotted to the primary children had to be extended upward each year.

A second effect of the changing population was that many of the children coming to this school came from single parent homes, or homes where there was difficulty meeting economic needs. Some of these children seemed to have many problems to work out, and the staff needed to search earnestly for the means to help them. Since the greater growth was in the younger population of children, it followed that more of the children in the open classrooms were in need of much helpful reinforcement in order to be emotionally ready to learn. Teachers once again tried to find solutions, and the entire staff gave time and thought and effort to provide for the special needs as they arose. Although teachers tried willingly enough, they were often drained by the particular demands of the situation. The author found this problem to be uppermost during her last two years of teaching in the program. She felt inadequate to the task. She carried many children home in her heart day after day and tried to find ways to answer the varying needs of these children with whom she lived and worked. Again, in retrospect, perhaps this teacher was too close to the problem to see it clearly. Her determined belief in open education insisted that the approach could, and should, serve all children. She still believes this to be true. However, there are numerous tactics for structuring the environment for children, and no doubt the author left many possibilities untried.

Author's Experiences Related to the Framework
of Items for Teacher Satisfaction

Opportunities for Personal and
Professional Growth

How did this teacher grow professionally and personally through the practice of open education? First, she grew in desire to learn, to read every source available dealing with open education and its implementation in schools. She opened her mind to think in new ways, to confront new problems and seek untried solutions. Anne and John Bremer, George Dennison, Anthony Kallett, Virgil Howes, Stewart Mason, Molly Brearley, Wylvia Ashton-Warner, and others insist that teachers must become learners and must be seen as learners by the children they teach.

Perhaps the most forceful reports of learning come from people like Sybil Marshall and Edward Yeomans, who wanted mature students to be provided with the experience of learning by working in creative ways that were unfamiliar to them. The author wasn't among the fortunate participants of the Loughborough workshop, or Marshall's summer term, or the workshop at Shady Hill, but she did enjoy some genuine opportunities to learn personally and deeply, if briefly. During a summer workshop offered by the Integrated Day Program of the School of Education, University of Massachusetts, she attended for a few days only. In those few days she had the enriching opportunity of binding her own book and trying to draw a figure from life. This second task was frightening and Herculean to the author because she knew for sure and certain that she "couldn't possibly draw--anything." She experienced something of Rathbone's "fundamental inability to release myself to the learning situation,"

but because she also found a "climate in the psychological environment"⁴ of the Massachusetts workshop, she could try. The staff member in charge of life drawing put the pencil in her hand and gave her directions and she tried with all her might. It wasn't a good drawing; it was really dreadfully inept, and a five year old would not have claimed it, but it was a revelation to this teacher to have tried.

Another growth opportunity came to the author and colleagues when they took part in the Integrated Day course offered by the School of Education. Meeting with other interested teachers, sharing experiences, and learning from instructors whose specialities were math or language arts or music and movement, was exhilarating and supportive.

A third opportunity to learn and grow was provided through a workshop in manipulative mathematics offered by two teachers in the school district. This was an enriching and exciting experience to this teacher, for she was "ripe" to extend her math understandings, having been recently exposed to the possibilities offered by manipulative materials.

Then came the spring term when the author and a colleague were asked to teach a workshop course in the Integrated Day approach for Continuing Education, University of Massachusetts. They accepted somewhat reluctantly, for they weren't at all sure they knew enough about open education to direct the course. But they sensibly decided to plan the course to function like an open classroom, in which everyone was to learn by interacting with the environment and each other. This proved to

⁴Rathbone, Open Education: The Informal Classroom, p. 164.

be a wonderfully enriching experience, and all members of the class, students and teachers alike, expressed feelings of growth and satisfaction.

This author's opportunities for professional growth were enhanced by the fact that she taught in a school with a university connection. This made available a wealth of knowledgeable, interesting and interested educators with whom to converse and from whom to learn. This was a great advantage and this teacher feels particularly fortunate in this respect.

David Armington spoke of the spirit and style of the experimenter who tried every idea that came to mind,⁵ and this teacher felt like that experimenter during that six years' experience.

One of the letters Sybil Marshall received from her students after the course concluded spoke of the fact that the writer realized that even the most experienced teachers were in great need of the confidence, praise, encouragement and inspiration that they received. This teacher knows this to be a fact. No matter how many years and classes she has taught, she needs all those reinforcements.

Bussis and Chittenden refer to the need for professional growth as stressed by advisers, teachers, and various publications. But they also mention the important need for teachers to experience growth in some area of purely personal interest, such as photography or music.⁶ This teacher recognized the need, but while the program was in its beginning stages, she just could not find time to indulge it. However, as the years brought increasing confidence and the teacher learned to

⁵Armington, Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 78.

⁶Bussis and Chittenden, Ibid., p. 129.

accept the "never finished" syndrome, she did venture into some purely personal activities. She took a course in Persian dancing, and worked to improve her tennis skills. She took up cross-country skiing and found this sport a wonderful release after a busy day.

Thus, for this teacher, the balance tips in favor of rewards in the area of personal and professional growth.

Self Concept

The author found the freedom of being human and fallible a definite plus for open education practice. She had long believed that it is beneficial for children to realize the fallibility of adults, thereby allowing themselves to risk making mistakes. In practicing open education, the teacher can be wrong, can be seen to be learning, can admit mistakes and make apologies, all because she is, hopefully, a person who is described by Brown and Precious as an "adjusted, resilient and sympathetic person having a sense of humor and plenty of common sense."⁷ It is necessary for the teacher to have a good, positive concept of self and sense of confidence, she needs to know and accept her personality, limitations and capabilities. This teacher encountered many occasions when her self concept was sorely tried, when she doubted that she did have the ability to continue. In spite of waverings and uncertainties, the teacher *did* continue, so her sense of self must have grown according to the need. Roy Illsley's statement about the teacher's need to become "psychologically mature and accept the facts of ambiguity and

⁷ Brown and Precious, The Integrated Day, p. 19.

uncertainty"⁸ must refer to the teacher's establishment of self-identity.

The acceptance of oneself, with all one's flaws and faults, is one of the most difficult of tasks, but one of the most profitable for the teacher and the children she teaches.

As the program progressed beyond the first "fumbling stage" (to refer to Lillian Weber's expression⁹), when children occasionally displayed some real grasp of a difficult concept and parents appeared to accept the fact that their children were in good hands, the teacher's positive concept of self increased. There were still moments of triumph and moments of near despair, but on the whole self concept was strengthened by participation in the open classroom.

At the moments of high exultation, such as that occasioned by the performance of the peanuts play about George Washington Carver, or the lovely surprise of Teacher's Day, the teacher's self concept grows and glows! Remembering these high points, as well as the many days the teacher felt happy about children's learning and her own involvement in it, the balance tips toward rewards in the area of self concept.

Creativity

The practice of open education cannot be separated from the issue of creativity. If an open classroom is not a hotbed of creativity, it is not a genuinely open situation. The author encouraged unique and creative uses of the materials she provided, she supported children in their need

⁸Yeomans, Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 264.

⁹Weber, Current Research and Perspectives, p. 118.

for much time in which to be creative, she made ample space available to them for the purpose of their creating wheaever seemed good and worthwhile to them.

But the author, herself, approached creativity vicariously--she enjoyed what others did; she didn't produce. She needed to take a course with Sybil Marshall, or Roy Illsley. Her brief forays into the world of creativity were just too brief; there was no time for the necessary depth which produces internal change and the release of creative potential that Marshall talks about. Even now, nine years after the initiation of the Integrated Day program in the school in Massachusetts, the author delves into creative materials with pleasure, but lacking the confidence to attempt a really creative product. An opportunity to remove herself entirely from the teaching situation, and immerse herself in a learning workshop like Sybil Marshall's might, just might, produce a miracle. This teacher agrees with every word on the subject as reviewed in the literature in Chapter II, she applies it readily to herself, she knows what she needs to do--but so far, such an opportunity has not come her way. The letter written to Edward Yeomans in application for a place in the summer workshop could have been written by this author:

I need to work with many kinds of materials and be guided by those who understand them better than I do. I need, for awhile, to be freed from responsibility as a teacher, and to become a learner in much the same way that children are.¹⁰

Open education makes this kind of involvement possible for many teachers. Those who take advantage of the opportunities offered in the creative

¹⁰Yeomans, Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 265.

area can make "a point of entry into the learning situation," as Roy Illsley says in reference to that summer workshop at Shady Hill in Massachusetts.¹¹

The author found great pleasure in sharing music with children. She felt more comfortable in this realm of the arts, and while not expert in any area, she sang and danced with children without restraint. She enjoyed the spontaneous creative dramatics that became a part of many days' natural routine.

Perhaps the most "creative" experiences for this teacher came about as she attempted to find more interesting ways to teach mundane subjects such as spelling and handwriting. Generating a high degree of motivation for learning to spell is a difficult task! She worked out a singing game which was played on the piano and which involved children in singing the spelling patterns that came about naturally in the course of their work interests. Although she can claim no awards for this innovation, it proved to be helpful. It may not have stirred children to a frenzy of excitement about spelling, but at least it didn't produce utter dislike! The other area of integration of music and a skill was in the teaching of handwriting. During the first years of the program the author neglected this area of the curriculum. She provided handwriting task cards, and occasionally an interest center devoted to the art and skill of forming letters, but she took no more active part in the process. Gradually it became clear to her that children, while needing to learn to write legibly, were not given much assistance in the development of

¹¹ Ibid.

the skill. So during one summer the author explored all the many ways she might improve this situation, and developed, over many weeks, a singing alphabet for the formation of letters. During the summer she sang on the beach, in the hammock, at the grocery store, wherever and whenever another idea for adding to the song occurred to her. This became a very rhythmic chant, with precise directions about forming each letter and built-in practice. When she implemented this scheme, it became successful to the extent that children soon sang along with the teacher as they worked, and all those involved appeared to enjoy the process. There was no "proof of the pudding" possible about this effort to improve the quality of children's handwriting, for the teacher started too late in the six year program to see real results.

Children were interested in learning to play the piano, and when they began to compose music by playing the keys over and over in patterns the teacher decided something must be done to provide the "next steps." She color coded each piano key in the middle octave, and three keys above and below, and with this help, children could play a familiar song (noted in colors by the teacher) or compose a melody of their own. The teacher then sat down with them and together they turned it into colored notes so that the "piece of music" could be played by themselves or their peers as often as they desired. In this way, a substantial music book of original compositions was compiled by the children. They realized genuine pleasure and satisfaction in replaying their own songs and also in hearing their compositions played by classmates.

Creativity for this author also lay in the discovery and excitement of playing with the many splendid mathematical manipulatives

available to today's classrooms. She had been educated long before these materials were in use for young children, and had the all-too-common attitude toward arithmetic--one of distaste and discomfort. The joy of discovering the relationships and beauties of math was a new one for her, and she found great satisfaction in approaching the materials "with the unassuming, unassuming, honest ignorance that was required"¹² to learn from them. She found herself "humbly ready to learn from the children"¹³ as they worked and played together in the area of mathematics. She was, to be sure, artistically illiterate, but knew this fact and could, therefore, begin at the beginning in some ways.

The area of the arts provided another of the problems in the first years of the open program. As the author explained earlier, during the first year the decision was made by the teachers not to avail themselves of the formal services of the art and music and gym teachers. The author and colleagues felt that all activities should originate naturally with the children's pursuit of interests in and out of the classroom. Art seemed a very natural concomitant of curriculum explorations, and a formal period for "going to art" seemed artificial. So during the second year, as noted in the autobiography, a different approach was attempted, in which the special teachers came to the classroom and tried to work informally with children. This was completely acceptable to the classroom teachers, but did not prove satisfactory to the special teachers. In the third year, the decision was reversed, and all children

¹²Rathbone, Open Education, the Informal Classroom, p. 164.

¹³Richardson, In the Early World, Foreword, vii.

were to go to the special music, art and gym teachers in their special rooms. The idea underlying this decision was that special teachers would coordinate their curriculum plans with the classroom interests and projects current at any time. Communication was not as free as it might have been between special teachers and classroom teachers, so that gradually there was less and less attempt to coordinate special lessons with classroom interests. The inevitable consequence was that the author actually said, frequently, "John, put away your paint and brush; it's time to go to art." And when time for music came, teachers lined up protesting and reluctant children who verbally expressed their dislike of music! These were the same children who sang and danced just about every day, played rhythm instruments with gusto, and composed and played their own compositions on the piano!

This problem was not resolved. This author willingly grants that children were exposed to musical and artistic skills that she would not have been capable of offering them. They produced some fine art work, and they participated in some musical programs of quality. But the author's belief is that somehow children should be able to take advantage of the expertise and talent of all teachers in the school, on an informal basis, without having to be marched to scheduled skill lessons which treat isolated skills in the creative area. English schools visited by this teacher saw that kind of informal learning happening; when a child needed help his teacher was unable to provide, she cheerfully sent him on to another teacher noted for her skill in that area.

The author is well aware that she does not possess many creative skills, and does not know how to set standards such as Elwyn Richardson

insisted upon, but she would have been happy to send children off to the person who could provide this kind of help, on an individual, spontaneous basis.

Although this particular teacher cannot claim to have become deeply involved with art processes as a result of her involvement with open education, she knows that such opportunities are inherent in the approach. She enjoyed the freedom to explore mathematical materials in an unplanned manner, and she found great satisfaction in sharing musical experiences with children. A balance sheet would have to record a plus for the teacher's opportunity for creative development in the open classroom.

Attitude Toward Professional Career

In re-thinking the years in the light of her attitude toward her professional career, the author wonders when, if ever, she wasn't eager to "get on with it." This teacher has been extremely fortunate in that life has offered her so many interesting challenges in the field of education. This is not a "Pollyanna" attitude at all; many times she has been discouraged and disheartened, overtired and uncertain, but she has never been bored! Dorothy Welch, quoted in the interview reported in Nyquist and Hawes' Open Education, states that she was miserable in her job, and the inference is that she was grasping at straws when she decided to take the workshop course with the Elementary Science Study in Massachusetts.¹⁴ In honesty, this teacher has experienced no such disenchantment with teaching. When things went wrong, she wallowed a

¹⁴Hein, Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 156.

state, fits exactly this teacher's dilemma many times during the six years. He quotes the teacher: "It has not been painless." (Indeed, it has not!) "I've cursed and blessed the New School inwardly, sometimes simultaneously." (The author often endured the same ambivalent feelings about the seminar in England. It offered so much, was such a Pied Piper drawing all the American teachers joyfully in its wake, and then came the jolt when they encountered the real world of their own classrooms.) "I am not satisfied with what I am doing, but I could never go back to what I did before."¹⁷ This author is equally certain that in spite of disappointments, frustrations, dissatisfactions, discouragement--none of these could induce her to return to traditional teaching. There is always that one more day, which just might see everything mesh, and is worth waiting for!

Undoubtedly, teachers could benefit from special preparation for going into open classrooms. The author and her colleagues pioneered their effort, so there were no advisors or experienced teachers or administrators to provide the kind of preparation discussed by Dr. Buski in his dissertation. A "knowledge of demands placed on the teacher in an open setting" would have been valuable if "open" meant educationally open, rather than, or as well as, physically open. Perhaps the most helpful suggestion was the priority given to the need to serve an internship in an open classroom.¹⁸ The author is not convinced that any external agency could teach her to be cooperative, flexible or to possess empathy for children and co-workers! Possibly the possession of these

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Buski, "A Study of Matters Teachers View as Important," Abstract.

characteristics could be contributing factors in a teacher's healthy attitude toward her professional career.

In balancing the rewards against the demands of open education, this teacher can only conclude that she has had every opportunity to develop a healthy, hopeful, enthusiastic and positive attitude toward her chosen career.

Interaction and Communication with Colleagues

The author was particularly fortunate in her companions in the Integrated Day adventure. The teachers worked together closely for several months before embarking on the summer seminar in England. They spent hours and hours threshing out the basic philosophy of what they were attempting to implement. While in England they roomed together and shared impressions of the various schools they visited. They traveled together and increased their opportunities for personal growth. Everywhere they went, they questioned what value this or that particular experience might have for their coming project. If Lillian Weber is correct in her statement that exchange between teachers is vital to their learning, the team of teachers who journeyed together had an unparalleled opportunity to learn! Sealey's report on the selected American elementary schools credits open education with bringing teachers closer together, and the author's experience with her colleagues verifies this statement.

But collegial interactions are not just for friendly dialogue and sharing of interesting or exciting ideas about education. These relationships provide the mutual support so necessary to a new endeavor.

Ewald Nyquist lists key elements necessary to build a dynamic program, and the third element listed was "built-in personal support for each teacher, . . . at least one other teacher who shares her attitude and goals."¹⁹ In the case of the teachers in question, they were a close-knit group of four when they launched the open classroom.

The author always found a responsive friend with whom to share worries, a shoulder to cry on (and that was done more than the teachers would care to admit) and friendly, practical advice to help her over the temporarily rough spot in the road of open learning. Without these supportive colleagues, it is doubtful if the author could have survived the first anxious year. She marvels at those professionals like Sybil Marshall and Elwyn Richardson who accomplished a superior job all alone. Rogers and Church, in their critique and assessment of open education, share letters written by open education innovators. One teacher wrote that her worst moments had been those when she felt alone and isolated. She expressed her situation poignantly, "I am uneasy with the possibility that I may be, not only in my own boat, but on my own sea as well."²⁰ The author shudders at the possibility of being so alone in a venture of this kind. Again referring to literature previously reviewed, the author could have written the words attributed to the teachers in North Haven by Bud Church in his article on their experience of initiating a project of open classrooms, "It can't be overemphasized how important it was during

¹⁹ Nyquist, Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 90.

²⁰ Rogers and Church, Open Education, Critique and Assessment, p. 44.

that first year for the three teachers to have each other for support during all the moments of doubt and frustration."²¹

Cooperation between the members of this team was vital to the success of the project. And cooperation there was! At every step of the way, the teachers joined forces to smooth out problems. During the very difficult situation of the entering group of five year olds in the afternoon, the teachers teamed together to try out all the solutions they could imagine. They cooperated later on when they devised a schedule to make possible a few free minutes in the middle of the day for teachers on a rotating basis. They cooperated by sharing materials, books, ideas and successful projects. In the Sealey report, teachers underscored the fact that, in open classrooms, ideas, once kept secret, were willingly shared. This was evident in the kind of cooperation that existed between the members of the author's team. Productive, successful ideas were to be shared, not hoarded.

A less successful area of personal interaction became apparent over the years as classroom teachers and special education teachers found themselves at cross purposes. There was an unfortunate polarization that both groups regretted and attempted to resolve, but at the time of the author's departure from the school system, this situation remained a problem. The "specialists" referred to are those whose responsibility is providing services for students with special needs. The author's discomfort with the removal of children from the classroom during the first days of the school year is an indication of some of the areas of misunderstanding and lack of agreement. This particular problem is not

²¹ Ibid.

common to open classrooms only; in fact, the informal structure of the open classroom should make the entries and exits of children less awkward than in more formally structured settings. However, the schedule of the special teachers seemed very rigid and the interruptions for children came at inopportune times.

So, although this one area of interaction and communication among staff must be judged a failure for the author, in general the positive, helpful, *pleasurable* aspects of interaction among colleagues involved in the practice of open education, as experienced by this teacher, can only be summed up as rewarding. Her life was immeasurably enriched by the professional and personal relationships which accompanied the work.

Administrative Support

Support within the professional framework was offered to the teachers involved in the open classroom project through their principal, who did indeed "foster an open relationship with his teachers" and who both trusted and supported them. He listened to their problems, offered suggestions of both a practical and an impractical nature, and encouraged them to take time out to rest and reflect. In the first years, the teachers could only nod at this sage advice, knowing well that to take the prescription was impossible. In contrast to much of the writing about open classrooms, such as Vincent Rogers' statement about "an awful lot of schools where principals get the message across very quickly that they don't have much faith in their teachers,"²² this principal displayed

²²V. Rogers, Current Research and Perspectives, p. 25.

faith in the teachers' ability to plan, implement and evaluate their program. In fact, he appeared to possess more faith in the teachers than they did in themselves. He acted as a buffer for them countless times when they were pressed for time or answers. He often interpreted for them results of test taking by their children to show that open education, in spite of their fears, was not failing!

Other evidences of support within the professional framework are scant for this study, because of the original nature of the undertaking in that time and in that place. The teachers were strongly supported by the University personnel interested in open education. They received the "non-threatening, non-partisan aid" of which Martha Norris speaks in The Role of the Advisor in Open Education.²³ There were no advisors, as such, available to these teachers; it will be remembered that they called in their own counselors for advice. There was, at that time, no teacher center where they could go to exchange ideas.

Upper level administrators, while they permitted the program to function, did impose the standardized tests, referred to by Sealey in his report, "Open schools in the study were by no means free of many pressures upon teachers to produce good results as measured by conventional achievement tests."²⁴ The teachers felt this need to show results in conventional measure implied mistrust of them and their program. When the author talked with headmasters in England, they often commented that they found it hard to understand the lack of trust American administrators had in their teachers.

²³ Norris, The Role of the Advisor in Open Education, pp. 8, 9.

²⁴ Sealey, Open Education: A Study, p. 31.

The School Board was noticeably wary of the new approach and expressed this concern openly, which added to the stresses and pressures already being felt by the teachers.

Added to the strains of proving the program to administration was the questioning by teachers in other schools within the district which was felt to be critical by the open classroom teachers. Because these schools were not practicing an open approach, there appeared to be much misunderstanding, and the author and colleagues felt defensive.

In spite of some discomfort in the relationships outside the school, the teachers in the open team had the assurance of the principal's strong and trusting support, and close communication with the University personnel; both provided aid and comfort for the teachers.

Independence and Locus of Control

The open teachers began their adventure with a strong sense of internal locus of control. The entire idea for the project came from within their own group, certainly no external source mandated such an experiment. This was one of the stimulating joys of participating in the project. Every step of the way had to be worked out together; no one in authority made any demands upon them in the planning stage. The former school principal was completing his term in their school and moving into a college faculty. He was an interested and supportive member of some of their meetings, but he imposed no restrictions or mandates whatsoever upon the planners. There was an exciting element of pioneering, and adventuring forth together, that permeated the hours of discussion. The summer seminar trip to England was their own idea, and

they managed to paint it in such glowing colors that the School Board actually allotted them a sum to cover part of the expenses! Since they were the first teachers in their locality to move into the open approach, there was no person or authority to give them direction.

When the teachers returned from England and began the actual specific planning for their classrooms, they were completely independent. If Knowles is right in his assumption that a feeling about one's ability to control one's destiny counts more for achievement in school than all other factors,²⁵ these teachers were well on their way toward achieving their goals.

Clearly, classroom teachers, no matter what their educational persuasion, cannot completely control their destinies. There are many matters that need to be directed by administrators in order for total institutions to function. But the feeling of being in control over what happens in her own classroom, and having the independence to take whatever steps she feels necessary to promote learning, is necessary for a teacher to feel success.

The staff involved with the Integrated Day program did not suffer the misfortunes of some teachers who have tried the approach and have met with such restraints that they felt unable to proceed. Again, the author is reminded of the statements made, either in anger or sorrow, in the Rogers and Church book on open education. One writer felt that her largest frustrations had come from principals who had mandated uniformity throughout the school, principals who made it clear that their

²⁵ Knowles, in Current Research and Perspectives, p. 93.

goal was teachers who taught as they were told! And the teacher who expressed anger with the educational bureaucracy that had inhibited her independence, reflected a frustration shared by many teachers trying to change.

The author protested regional directives which seemed to interfere with her independence, but in actuality never relinquished her sense of the control of her own destiny. She resented the direct command to give the achievement tests, but she knew she *could* resign if she felt absolutely unable to bow to this directive. Knowles refers to Prescott Lecky's belief that "it is not what one is actually capable of doing that governs his actions, but it is what he believes that he can do!"²⁶ These teachers believed that they could effect an improved quality of educational life for children, and whatever the obstacles, disappointments or discomfort they encountered, they persisted in feeling they had a strong element of control.

Financial and Job Security

Financial security is a condition desired by most of the teachers who choose the educational field, and related to this need is that of job security. It would appear that open education teachers share the same needs as all other teachers, and that their chances of meeting their needs are about equal to those of all other teachers. After all, Silberman refers to "ancillary rewards" such as job security and long vacations that may attract teachers into the field in the first place, but become relatively unimportant once a teacher becomes established in

²⁶Ibid.

the profession, since they are identical for almost everyone.²⁷ He goes on to insist that teachers show more concern for intrinsic rewards such as pride of accomplishment and satisfaction. The author knows this to be true in her own case. Financial rewards are modest at best and disappointing at least!

Job security is equally important, and surely the act of practicing open education should not endanger a teacher's employment. However, this teacher remembers that in the course in Integrated Day that she and a colleague taught, one of the students was a teacher in a small town near the University. This teacher shared with the class her concern that she might not be rehired because the superintendent of schools in that community did not believe in open classrooms. Sadly enough, this same teacher did lose her position with that school district, and the reason given her was that the open approach was not suitable for that particular community.

The author has never felt anxiety that her commitment to educational openness might cost her the opportunity to teach, and she hopes that few teachers are in this unhappy situation.

It is quite understandable that some open classroom teachers leave a particular school district because open education is not valued there, and change positions to enable them to continue to practice the openness they believe in.

It is to be hoped that the practice of open education will not jeopardize the professional careers of dedicated teachers. It is even

²⁷ Silberman, Open Education, A Sourcebook, p. 78.

more to be desired that belief in open education might enhance the opportunities for professional success.

Rest and Recreational Refreshment
for Body and Spirit

Now comes the time to reflect on the final area treated in the review of the literature--that of the opportunities for rest, and recreational refreshment for body and spirit. None of the previously mentioned teacher satisfactions can balance the scale of rewards and demands if this need is not met. Energetic, enthusiastic, seriously committed teachers expend monstrous amounts of time and energy practicing open education. This teacher knows this to be a fact, and she considers herself an energetic, enthusiastic teacher, and one who is committed, heart and soul, to the practice of open education. For each ounce of energy spent, an equal ounce of rest or recreation must be restored to the individual. Unless this balance is preserved, over a period of time the teacher begins to lose the healthy energy associated with successful teaching. Exhaustion destroys enthusiasm, numbs the brain, and causes molehill problems to grow into mountainous ones.

The author experienced just such exhaustion during the first year of the open classroom practice. In succeeding years, the situation improved steadily, but the problem was never conquered completely. A colleague in the first team of teachers became ill from exhaustion and anxiety, and after spending time in the hospital decided to take a leave of absence, from the school and from open education! One other colleague persevered throughout that first hard year, then decided that the program demanded more than she could give, in justice to herself. She changed

teaching positions and has functioned superbly as a top notch, warm hearted, open-minded traditional teacher. The author added up the pros and cons of "sticking it out" in the open classroom during the spring of the first year, and as mentioned earlier, almost changed teaching positions but decided to try once more. Clearly, the first year was a strenuous and difficult challenge. The years that followed were filled with much work and anxiety, but the author gradually discovered ways to obtain needed rest and recreation.

Perhaps part of the explanation of why the succeeding years became less stressful and debilitating for this teacher lay in the purchase of a little cottage at the shore in Rhode Island. Going there on weekends was like a trip to Paradise. It brought rest, refreshment, good outdoor exercise and a complete change of scene. In time, the author found that she could take schoolwork with her, and if she disciplined herself firmly and only allowed a specified period of time for that work, she could accomplish whatever needed to be done before Monday in a constructive, pleasant frame of mind. Then she would put open education behind her and go for a lovely, invigorating walk on the beach. She must admit to not putting open classrooms out of her mind completely, for she often found interesting sand treasures to bring back to her children. In point of fact, she also brought back the sand! In retrospect, it seems to the author that it was the house at the beach which saved her sanity and health during the stressful times. She began to play tennis again and found, in the challenge of the sport, splendid release for tensions that had been building up through the week.

In the author's love for the outdoor activities offered by the weekends at the beach, she feels a kinship with Sylvia Ashton-Warner, who spent so many precious moments walking, in sun and snow, when she was in Colorado that one year. In Spearpoint, she mentions over and over again how she loved to walk in that beautiful area. It seemed to be a balm to her distressed spirit. (And of the distress she pretends no cover-ups' her educational disappointments that year were gigantic.) Jane Prescott, quoted in the Walberg and Thomas TDR report, emphasizes the need for teachers to be refreshed by "things other than worry and work."²⁸ Then she speaks of balancing one's life out of school. But where was the *time* necessary to accomplish this balancing?--this is somewhat akin to that expression of Brown and Precious about the teacher who functions "like a champion swimmer, using 50% effort and 50% relaxation."²⁹ It must be admitted that during the first year surely, and partially throughout the entire duration of the six years, this teacher was able to manage only a 90 percent effort and 10 percent relaxation! As the years moved along, this ratio gradually changed for the better, but never reached the perfect balance suggested by Brown and Precious. Again, the teacher must confess that much of the pressure, stress and inordinate amount of time used by school-related activities was necessitated by her own internal demands for excellence in the teaching situation.

Minor triumphs of will occurred when the author allowed herself to buy season tickets to the symphony concert series, to take up a

²⁸ Walberg and Thomas, Characteristics of Open Education, A-54, Item SP2.

²⁹ Brown and Precious, The Integrated Day, p. 19.

modified social life again with her family, to sign up for a course in Persian dancing, and to return to her place in the church choir. She could not conquer the "never finished" syndrome, but she learned to ignore the guilt that crept into her inmost being because of it.

Kathleen Raoul's example of finally daring to go to a concert, and enjoying it, and finding that the children survived the next day very nicely, was a helpful example to this teacher.

Some comments about "teacher burnout" seem appropriate. This malady is not restricted to open education teachers; apparently it is common among all teachers at this time. Some of the advice offered in the magazine and newspaper articles sounds like advertising for open education: "putting the learning program on the shoulders of the students"--that's what open classroom people have been saying all along; "students should take responsibility for their own learning"--absolutely! Teachers are advised not to isolate themselves, and attention has been given in this study to show that meaningful interaction between teachers is vitally necessary to effective functioning. The Christian Science Monitor article suggests that teaching personnel should look at the profession in wide terms, realizing that dealing with students brings inevitable problems. This is sensible advice for any teacher.

The Instructor's LeRoy Spaniol tells teachers that burnout is related to stress. Teachers are pretty well aware of this fact. He then outlines many reasons for the almost "epidemic proportions" the ailment is reaching. Many of his reasons have been noted by the author in the review of literature dealing with teacher needs. His suggestions

are much like those offered by the Christian Science Monitor article; then he adds that some schools are actively working to combat this problem by allowing teachers to change grade levels to add variety to their jobs, providing teacher advocates to aid and comfort teachers, initiating courses in new ways to teach, and by encouraging teachers to try new out-of-school activities.

This author has experienced teacher burnout, although she did not know it under that term. But she has experienced the exhaustion and the feeling of being overburdened with work and worry, and she has known the aggravation of minor physical maladies (and some not so minor, such as migraine headaches). She is familiar with the "attitudinal exhaustion" alluded to by Ayala Pines in the Learning magazine article. She feels that the prescription of finding time, somehow, for rest and recreational refreshment of body and spirit is her answer to teacher burnout.

Affirmation of the Rewards of the Approach for the Teacher

As the author reflects on the demands encountered in the practice of open education, she realizes that in many respects heavy demands are met by all conscientious teachers, not by open education teachers alone. Successful, effective teachers try to help all children learn. Caring teachers give of themselves and their energies generously. Mentally alert teachers seek to increase their knowledge and improve the skill of their craft. The author acknowledges that open education is but one educational approach, and it is the approach which she has found to be the most fulfilling as a teacher. She also believes it can provide an optimal growing and learning environment for children. The need for

open education teachers to be ready at all times to provision the environment to meet emerging curriculum, to adopt a "wait and see" attitude rather than to move unswervingly ahead from beginning of the school year to the end, to seek continuously to find approaches to meet each child's developmental needs--these are demands particular to open education. It is difficult to accept responsibility for helping children learn and yet not take control of the progress of that learning. The author's watchwords have been, "Go forward in faith, based on the understanding gained in retrospect." This implies a deep commitment to the philosophy of open education and a sturdy reliance on the powers of children to accept the challenge of assuming the active role in their own learning. This leap of faith cannot be validated daily, and this is a factor in the stress experienced by teachers.

Summary

The six years under consideration in this study constituted a more important period in the author's life than a mere six years might suggest. She feels that she was always on the way toward open education, even back in the little country school in California in 1942, when she realized that learning had to be related to children themselves, and that the learning group must become a community. She was traveling toward open classrooms in every teaching assignment she accepted. She traveled a wavy path, she retraced steps sometimes, and she got lost occasionally, but the general direction was true. And so, when she joined the teachers who were looking for a new way of living and working with children, she felt herself to be at home. She had much to learn, but it all confirmed

what she had believed all along. She could not have known the trials, tribulations, small disasters, disappointments, frustrations and fatigue she would be confronting. Nor could she have known the exaltation of spirit, the glorious sense of freedom in learning, the beautifully human relationships with adults and children, the joy of sharing her beliefs with interested others, nor the intense satisfaction she experienced when children demonstrated the value of the approach and validated those beliefs.

The author's conclusion: The demands of open education are heavy; the rewards are far greater!

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The author has examined in retrospect the evolution of an open education teacher to determine if the internal and external rewards of the practice of the approach are equal to the demands imposed on the teacher.

In their 1978 review of open education, Bader and Blackman conclude their review thus: "The data appear to indicate that the success of the open school is largely dependent on the individuals in the school rather than on any external factor."¹ Joel Burdin states, "The irreducible minimum in any educational endeavor is competent, sensitive and humane personnel. . . . Recruitment, selection, preparation, placement and retention (of personnel) must be responsive to the unique demands of open schools; otherwise, one more movement is headed for the morgue."²

Because the teacher is the key to the successful functioning of the open classroom, and because the author fervently hopes that open education is not "headed for the morgue," she undertook this study at this time. It is a crucial time for the future of openness in education; educational issues are often in the forefront of the news media. The

¹Carol H. Bader and C. Robert Blackman, "Open Education, A Review of the Literature" (Louisiana State University: Louisiana Educational Research Association and the Bureau of Educational Materials and Research, College of Education, 1978), p. 11.

²Burdin, in Current Research and Perspectives, p. 144.

philosophy of the open approach is strongly criticized by those who either do not understand its principles, or who do not approve of them. Therefore, the future for open teachers is uncertain, and if competent teachers are to become committed to openness, they must be convinced of its worth for them, as well as for the children they teach.

Summary

Chapter I presented the author's definition of open education, and defined the open education teacher in the context of a working classroom.

In Chapter II, the author explored the available literature relating to the open classroom teacher. She found a plethora of literature concerning open education, but a paucity of literature that was directly related to the teacher as a person. The author employed a set of assumptions for teacher satisfaction as a screen for reviewing the sources which did apply to teachers.

Chapter III contained the educational autobiography of the author, who practiced open education for six years in a school sponsored jointly by the Amherst Public Schools and the School of Education of the University of Massachusetts. The autobiography purported to show the growth of this teacher toward her acceptance of the principles and practices of open education.

In Chapter IV, the author looked again at the problems that occurred during the six year period, and at the steps she took to solve them. She reflected on those problems which remained unsolved, the most pressing of which was the matter of time necessary to maintain a

fully functioning open classroom. She also reviewed her experience in the light of the nine assumptions for teacher satisfaction outlined in Chapter II. In conclusion, she weighed the rewards she had gained from the years spent in open classrooms against the demands imposed by open education teaching, and determined that although the demands of the approach were heavy, the advantages to the teacher far exceeded the disadvantages.

The autobiography shared many of the teacher's successes and failures over the years. Successes would include the facts that:

Children came eagerly to school and demanded to attend school even when they were ill (this fact was substantiated often by parents).

Most of the parents involved came to believe in open education as it was practiced in this teacher's classroom and were supportive to her.

Although at first no other teacher in the school was interested in adopting the approach for herself, during the six years of the program almost all members of the staff moved into some form of openness.

In 1975, the author received a Teacher of the Year award for excellence in teaching. She accepted this award with the certain knowledge that it recognized a whole-hearted, whole-minded commitment to children, rather than being a purely personal award for the teacher herself. To this teacher, this particular award validated her approach to the practice of open education.

Failures should be seen as lack of accomplishment or achievement, and discouraging, even disheartening, to the practitioner, but not as total defeat. These would include:

The teacher's own feeling of inadequacy in helping children plan appropriate next steps in learning.

Her inability to conquer the personal energy drain.

The rift between herself and the teachers who provided special services to children.

The explosive atmosphere of the lunchroom. She had envisioned the possibility of a happy, peaceful, sociable lunchtime routine, such as she had observed in some English schools. This dream never materialized.

Unsuccessful attempts to convince authorities that report cards and standardized tests were inappropriate in open education.

However, in spite of flaws and mistakes and failures, this teacher is firmly convinced that open education provides the optimum possibility for growth for both children and teachers. For society as a whole, the educationally open approach can provide a citizenry who value humane qualities of respect and dignity of humankind. The importance of establishing a feeling of community among the participants in an open classroom underscores the individual's responsibilities toward his group as well as the privileges of belonging.

An analysis of the particular six years covered by this study produces some interesting patterns in the functioning of an open classroom. The author has long realized that there is an undulating rhythm to an educationally open situation. A day in such a classroom begins with quiet bustle and much conversation, a settling-in time for teachers and children. As the participants become involved in activities, mostly

self-chosen ones, a period of absorption follows, during which members of the group work with intensity--some in small groups, some in pairs, some individually. There is a quiet hum of busy-ness, dialogue between children and children and between children and adults. (It is during this time of intense involvement that teachers may slip in and out of the working classroom without their presence or absence being noted particularly.) The length of this time may vary, but gradually the tone of the room becomes louder and activities increase, movement speeds up, and the teacher becomes aware of the change in the atmosphere. On some days, this second phase becomes very loud indeed, and the classroom seems to be exploding with confusion. Sometimes adults decide to change the climate by redirecting some of the activities, occasionally the adult will redirect all the activities if this seems indicated. Usually, however, adults with a supply of patience can "ride out" this minor storm and then enjoy the ensuing period of peace. The author has tested this rhythmic routine countless times and has discovered that the pattern is standard. After the noisy hustle and bustle of the middle of the morning, another time of busy, purposeful work occurs. In fact, often just when the author would decide that "this time it's too much; there must be a change NOW," that would be the moment when the re-settling would begin, and within a short space of time all would be flowing smoothly once again.

This pattern repeats itself during the afternoon with some modifications. A very quiet, relaxed, somewhat slower tempo accompanies all the work after lunch. Usually the children have had a time to play

actively outdoors, and then return to the classroom. This teacher and her children usually sat down comfortably together, drew in some deep breaths, and then shared a story. At the conclusion of the story, children would choose to continue morning tasks or initiate new ones, but in any case, the tempo would be slower and more relaxed than in the morning. Toward the end of the afternoon the peaking of noise and confusion would occur again, this time triggered by fatigue. The transition time of cleaning up and preparing the room for the next day was a noisy one. This teacher often brought children together one last time just before they left school to go home. Then the feelings of discomfort, small irritations, noise and bustle, could be overcome with a quiet song and the sharing of the day's activities. Sometimes the teacher and children would just take each other's hands and quietly experience a sense of community and conclusion to the day.

A note should be added to the effect that the teacher herself experienced a rhythmic pattern to her days with the children which reflected an accommodation to the natural routine of the classroom.

In reviewing the evolution of open classroom teaching as experienced by this particular teacher, she looked for comparative patterns which might be applicable to years (or even groups of years) rather than days. Can it be that a school year marches along in much the same manner as a school day? Does the year begin in the same general way that a school day begins? Is there a rhythm that can be expected to occur? If this supposition appears likely, might it not lend support to teachers as they anticipate open classroom teaching, and when they plan for succeeding years? Perhaps this idea, tentative as it is, ought to be explored.

Problems Remaining to Be Solved

If open education is to remain an alternative and therefore satisfy continuing need for open teachers, how can the proponents of this approach answer the many critics? There seem to be several basic kinds of critics:

1. Informed educators who see some value in the approach but find many weaknesses in either the theory or application. Roland Barth would be listed in this category. Although he was one of the earliest definers of basic assumptions of open education, he has become a frequent critic. In his article in The Phi Delta Kappan magazine, he theorizes, "In the act of analyzing British primary school experience, we Americans *created* [emphasis in the original] open education, where before it did not exist. . . . The definition of open education is a hypothetical, academic artifact, not an educational reality."³ He answers his own question, "If open education is so good and so clear, why do teachers eschew it? Because it is dangerous. For most school people, 'open' is a four-letter word."⁴ He continues to suggest that the need is not so much for teachers to have the courage and conviction to run open classrooms, but for teachers to become sensitive and skillful in observing and diagnosing children's behavior, in deriving rich information from these observations and in responding to children's needs and deficiencies helpfully and appropriately with all the resources and imagination available to them.⁵ (The author sees this as part of the teacher's role in open education.)

³ Roland Barth, "Beyond Open Education," The Phi Delta Kappan 58 (February 1977):490.

⁴ Ibid., p. 491.

⁵ Ibid., p. 492.

2. Informed individuals who understand the theory of open education and comprehend the underlying structure of a functioning open classroom, but disagree with the basic premise.

3. Uninformed spectators who misunderstand what they see in an open classroom and conclude that children are not engaged in serious learning tasks.

4. Those who see a misapplication of the approach and assume that this is indeed open education and then rightfully disapprove of what they see.

To assure the survival of an educationally open approach, to whatever extent, it will be necessary to answer these critics. This teacher observed the program slowly selling itself, over the years, in an academic situation. If this is one way of providing open education with a longer life span, then the time necessary for programs to begin, to grow, and to flourish, must be obtained.

The author feels that Barth's probing questions are legitimate ones and that open educators must look at those questions with sincere desire to find answers. Barth, in his article, suggests that a potential fourth stage be added to his previously defined stages of open education progress (testimonial, analysis and proliferation). This fourth stage he terms that of self-criticism and self-correction. He calls for a de-mythologizing of the values, methods and beliefs of open education, and their selective assimilation by teachers in their important classroom work. This author accepts Barth's criticisms as thoughtful ones, although she has no pat answers with which to confront them.

⁶Ibid.

The critics who misunderstand what they see in a genuine open classroom must be helped to understand the underlying structure of the approach and to appreciate the results. This seems to indicate a need for some kind of public relations program. Obviously, committed teachers, parents and administrators should be the most effective salesmen for this task, but the question remains as to just how to go about accomplishing it.

Those critics who see a misapplication of open education are difficult to answer. The author feels particularly intense about criticism arising from this source. Countless times, she has tried to defend the principles of open education to those who have observed classrooms which are operating with large numbers of children in large open spaces and operating within tight time schedules. These architecturally open classrooms usually present one of two aspects:

1. An unacceptable level of noise and confusion seems to abound, and students are apparently wandering around aimlessly looking for some meaningful task to do, or are engaged in tasks not only educationally meaningless but actually counterproductive. Those students who do appear to be working seem to be doing so completely alone and isolated.

2. Groups of children marching from one teacher to another on rigid time schedules and most of the academic tasks done in groups, with little individualizing.

Neither of these structures is, in any way, an example of open education, but the *terms* employed to label both approaches are shared. Open education and open classrooms are terminology which describe the

educational approach this teacher has been discussing throughout this study. But the classrooms described above are also termed "open classrooms."

The author chooses to inject a particularly relevant incident. She was leaving the home of the typist who was converting this manuscript into a readable paper, and she was introduced to a woman passing by. The typist explained what she was typing for the author. The visitor turned to the author and said, "Oh, I know all about open education! We tried it in our school (I'm a music teacher) and now the teachers are all yelling for the walls to be put back!" The author launched into yet another defense of the principles in which she so ardently believes. But there must be a better answer. These spirited defenses become not only tiresome, but tiring over the years. What seems to be indicated is a completely new term for the approach. The contribution of such a new label would provide aid and comfort to numerous open education proponents.

Implications for Further Study

For the purpose of lending support to the open education teacher, further study appears to be indicated in the following areas:

Open educators and researchers must continue to pursue questions relating to the precise goals, functioning and results of the practice of open education in order to present thoughtful and precise answers to informed critics of the approach.

A method of "selling" the value of open education must be found to answer the uninformed critics who misunderstand the principles and functioning of educational openness.

A specific term to describe open education needs to be sought in order to differentiate philosophically open classrooms from classrooms that are architecturally, spatially, open but educationally closed.

An in-depth study of the rhythm of an open classroom day, and the possible extension of the application of that rhythm to educational years, might assist open classroom teachers to anticipate, plan, and implement their programs more effectively and harmoniously, thereby easing some of the pressure experienced by open teachers.

Because this teacher believes that it is so important for the success of an open classroom to establish a feeling of community among the participants, she would like to see a study undertaken to determine ways to promote the goal of a learning community. She has realized a sense of success in this objective during most of her teaching career, but she does not know how her particular methods could be replicated. These methods are intangible and come more from a *feeling* of what should be done, than from a reasoned approach.

The difficulty of record keeping has been alluded to in Chapters III and IV. Since the author concedes that this problem has not been solved satisfactorily, she would like to see a study undertaken which would focus on record keeping strategies and results. This could be of great value to open education teachers.

An interesting and useful project would be a follow-up study on the children taught by the author during the six years of her practice of open education at Mark's Meadow School. This might yield information

on the impact of early experiences in open education on children's later educational progress. Additional information might be obtained by interviews with the parents of the children who participated in the author's classes during the six years of this study. Long-range studies of children from other open education programs would be helpful also.

This study describes the odyssey of one open education teacher. It would be useful to secure a collection of *vignettes* illustrating the experiences of other open education teachers.

The author has received much assistance, support and inspiration from writers in the field of open education such as Sybil Marshall, Elwyn Richardson, Sylvia Ashton-Warner and George Dennison. It could be profitable to document the educational careers of those early proponents of the approach from the time of their first publications to the present day.

The study supports the fact that the demands on open education teachers are heavy and that teachers often suffer from stress and fatigue. Perhaps an investigation into the need for renewal and refreshment through change is indicated. Changes in teaching assignments and sabbatical years for study and/or travel might provide answers to the condition currently known as teacher burnout.

Practical Suggestions to Help Practitioners
of Open Education Experience Success

The author of this study is proceeding on her own educational odyssey and makes no claim to having reached a terminal point. Such a termination of learning and effort will never be achieved, for life must

be growth, and to be educationally alive should mean to be educationally growing and learning continuously. The suggestions offered by this teacher might be helpful to other teachers involved in this process of learning and growing in educationally open situations. They are not offered as answers, but as guideposts along the way.

1. The practice of open education should be attempted only if a teacher is dissatisfied with what is happening in her classroom, if she is looking for better ways to meet the needs of the children she teaches. This must be an honest and admitted dissatisfaction.

2. If a teacher feels dissatisfied with the way she is living and working with children, she should first visit as many open classrooms as possible to sense the atmosphere and underlying structure that exists. She should also read several books and articles that relate to the approach, and as she reads, keep asking herself if what the authors are saying seems reasonable to her.

3. Once a teacher becomes committed to this different way of thinking about and working with children, she needs to talk to teachers currently practicing open education in order to realize just what this commitment means in terms of her own time, effort, energy and ego strength.

4. No teacher should begin the process of change all alone, but should join forces with at least one other like-thinking teacher, preferably in the same school building, at least in the same community. These teachers can then support each other. If no teacher is available, a concerned administrator might be able to provide that support. It

would be difficult to succeed in an open classroom if the building administrator were adamantly opposed to the approach.

5. It would be very helpful to involve the parents of potential students in the planning. Look for ways not only to communicate with them about the program, but for parents to actively contribute to the project. This might eliminate some of the defensive explanations and activities later on.

6. Prepare some materials to use with the children. This is part of the process of opening up, and is a learning experience in itself for the teacher. But prepare only a reasonable amount of materials, just enough to get started, because this teacher has found that the most effective learning materials are those that grow out of a specific need for a specific child or group of children. This does not preclude the materials being used again and again subsequently, or modified and re-used, but it does guarantee that at least some use will be made of the material that took precious time to produce.

All open teachers must be good scroungers. They must look at any and all "found" materials for their possible creative use in the classroom. This suggestions carries with it the admonition that storage space is also a necessary part of the teacher's environment.

7. Remember that teachers must be accountable for children's progress or lack thereof. Each open classroom teacher must decide for herself how to accomplish this, but none can escape the need to do so. Teachers must decide (or have decisions made for them) what to evaluate, and then work out some comfortable system to keep records. It is helpful

to be open minded about this task, realizing that answers will be found only gradually.

8. If at all possible, teachers contemplating change to open classrooms, or teachers now practicing open education, should attend an in-depth workshop. This teacher cannot validate this suggestion personally, but she feels this would be of great value.

9. The author offers this suggestion with full knowledge of the difficulty of following it: Teachers should set a reasonable schedule for working on school-related tasks, and adhere to that schedule! It is so tempting to work an extra hour or two, "just this once," and soon the extra hour becomes part of the regular schedule, and then another extra hour is added and the pattern is established.

10. An open education teacher should set realistic goals for accomplishments. She must not expect too much too soon. She must be as realistic about her goals for herself as she is about her goals for the children she teaches.

Concluding Statement

"A necessary condition for teacher growth . . . is that the teacher be allowed to work on things which he regards as important, that he be allowed to work in ways which make sense to him, and that he have at his disposal means both abundant and convenient."⁷ This truism was stated by Roland Barth in 1972. Open education has been the vehicle for the continuing growth of this teacher. It has made possible the attempts to find educational answers. The author, therefore, concludes

⁷Barth, Open Education and the American School, p. 9.

this study with a sense of a task only just begun. The autobiographical journey served as a reminder of how much more there is to learn about living and working with children, and how important it is to find the personal energy to do so. The educational experiences re-lived in the personal account are valuable only as they serve as motivators to continue to explore more effective ways to enrich the lives of children, and to pursue this endeavor in ways that contribute to the teacher's well being.

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