

Central Washington University ScholarWorks@CWU

All Graduate Projects

Graduate Student Projects

1974

Student Learning Centers - Key to Transition from Traditional to Open Classroom

Donna M. Calhoun

Central Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/graduate_projects

 Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Calhoun, Donna M., "Student Learning Centers - Key to Transition from Traditional to Open Classroom" (1974). *All Graduate Projects*. Paper 6.

This Graduate Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Student Projects at ScholarWorks@CWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Graduate Projects by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@CWU.

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY CENTER
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

CENTRAL WASHINGTON STATE COLLEGE

Graduate School

Final Examination of

Donna Calhoun

B.A., Central Washington State College, 1971

for the degree of

Master of Education

Committee in Charge

✓ Dr. Robert Carlton

Dr. Byron DeShaw Dr. Alan Bergstrom

Thursday, May 2, 1974

10:00 A.M.

SUB 211

Courses Included in Graduate Study

Required Courses

Completed

Psychology	552	Advanced Human Growth and Development	Summer, 1973
Education	500	Educational Research and Development	Summer, 1973
Education	570	Education Foundations	Summer, 1973
Education	699	Individual Project	Winter, 1974

Courses in Field of Specialization

Education	460	Parent Teacher Conf.	Spring, 1972
Education	441	Curriculum Building	Summer, 1972
Education	441	Adv. Curric. Building	Summer, 1972
Education	441	Innovative Reading	Winter, 1972
Education	499	Individualized Instruction A	Winter, 1972
Education	499	Indiv. Inst. B	Spring, 1972
Education	441	Effective Questioning	Winter, 1972
Bio. Sci.	440	Frontyard Biology	Fall, 1972
Education	418c	Org. & Sup. of Student Teaching	Spring, 1973
Health Ed.	440X	Fund. of Drug Ed. Curriculum	Spring, 1973
Ed. Med.	415	Instructional Media M/M	Summer, 1973

Elective Courses

Home Ec.	499X	Big Idea-Nutrition	Fall, 1971
Geology	345	Principles of Geology	Summer, 1973

Please note: This student's biographical information has been redacted due to privacy concerns.

STUDENT LEARNING CENTERS--KEY TO TRANSITION
FROM TRADITIONAL TO OPEN CLASSROOM

A Creative Project
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Donna M. Calhoun
March, 1974

STUDENT LEARNING CENTERS--KEY TO TRANSITION
FROM TRADITIONAL TO OPEN CLASSROOM

by

Donna M. Calhoun

March, 1974

It is the purpose of this project to provide a transition from the traditional classroom into an open classroom through the use of modular group-oriented and individualized learning centers. The transitional approach is designed to assist the student to assume responsibilities needed to function successfully and comfortably in a new school environment, the open classroom.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This writer wishes to express her appreciation to Dr. Robert Carlton for his time, effort, and helpful advice in making this project possible. The writer also wishes to express her appreciation to Dr. Byron DeShaw and Dr. Alan Bergstrom for their assistance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. PHASE I - MODULAR GROUP-ORIENTED CLASSROOM . . .	2
STEP ONE	2
Method I	2
Method II	3
STEP TWO	3
STEP THREE	4
STUDENT ROTATION	5
SCHEDULING	6
PROGRAM WEAKNESSES	8
PROGRAM STRENGTHS	9
3. PHASE II - LEARNING CENTERS	10
TYPES OF CENTERS	11
DEVELOPING PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY	12
CLASSROOM CONTROL	15
EVALUATION	17
POSSIBLE OUTCOMES	19
4. PHASE III - THE OPEN CLASSROOM	20
STRUCTURE	23
RECORD KEEPING AND EVALUATION	24
5. CONCLUSION	26
BIBLIOGRAPHY	28

APPENDIX

A. Grouping Children Methods I and II	30
B. Language Arts Ideas	33
C. Lesson Plans	35
D. Floor Plans I and II	38
E. Scheduling Charts	41
F. Learning Centered Floor Plan	43
G. Student Chart for Learning Centers	45
H. Complete Open Classroom Floor Plan	47
I. Additional Ideas for Centers	49

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of this paper to identify a program which a teacher might use as a transition from a traditional classroom learning environment into an open classroom learning environment.

Many teachers are oriented to the traditional classroom and they approach the open classroom with an apprehensive attitude. Teachers have followed such a rigid pattern for many years through their own early schooling, college courses, and student teaching experiences, that any type of curriculum which deviates from their past experience is seldom given serious consideration.

Teachers should be creative enough to allow their personalities and interests, as well as that of the students, to establish a dynamic climate which molds a classroom to fit the individual needs of students.

Not all teachers or students are alike--nor can or should all classrooms be alike. Each one should be determined by the personalities within. What may work fine one year may not be the answer the following year. With the flexibility most teachers have, innovations can be adapted to individual student needs, and learning can become a fun experience for all involved.

Chapter 2

PHASE I - MODULAR GROUP-ORIENTED CLASSROOM

The modular group-oriented classroom is designed so that four groups rotate about the room doing group work at centers. This allows the students to move about with limited freedom, to work in smaller groups, and to assume some responsibility by being teacher of a group.

STEP ONE

The first step is to divide the students into four groups. If the school is already divided into ability groupings within the grade level, the range of abilities within the room will not be very large. Either way there are two methods that work equally well, depending on the teacher's preference.

Method I

1. Place both boys and girls in each of the four groups.
2. Place top and middle range students in each of the four groups.
3. Separate disruptive students in each of the four groups (see Appendix A, page 30).

The rationale for this method of grouping is that it places a student who is capable of helping others in each group. Peer pressure often forces the disruptive student to

behave and no group will be more noisy or disruptive than others. Boys and girls learn to work together.

Method II

1. Place top students in one group.
2. Place middle group students together.
3. Place students from both top and middle groups who work slower than others together.
4. Place disruptive students together (See Appendix A, page 30).

The rationale for this method of grouping is that it allows students who work at about the same pace to either work faster or slower through the materials. This becomes individualized to an extent. In a regular individualized classroom, groups soon form naturally because some students are working at the same pace and have the same needs. It also keeps disruptive students from bothering a group that is trying to work. With the students in Group 4, you can establish a minimum amount of work to be done. The rest of their time can be spent in Language Arts games. These students will be less disruptive because they are doing what they want. This is called give and take. All students realize everyone is receiving comparable grades for the amount of work completed.

STEP TWO

The second step is to plan for the groups to be used. Four groups are suggested. If a Language Arts block of time is involved, the following centers might be designed:

(1) Reading, (2) Language, (3) Spelling, and (4) Activities.

However, any area of learning might be designed this way:

(1) Social Studies, (2) Art, (3) Science, and (4) Math. This is a personal choice made by the teacher based upon the student's needs.

STEP THREE

The third step is to identify the materials to be used in the centers. These can be lists of filmstrips, tapes, or other materials which can be ordered from the local audio-visual center. Games, puzzles, pictures, and crosswords should be made or purchased in advance so they are readily available for use. All equipment should be placed for easy usage and it would be helpful if students from each group are taught how to use the centers in advance. The teacher should arrange for as much variety as possible to keep interest high.

A sample of ideas used in a Language Arts modular group-oriented class may be found in Appendix B, page 33.

As centers are designed many ideas will be found that work well as the main assignment or for extra fill-ins for students who finish early.

In planning for any four groups, assignments should be made so the teacher is not needed in more than one place at the beginning of the period to present a new lesson. Carry-over assignments from the previous day can help groups get started immediately. The teacher might arrange to work

in one area for the day, or roam freely and supervise all groups.

Planning should include at least two groups doing quiet activities. If a group is reading orally and spelling words are being given in another group, then the activities group might be at the listening center listening to a literature story or viewing a filmstrip in the hall. Language students, after checking the previous day's work, will be doing an assignment. A sample of lesson plans for a typical week may be found in Appendix C, page 35.

Plan so that activities at all centers are varied, and students do not end up writing at all four centers.

STUDENT ROTATION

A decision should now be made on how groups are to rotate. If the teacher prefers a quiet room, four groups of students might be seated at four clusters of tables. Material for the day's lesson would be moved from group to group. This floor plan requires less space and fewer extra tables, but keeps students immobilized. See Appendix D, page 38, for floor plan 1.

The method preferred by most students is to move from center to center. To plan for this method the room should be arranged to provide space for the centers. The centers should be placed as far apart as possible, with sufficient space left for the reading group to form a circle for discussion purposes. This is usually done by placing the individual desks

or two-place tables close together in the center of the room. The students would be given permanent seats in this area and should be seated upon arrival. This group of desks also serves as the Reading center.

In order to provide ample room and to encourage reading and not visiting, place a student so an empty seat is between him and each member of his own group once the rotation starts. If student assignments are individualized, then meeting in the circle to discuss a taped story heard at the listening center is a good follow-up. Otherwise the reading group may remain at their own central seats. If the reading group is to meet at the circle for the time period, the group working on Activities may be assigned to remain at their central seats for individual work.

Floor plan II is included in Appendix D, page 38, to show how groups and desks might be located in a room. In working out seating arrangements, the teacher who desires a quieter room might break up talkers and put boys and girls together which might help decrease possible discipline problems. This floor plan is shown with numbers, which corresponds to the week 1 schedule, 9:00-9:25.

SCHEDULING

Scheduling can be simplified through the use of four sequential charts. Each chart would include the four blocks of time, the four centers, and the rotational pattern of the four groups.

By rotating the four charts over a four-day period, the groups would take turns starting at different centers. The charts allow the students to check and see where they should go when the period changes without asking the teacher or wasting time. The four charts are found in Appendix E, page 41.

It is convenient to have the student's name and groups also on the board. This helps remind students where they or others belong and also provides a quick check for the teacher if a student is wandering.

The teacher should now be ready to approach the class with the new learning technique and begin by carefully explaining the students' groups, the four centers, the scheduling and rotation procedures.

The next important task is to stress where the assignments will be found. Assignments should be located in the same place each day so the students can find them quickly. They should be clearly written, explaining what should be done immediately upon reaching a center. It should also list where the group will meet, as listening center, seats, hall, circle, etc. If possible, in the time allotment, five to ten minutes should be allowed at the beginning of each day for teacher explanation and student questions concerning the day's assignment. This is also a good time to discuss self-discipline and responsibility on the student's part.

If, as in spelling, a student is needed to dictate words, the process of taking turns should be discussed. It is simple to rotate students by using an asterisk (*) by each name on the board. They will notice that it is changed each day.

The teacher should explain that groupings do not allow students to stop and talk with someone in a different group as that is interrupting. Also, it is necessary to remain reasonably quiet because with four different areas doing different things, it can become too noisy. Remind students, "It is you that makes the program work or fail."

The teacher and students should now be prepared to start immediately to try out the rotation method. Initially the teacher must be patient, for some students will become lost and end up in the wrong place. At the end of each session, the teacher simply reminds the class, "It is time to change groups," for students may not have noticed the time.

PROGRAM WEAKNESSES

1. The classroom may become too noisy for some teachers.
2. Some students may become too interested in what is happening at other centers.
3. Some students may purposely interrupt another group.
4. The teacher may be needed in several places at once if unexpected problems or questions occur.

PROGRAM STRENGTHS

1. The teacher has more time for individual help, as groups actually run themselves once they get started.
2. Students within groups help one another. (Piaget states that the best way to learn something is to teach it [7:207].)
3. Students accept more responsibility for their own learning.
4. Students find the idea of rotating within a classroom fun, and they like a varied routine.
5. Students, in giving spelling words or in supervising the checking of workbooks, like teaching. (The normally disruptive student may be an excellent leader at this time.)
6. The rotation method allows for the use of learning packages and improved individualized reading since the teacher would only have six or seven to conference during that time block over the whole week's period.
7. It allows the teacher to work with groups of six or seven students on particularly hard assignments.
8. It is a good way to provide time to allow for a wide variety of activities during the Activity period.
9. The teacher can quickly check a small group of papers during the time period so the students have immediate reinforcement.
10. The teacher has time to drift about the room to survey, supervise, and give special attention and encouragement where it is needed.
11. It can be a very success-oriented method of teaching by having multi-levels of assignments available to different groups of students.
12. It is fun for the teacher as well as the student.

There are an even dozen positive reasons to encourage any teacher to give this method of teaching a try.

Chapter 3

PHASE II - LEARNING CENTERS

After the students have functioned in the modular arrangement for a period of time and hopefully learned to cooperate in groups, learned the responsibility of tutoring their peers, and learned to function without the teacher's immediate direction, the second phase may be initiated.

In preparing for learning centers, the room arrangement needs to be redesigned. The students' individual tables are still grouped in the center of the room, but the clusters of tables around the outside of the room need to be replaced for individual centers and not group-oriented centers.

The room may be set up as in Appendix F, page 43, but basically each teacher will have to take into consideration the size of the classroom, tables and counters available, and the number and type of learning centers desired. There should remain a place for group activity or structured teaching as well.

The areas should be arranged or separated by dividers, book cases, or screens to insure some privacy for individualized activity which does not invite intrusion by others. A quiet area should be placed away from traffic areas, so students can read or work as they wish. It is suggested

rugs and pillows be utilized to help students relax in an area near the book shelves.

TYPES OF CENTERS

At this time the teacher must decide the type of learning centers that might be set up and what activities should go into them to keep the students motivated. It is helpful if other teachers are available to help brainstorm ideas. It takes only several good ideas from each teacher to provide a successful and creative experience for students.

The learning centers can be based around Language Arts and Math classes or be associated with all classes. Centers then are obviously learning centers, where children do their work, not just places to go when work is completed.

As each learning center is constructed several related activities or open ended activities should be planned for. These should be prepared for different ability levels so continuing learning can take place.

Every activity at each center is basically self-selecting, self-motivating, self-pacing, and self-correcting. The emphasis for learning is put on the child rather than on the "all-knowing" teacher (8:3).

It is important that the student understand what is to be done, find the activity interesting and stimulating, and be able to have immediate reinforcement upon completion. If the activity needs to be checked or corrected, he should do so immediately through keys available for his use at the center.

Clear concise directions plus examples, if necessary, should be available at each center to insure that the student understands what he should do. If there are a variety of activities at any center, then the activities might be listed upon index cards rather than on a tagboard chart above the center.

DEVELOPING PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The student needs to accept responsibility for his own learning. He should take the initiative in deciding which center he will use, and what type of an activity he will pursue. He also learns to plan and use his time wisely or he will find that he has spent too much time in one area and has insufficient time left to complete the rest of his allotted activities.

An important facet of the program is the focus on individual responsibility, making each child accountable for his own work. As one teacher states, "We could merely extend skills; we want to do more than that (3:4).

To start with it may be a good idea to rotate students through the learning centers--many teachers prefer this way. A schedule similar to the one presented in the modular classroom might be used. One problem encountered is that the student may not be completely self-directed by being able to choose the activities he wishes to work on at the time or in the order he prefers, but maybe this is one point left to the open classroom. It still is best to allow the student to be self-pacing and finish an activity at his own rate of speed rather than on a limiting time schedule.

To direct the students to different centers to fulfill individual needs, a paper might be prepared by the teacher listing the centers available. The teacher would evaluate the students' needs and place a check by centers which definitely should be used. Upon completion of these centers, the student would have a conference with the teacher and determine if further work is needed to be done in these areas or if he should go on to another learning center. As a center is completed a check is placed in the appropriate box on the student's record sheet. (A sample sheet is included in Appendix G, page 45.) As the centers are completed, and this may be easily kept track of by a sign-up sheet at each center, the teacher may change the centers. This may be done a few at a time or all at once. Some centers which have multi-activities or are open-ended may remain the same throughout the year. The students should be given ample time to complete the centers before activities or centers are changed.

It is important that success remains the key word throughout the arrangement. A student who works fast will complete many centers, but he should be encouraged to do a thorough job, and not let completing the centers as fast as possible become the goal. For the student who works slower or the lower achieving student the completion of all the centers should not be required, as this can cause unnecessary pressure. Centers should be designed so that completion of part of the work, as well as completing a lower-level skill,

will fulfill the requirement. The top student who chooses to complete only lower-level skills should be encouraged but not forced by the teacher to achieve the higher-level skills in place of or along with the lower-level skills.

Many of the students need to learn it is alright to make mistakes. Assuming responsibility and making self-evaluations enable the children to see that they can profit from mistakes. They are also urged to try activities or projects in which they are not guaranteed success, thus increasing their interest (3:11).

As the teacher plans and evaluates he plays a major role in encouraging or shifting student's attention to the different areas of the room. Change may not become a problem except in a few isolated cases where a center appeals so strongly to a child his attention is focused strictly there. The teacher's skills in maneuvering are brought out here as the student should not feel forced or pressured into another center or he may not perform well once he does change.

For the faster students who complete the centers quickly, a "buddy" system may be devised to help other students at centers, or the student may be a "consultant" at one center to answer questions and explain how the center is used. It is a good idea to encourage these students to also return to the open-ended centers and try something new. Maybe they can create new centers. All students should be allowed to inject ideas for centers. Students often have good ideas how the centers should be used and what can be done in each center.

Teachers who have had a modular classroom will usually find the students already capable of moving about the room, used to some self-direction, and fairly responsible for their own actions. These students should swing into the centers with ease and function smoothly as they are used to following written directions. Since they have been working together in groups, working responsively alone is a good change of pace. Students usually respond well as the colorful and creative centers are an invitation to try something new and different.

For the teacher in the traditional classroom wishing to change to learning centers, an intermediate step might be to design a center or two for the students who have completed their work. Later, a few more learning centers could then be established and students given a free choice of centers to attend. The students could rotate to each center in turn.

This allows the students to become acquainted with using the centers, and the responsibility they must assume in order to have the privilege of learning centers within the room.

CLASSROOM CONTROL

Discipline can become a problem, but this may simply be a teacher-attitude problem. If the teacher in a traditional classroom has demanded a regimented class, quietly doing their work and moving around the room only after gaining permission by raising their hands, then the learning

centers, free movement, and occasionally an emotionally excited outburst may be viewed as a chaotic and uncontrolled classroom. The teacher must then re-evaluate his standards and if he finds the new freedom unacceptable to himself, or perhaps to the principal in charge, then this method of teaching is probably not suitable. However, if the teacher can relax and enjoy the students and become excited over their accomplishments, the discipline problems will be far and few between. The noise level should be recognized for what it is, enthusiasm for the activity and excitement of wanting to share the experience with someone. Granted, calling across the room, interrupting where unwanted, or destroying someone's project is uncalled for and has to be dealt with, but visiting and helping each other are part of this type of a learning experience.

Keep in mind that discipline problems are probably being caused by bored, frustrated, or angry students. Maybe the teacher has not provided (1) enough centers dealing with the various ability levels, (2) enough interesting centers--causing students to have to wait too long, (3) evaluation techniques which are adequate, or (4) enough activities and materials for the children's needs.

To solve behavior problems

1. Assess each child's needs.
2. Provide as much free choice as possible with materials available.
3. Make it as easy as possible for the children to do the acceptable thing (10).

The teacher should anticipate problems before they happen and guide students into an activity that is acceptable. The room should be set up so traffic patterns help control behavior. All rules should be stated positively. Move closer to an area where a conflict may arise and be ready to avert any aggressive movement before it occurs.

The teacher must know the children well enough to help them avoid a situation in which they might lose control.

The teacher through positive attitudes, positive rules, and positive corrections can control many of these situations before they happen.

EVALUATION

In evaluating activities, the teacher should not feel compelled to always require a written response. Oral work, matching cards, putting pictures in sequence, or a game can be quickly checked by the teacher or by a key available to the student. Marking the results, or simply the completion of it, would suffice. The manipulative activities are important as they will motivate students who are turned off by dittoed materials.

Evaluation by the teacher is very important. Planning, daily supervision and evaluation are very structured. Things do not happen haphazardly as it might appear to an outsider unfamiliar to the classroom. The teacher must be aware of the student's needs, and how these needs must be fulfilled. Evaluation techniques may be designed in different ways depending on the objectives and activities involved.

Previously mentioned self-correcting keys available at the centers are one evaluation method. There may be a group testing corrected by the teacher as well as other work, consisting of written stories, drawings, and art assignments, not immediately evaluated upon completion, which require the teacher's attention. The last especially need some preplanning and care so they will not be lost or destroyed. For this a folder may be placed at each activity area. Or, a student may have his own separate folder where he would file his own work. The last may be stored in a separate area; or if preferred, the student might carry it from center to center.

The teacher should spot-check the student's progress at the centers when time allows. If the student is carrying his folder it is easy to flip through it to be sure instructions are being followed. There should be a planned individual conference with the student each week to evaluate the work and to plan for goals the student should achieve the following week. The class can be divided so that the teacher will conference so many students each day and the student can plan on it for a certain day each week.

The teacher's job at these conferences is to help each child learn to set realistic goals for himself, to encourage him to work up to these goals and to help him learn to evaluate his own progress. . . . At this time they review the previous week's activities. The pupil compares what he accomplished with what he had planned to accomplish and goes over his work folder, discussing what work was easy for him and what work gave him trouble (4:56).

The students should be invited to evaluate the centers, and discussions should be held on how to improve the use of them. Peer groups may often influence the students more than teacher pressure (8:6).

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

The students may surprise the teacher as they often function differently than they did in a traditional classroom. Some who need close supervision with every minute planned for them may feel lost when they have to assume responsibility for their own actions. Students who did not excel may suddenly become motivated and try very hard to achieve. Those that are lazy in the traditional classroom may remain the same at the centers.

The children enjoy feeling more in control of their own program. They make choices, set limits, work at their own rate of speed and learn they are an individual not a duplicate of their classmates.

And isn't this really more like real life? Time regulated, conforming, boss-directed jobs such as assembly-line jobs are becoming increasingly automated and by the time these children are grown may well be nonexistent. The traditional rigid school schedule would seem to be losing value as a model for adulthood (4:56).

Chapter 4

PHASE III - THE OPEN CLASSROOM

Open classrooms vary from one country to another and from one classroom to the next. In effect, there is no one model. It is changed accordingly by the wants of the educators and the needs of the students in the area in which it is being used.

The earliest open concept schools, and from whom the United States has taken its direction, are found in England. There Silberman describes the students as

. . . getting on with interesting occupations, reading or writing, painting, carving or weaving, or playing musical instruments. . . . And the teachers would be among the children, taking part in their activities, helping and advising and discussing much more frequently than standing before a class teaching (7:6).

The children have the freedom of movement and their choice of activity within the classrooms. They are non-graded within primary and junior age grouping levels.

This method of organizing the classroom has been brought to the United States by people who wanted to humanize the schools. Some of the colleges here are now training teachers to work in this type of classroom, or a variation of it.

Many schools have wanted to be a part of the new "in thing" and in switching to it have found it does not work for

everyone. Teachers cannot be made to work in a system like this and expect success. They should first check their own values and past teaching behavior.

A conflict between your new and old values may result in inconsistent and contradictory behavior on your part. This kind of behavior confuses and unsettles children (1:18).

As with the learning centers, if a teacher cannot train herself to relax, to distinguish between learning noise and noisy noise, and to accept the idea teaching can be accomplished in many other forms rather than by all students doing the same thing at the same time, then the open classroom had better be reconsidered for the present time. If forced, it could become a bad experience for all and labeled as unworkable or uncontrollable. The consequence would be no further attempts made towards making it work successfully.

But, if after establishing learning centers and finding how enthusiastic the students are in working at them, a modified open classroom can be tried.

One variation to help students become used to managing their own time is to write on the board on Wednesday the assignments that should be finished by Friday. These may include an art project, a science experiment, social studies pages to be read, a filmstrip to be seen, a tape at the listening centers, etc. The students are also free to use the learning centers as they desire. At the end of each day the students should take ten minutes to write down what they worked on and what they completed that day.

The teacher should not be critical about the way the student is using his time. On Friday, however, the teacher should have the students evaluate what they have done, tell about the extra things they did, and decide how they might have accomplished more. The following week the assignments can be written on the board again for the length of days chosen. This time a few deadlines may be set up during the week--due to filmstrips and tapes which have to be returned or discussions which the students have to be prepared for. The same arrangement for the last ten minutes of each day should be followed. The teacher should be encouraging to those not organizing their time as well as they should and she should suggest they think about how they might improve their study habits. With patience and understanding, these students will improve. Usually these students mean well, but are sidetracked easily.

Alert teachers learn considerable about their students in this situation. Students eagerly attack some jobs to get them over with and linger on others with a diligence equal to a much older student. Here it is demonstrated that students are not geared to do everything at the same time in the same manner, for the same length of time. A student's interest should not be trifled with, "Put it away, it is time to go to something else." Once a student is started on a project, he may choose to work all afternoon on it and not even stop for a recess period. When a student does

this or rushes in at noon to get back to yesterday's project, a teacher should feel the program is successful for that student.

This is not a true open-classroom, but it may be a workable classroom for the teacher not yet committed to the idea students can completely choose what they want to do, or can be used in a school where the principal might be against the open classroom in the true context of the word.

STRUCTURE

Open classrooms are also often found to be very structured. The guiding done by the teacher is perhaps more concealed with students not working completely on their own as believed by untrained eyes. They are actively producing what is important to everyone at that time. Each student is evaluated accordingly--through individual conferences assessing his needs, his accomplishments, and his goals.

In planning for the free day there is no separation of activities or skills and no separate scheduling of any one activity other than the fixed points (Morning Service, P.E., Music and Movement, and lunch) designed for all children in school. As a result one might see all aspects of the environment--reading, writing, number, painting, acting, music in use at all times. A group getting the teacher's help or stimulus could be found at any time.

At some time of the day a child did number, reading, and writing, adjusted to his stage of progress and depending on his interest and his need of the moment (7:353).

In setting up one kind of open classroom to accommodate specific learning centers, students are not assigned fixed seats. They use boxes placed on shelves for their

personal belongings and carry these to the area of their choice. This makes it possible for not only the outside edge of the room, but the center of the room to be available for centers. An open area is left where the class may come together whenever necessary.

The floor plan found in Appendix H, page 47, could be used for this type of classroom. Along with the various centers mentioned in the previous section, see Appendix I, page 49, for additional ideas (1:111-118).

RECORD KEEPING AND EVALUATION

The teacher must keep records of what the student is doing and what his needs are and how the needs are being fulfilled. "Emphasis is on learning, rather than on teaching" (7:103). And so the teacher's role is different than in the traditional classroom.

In traditional classrooms, "The work children did tended to matter more than what happened to the child as a consequence of his doing it" (7:66).

Teachers in open classrooms are concerned more with what the students are doing, not just what children have learned for the grade on the report card. Many times in letting a student choose his own evaluation media he will choose to do a project such as a diorama, or a series of pictures that shows there has been considerable learning take place. In a written objective testing situation, this same student may fail miserably. The following statement does sum

up what many teachers and grading systems in traditional schools do stand for: "This is what you have to do; this is how you have to do it; do it and I will mark it to see if you have done it correctly; then I will punish you accordingly" (7:67).

It is a sober-sorry place when originality and creativity are stifled to this point. Carbon copies are the best that some teachers and schools produce. In this context, the more duplicated the student can prove he is the better his mark on the report card will be. Is this what teaching students is all about? Silberman in the Open Classroom Reader asks, ". . . what matters most in education--what one 'knows' or the sort of person he becomes?" (7:69).

In the open classroom students are being taught to make choices for themselves, accept responsibility and to think on their own. These are all characteristics teachers expect the students to have by a certain age, but deny them the experiences that will lead to their development.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

It was the purpose of this paper to identify a program which a teacher might utilize as a transitional approach in moving from a traditional classroom learning environment to the open classroom learning environment.

The modular grouping classroom, the classroom with learning centers, and the open classroom are all basically the same. They are places where children learn by themselves, from each other, from books, the teacher, and other media. They show flexibility in their style in that no two classrooms may be alike.

In the modular classroom the time is fairly structured and scheduled. In the classroom with learning centers, the many possible activities can range from a rotation method to one of the student's making personal choices. There are no grades or tests in the open classroom and probably no separate grade levels. The students have the freedom of making the choice of what they want to do, when they want to do it, and how they want to do it within the established guidelines of the classroom.

All three classrooms can be varied to meet the demands or needs of the particular group of students the teacher is working with.

In all three classrooms the teacher is available to guide the activities of the student as the need arises.

The classrooms are not uncontrolled nor uncontrollable, but the teacher must be able to function in an atmosphere created by energetic, involved students.

Arlene Silberman states,

There are only three requirements for a good elementary school:

1. a pleasant atmosphere in which every child feels valued and successful
2. a faculty concerned with developing youngsters who delight in learning
3. programs that respond to each child's needs (7:109).

These requirements are good goals for any school faculty or any individual teacher to strive for. In accomplishing these goals the teacher should feel successful, and the student's image of himself and the learning process should be greatly improved.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Blitz, Barbara. The Open Classroom: Making it Work, Boston: Allyn Bacon, Inc., 1973.
2. Carnahan, Karen, Connie Zink, and Stella Ross. "Using Learning Stations in First and Second Grade at Washington School," Ellensburg, Washington. (Pamphlet)
3. Model Programs, Childhood Education: Boston Public Schools Learning Laboratories, Palo Alto, Calif.: American Institutes for Research, 1970, ERIC Ed. 044-893.
4. Olenzak, Karen Romnes. "Learning Centers--The Teaching Approach that Makes OLD SCHOOLS LIKE NEW," Teacher, February, 1973, pp. 54-57.
5. Peterson, Dorothy and Lei Lani Jackson. Early Childhood Education, East West Invitational Workshops, Tacoma, Washington, 1973.
6. "Responsive Environment," (dittoed sheet).
7. Silberman, Charles E. The Open Classroom Reader, New York: Vintage Books, 1973.
8. Simmons, Marilyn. Learning Centers in a Self-Contained Classroom, Annapolis, Maryland: Anne Arundel County Board of Education, 1970.
9. "A Technique for Implementing Appropriate Daily Routine and Classroom Arrangement in Individual Follow Through Classrooms," Ypsilanti, Michigan: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. (Pamphlet)
10. "Techniques for Handling Disruptive Behavior," (dittoed sheet).
11. Van Allen, Roach. "Language Experience," (excerpts taken from a speech by Roach Van Allen).

APPENDIX A

GROUPING CHILDREN METHOD I

GROUPING CHILDREN METHOD II

GROUPING CHILDREN METHOD I

Groups

I	II
1. boy-high	1. boy-high
2. girl-high	2. girl-high
3. boy-middle-problem	3. boy-middle
4. girl-middle	4. girl-middle low-problem
5. boy-middle low	5. boy-middle low-problem
6. girl-middle low	6. girl high

III	IV
1. boy-high	1. boy-high
2. girl-high	2. girl-high
3. boy-middle	3. boy-middle-problem
4. girl-middle-problem	4. girl-middle
5. boy-middle	5. boy-middle-problem
6. girl-low	6. boy-high

GROUPING CHILDREN METHOD II

Groups

I	II
1. boy-high	1. girl-middle
2. girl-high	2. boy-middle
3. girl-high	3. girl-middle
4. boy-high	4. girl-middle
5. boy-high	5. girl-high .
6. girl-high	6. boy-high

III	IV
1. girl-high	1. boy-middle-problem
2. boy-middle	2. girl-middle low-problem
3. boy-high	3. boy-middle low-problem
4. girl-low	4. girl-middle-problem
5. boy-middle	5. boy-middle-problem
6. boy-middle	6. boy-middle-problem

APPENDIX B

LANGUAGE ARTS IDEAS

LANGUAGE ARTS IDEAS

READING CENTER

Textbook (oral and silent)
 Workbooks
 Discussions
 Homonym and Synonym Games
 Reading Games
 Phonics
 Conferences
 Job Cards
 Flash Cards
 Read to a friend

SPELLING CENTER

Textbook Lessons
 Spelling Bees
 Spelling Games
 Anagrams
 Vocabulary Building
 Build a Word Pages
 Word Families

LANGUAGE CENTER

Textbook
 Creative Writing
 Games
 Cursive Writing Practice
 Work Sheets
 Vocabulary Building Skills
 Dictionary Work

ACTIVITIES CENTER

Listening Center
 Literature Story Tapes
 Art Filmstrips
 Book Reports Book Making
 Crosswords Puppets
 Puzzles Class Poems
 Games
 Plays
 Skits

APPENDIX C

LESSON PLANS

LESSON PLANS

<u>DAY</u>	<u>READING</u>	<u>LANG. ARTS</u>	<u>SPELLING</u>	<u>ACTIVITIES</u>
Mon.	Introduce Unit on Tall Tales. Review new words. Assign story to read silently, "Paul Bunyan" Place: Circle	Cursive Writing Assignment Place: Seats	Unit 21 (Written daily work following manual) Place: Spelling Center	Tape: Blue Willow Place: Listening Center
Tues.	Read story orally with someone in your group. Place: Seats	Introduce new material on plurals. Oral work to be done with group. Place: Lang. Arts Center	Unit 22 plus Enrichment page. (Spelling will always be at Spelling Center.)	Draw the Blue Willow Plate from description in the story. Place: Activity Table
Wed.	Discussion of story. Explain and assign workbook pages. Place: Circle	Assign written work on plurals. Check orally with leader. Place: Lang. Arts Center.	Unit 23	Crossword Puzzles and games. Place: Seats
Thurs.	Allow time to complete workbook pages. Place: Seats	Teacher work with those having problems. Assign next lesson. Place: Lang. Arts Center	Unit 24	Filmstrip Paul Bunyan to go with reading lesson. Place: Hall

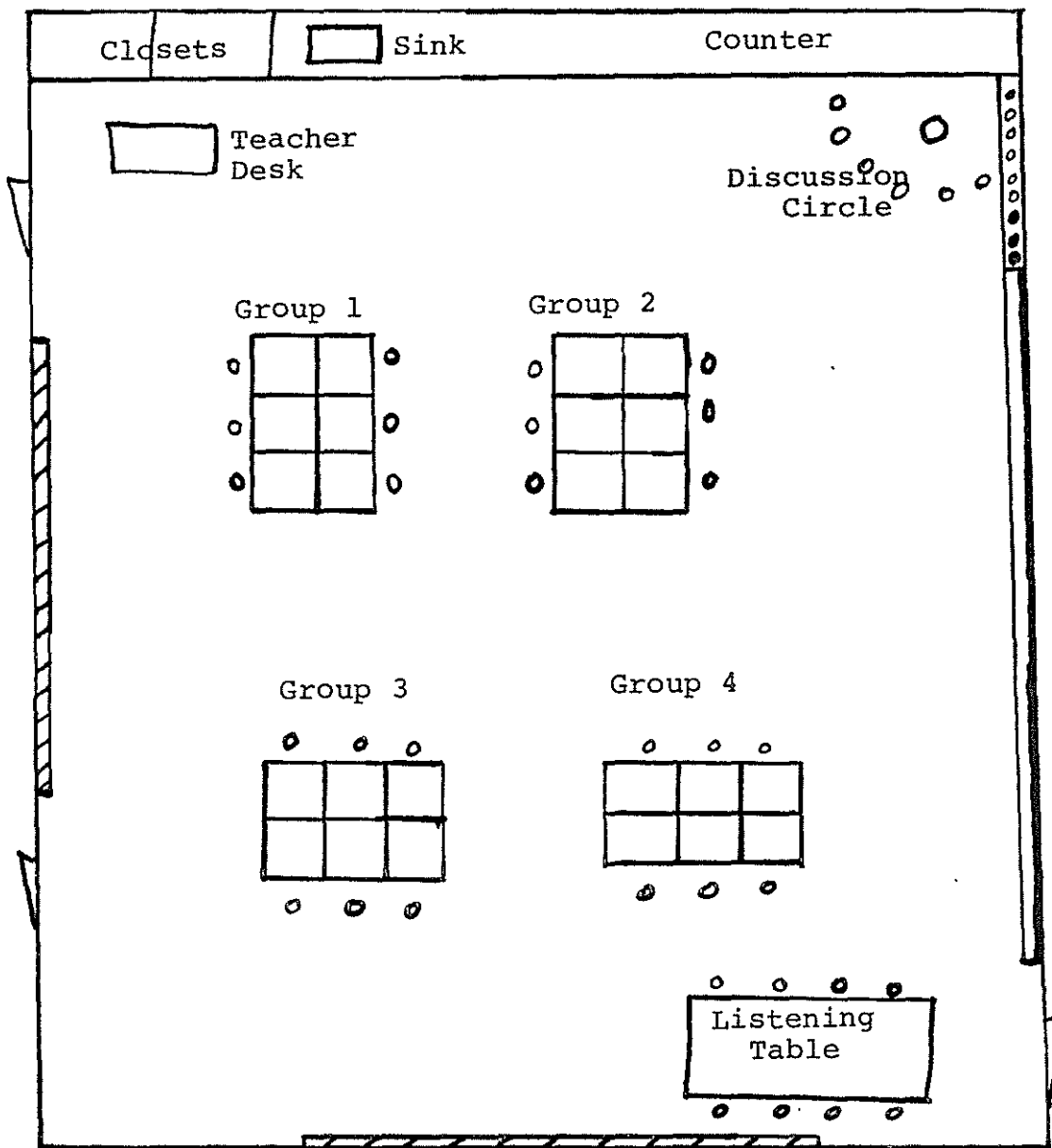
<u>DAY</u>	<u>READING</u>	<u>LANG. ARTS</u>	<u>SPELLING</u>	<u>ACTIVITIES</u>
Fri.	Check workbook. Allow free time for reading games. Place: Circle	Check work with group leader. Start new assignment. Teacher check as soon as Reading workbooks are finished. Place: Lang. Arts Center.	Unit 25	Write a tall tale about one of the pictures picked from folder, or make up a picture of own to go with story. Place: Seats




APPENDIX D

FLOOR PLAN I

FLOOR PLAN II

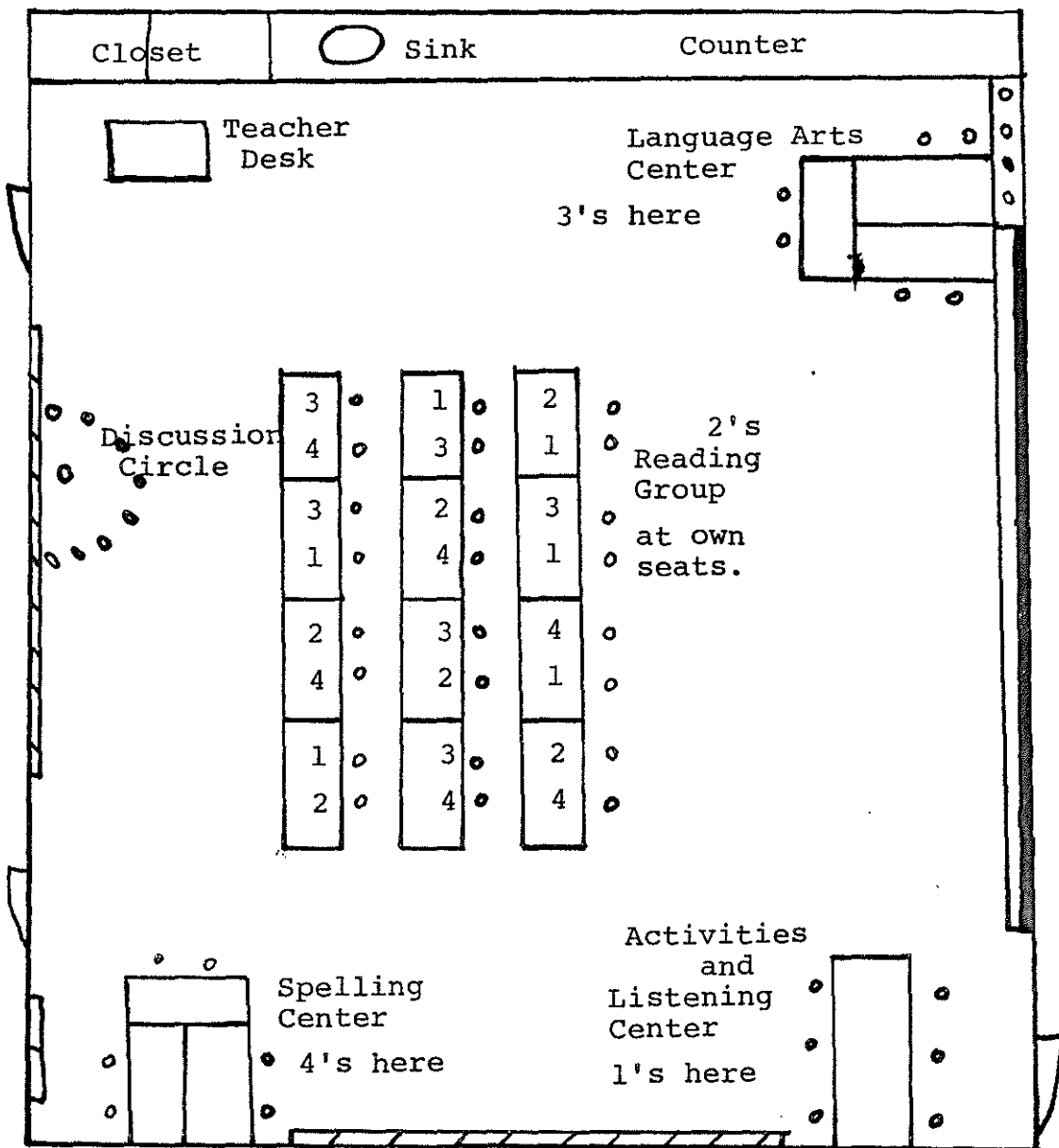
FLOOR PLAN I





-  Blackboards
-  Windows & ledge
-  Heater


FLOOR PLAN II

Schedule 1 - 9:00-9:25 Monday



 Window & ledge

 Blackboard

 Heater

APPENDIX E

SCHEDULING CHARTS

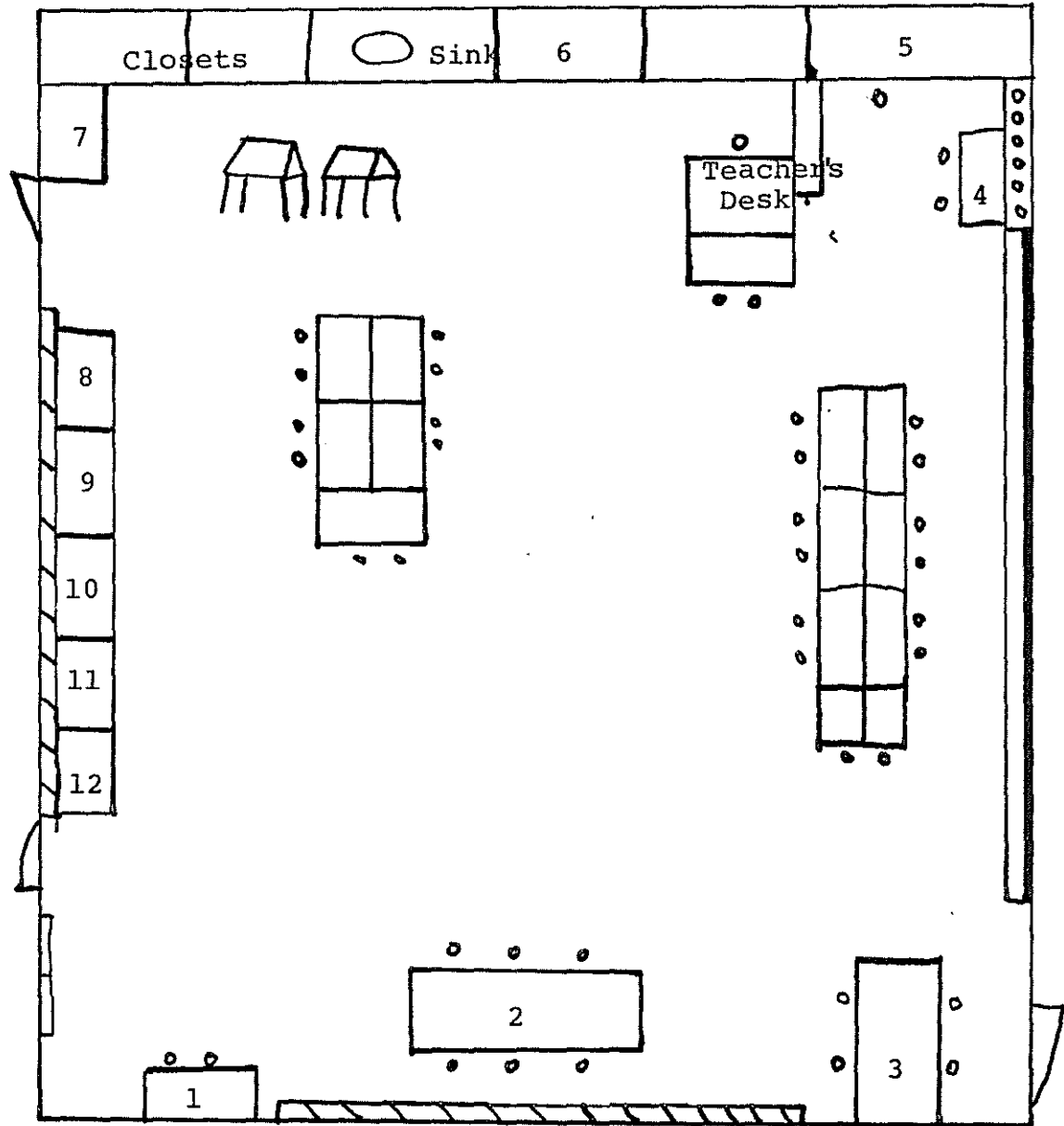
SCHEDULING CHARTS




<u>TIME</u>	<u>ACTIVITIES</u>	<u>READING</u>	<u>LANGUAGE</u>	<u>SPELLING</u>	
9:00- 9:25	1	2	3	4	Chart I
9:25- 9:50	4	1	2	3	
9:50-10:15	3	4	1	2	
10:30-10:55	2	3	4	1	
9:00- 9:25	2	3	4	1	Chart II
9:25- 9:50	1	2	3	4	
9:50-10:15	4	1	2	3	
10:30-10:55	3	4	1	2	
9:00- 9:25	3	4	1	2	Chart III
9:25- 9:50	2	3	4	1	
9:50-10:15	1	2	3	4	
10:30-10:55	4	1	2	3	
9:00- 9:25	4	1	2	3	Chart IV
9:25- 9:50	3	4	1	2	
9:50-10:15	2	3	4	1	
10:30-10:55	1	2	3	4	

APPENDIX F

LEARNING CENTERED FLOOR PLAN

LEARNING CENTERED FLOOR PLAN



-  Blackboards
-  Window & ledge
-  Heater

APPENDIX G

STUDENT CHART FOR LEARNING CENTERS

STUDENT CHART FOR LEARNING CENTERS

	Do	Choice	Finished	Checked	Date
Center 1 Spelling					
Center 2 Cursive Writing					
Center 3 Syllables					
Center 4 Clay					
Center 5 Listening Story					
Center 6 Crossword Puzzles					
Etc.					

APPENDIX H

COMPLETE OPEN CLASSROOM FLOOR PLAN

APPENDIX I

ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR CENTERS

ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR CENTERS

Science	Creative Writing
Painting	Language Arts
Social Studies	Spacial Relations Center
Building	Language Arts and Skills
Sculpture	Music and Dance
Reading	Housekeeping
Math	Dress Up (1:111-118)

* * *

Flannel Board Stories	
Composing - stories, song, riddles, poetry, commercials	
Word bank (collecting words)	
Making crossword puzzles	Yahtzee
Writing pen pal letters	Maps and compasses
Filling in words for comic strips	Clay
Dictating stories on tape	Sand and water
Electrical circuit boards	Books, comics and magazines
Typewriters	Records
Cuisenaire rods	Phonograph and records
Checker & chess sets	Viewmaster and slides
Playing cards	Colored pencils
Math puzzles	Murals and mosaics
Dominoes	Weaving